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Valerio Caldesi Valeri

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**The Dissertation Committee for Valerio Caldesi Valeri
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:**

Minos of Cnossos:

King, Tyrant and Thalassocrat

Committee:

Paula J. Perlman, Supervisor

Lisa Kallet

Michael Gagarin

Lesley A. Dean-Jones

Bernd Seidensticker

**Minos of Cnossos:
King, Tyrant and Thalassocrat**

by

Valerio Caldesi Valeri, B.A. M.A.

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Ai miei genitori

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In this study, I show that the figure of Minos, the mythic ruler of Bronze-Age Crete, functioned in Greek literature of the Archaic Age to the fifth century BCE as a mythical conduit elucidating three notions central to the interests of Greek thought: epic kingship, tyranny, and thalassocracy.

A destructive-minded individual and judge in epic, Minos resonates with the portrayal of Homeric monarchs, who display destructive behavior toward their subjects, yet bestow upon them the benefits of adjudication. Further, Minos is deliberately exploited as a precedent by Odysseus, as the hero resolves to use self-help against the suitors rather than a settlement in court. As a result, the epic representation of Minos is far from being marginal to the Homeric poems, as usually assumed.

In fifth-century Athenian literature the character is demonstrably portrayed as a tyrant. The shift in the portrayal of Minos is only apparently inconsequent. Artistic and literary evidence is mustered to suggest that the Athenians perceived Minos' epic role of judge as incompatible with their administration and conception of justice, and that adjudication could serve as a springboard for the achievement of tyranny. In his trajectory from judge to tyrant, Minos thus illustrated the fine line separating justice from tyranny.

Again in the fifth century, Minos is envisaged as a thalassocrat. I contend that his thalassocracy is a construct developed by fifth-century historians and based upon earlier traditions that associated Minos' sea power with the attainment of the status of supreme monarch. Minos' thalassocracy instead had the quite different implication that its holder would incline toward tyranny. Minos' thalassocracy, thus, is relevant to Athens maritime empire, also thought of as a tyrannical rule. An ominous model for Athens, Minos' thalassocracy is both denied and accorded primacy among the sea powers by the historians. Whether accepted or denied, Minos constituted a reference point for the current Athenian *archē*.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1. Minos Epicus: A Destructive-Minded King	5
Minos <i>Oloophrōn</i> : Destructive-Mindedness and Family Revenge	13
Minos <i>Oloophrōn</i> : Destructive-Mindedness and Epic Kingship	37
Odysseus, Grandson of Minos.	52
Minos <i>Basileutatos</i>	67
Conclusions	70
CHAPTER 2. Minos Tyrannos: The Transition From Judge To Tyrant.....	73
Minos in Vase Painting of the Archaic Age	74
Bakchylides' <i>Ode</i> 17: The Genesis of Minos the Tyrant	83
Minos and Athenian Drama	102
Conclusions	116
CHAPTER 3. Minos Maritimus: From Sea Power to Thalassocracy	120
Minos' Sea Power: Archaic and Non-Athenian Views	121
Minos' Thalassocracy: Thukydides' Systematization	139
Minos' Tyrannical Thalassocracy	147
Minos: A Problematic First Thalassocrat	155
Conclusions	162
CONCLUSIONS.....	164
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3. Again On Minos in Sicily	168
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	174
VITA	186

INTRODUCTION

The present study analyzes the construction of the figure of Minos, the mythic ruler of Bronze-Age Crete, in Greek literature from the Archaic Age to the fifth century BCE. The figure of Minos has been the object of several positivistic studies, which have utilized the description of the character in Greek literature as a tool to illuminate historical realities, practices and even ideologies of Bronze-Age Crete. For instance, the Greek historians' reference to Minos' thalassocracy has generated scholarly debate as to the historical existence of a Minoan sea power.¹ Also, the Homeric description of Minos has invited speculations about the astronomical knowledge of the Minoans² and their notion of kingship.³ Forgoing the import of Minos for the reconstruction of remote Bronze Age Cretan history, this work instead elucidates the character's significance within Greek culture, the very culture that produced his portrayal. Minos will be shown to function as the mythical medium illuminating three areas central to Greek thought: the representation of epic kingship, the relationship between tyranny and justice, and the implications that stem from holding a thalassocracy.

From his earliest appearance in Greek epic the representation of Minos is fraught with contradiction and ambiguity. Homer styled him as the destructive-minded father of Ariadne (*Od.* xi.322), yet, even so, Minos was also protector of Crete (*Il.* xii.452), judge for the dead in the Underworld (*Od.* xi.568-71), sovereign of Knossos, and confidant of

¹ Cf. the debate contained in Hägg-Marinatos (1984).

² Blomberg-Henriksson (1996), 27-40. For more details, see pp. 9-10 with n. 11.

³ See Palaima (1995) on the significance of Minos' golden scepter (*Od.* xi.569) as a Minoan symbol of a divinely sanctioned kingship.

Zeus, his divine father (*Od.* xix.178-9). Similarly, the lyric poet Bakchylides, while casting Minos' hybriatic behavior as a foil to Theseus' virtue, acknowledged Zeus' support for Minos as well as the king's heroic status (*Ode* 17). The fifth-century historians also painted a contradictory portrayal of Minos. Herodotos questioned the primacy of Minos' thalassocracy (*Hdt.* iii.122.2), whereas Thukydides placed Minos at the forefront in his survey of thalassocracies of the past (*Thuc.* i.4).

Naturally, these contradictions led some ancient sources to entertain the idea of two distinct characters called Minos.⁴ In this study, instead, the polymorphic, contradictory nature of Minos will be regarded as inherent in the character's definition.⁵ An example of this methodology is chapter one, where the apparently inconsistent Homeric portrayal of Minos, both destructive-minded and judge for the dead, is understood as compatible with the way in which epic represented monarchy. Agamemnon, as destructive-minded as Minos, displays behavior detrimental to his own communities, but is thought to compensate his destructive force by bestowing benefits upon his subjects, eminently the administration of justice. The depiction of Minos thus falls within and reinforces the epic representation of monarchy. Minos' ambiguity is also functional to Odysseus' confrontation with the suitors, as the hero seems to waver between the possibility of adjudication and the need for violent retaliation: such a dilemma was engrained in Odysseus' own characterization of Minos as judge and

⁴ In 264/3 BCE the Marmor Parium already attested to the existence of two different Minoses some two hundred years apart from one another (*FGrHist* 239 A 11, A 19). Similarly, Diodoros distinguished between Minos and Minos *deuteros*, the latter identified by the author as son of Zeus and thalassocrat (*Diod. Sic.* iv.60.2-4).

⁵ As Lévi-Strauss has pointed out, contradictions do not represent an obstacle to remove by seeking out one authentic version in order to dismiss all the rest as derivatives: see Lévi-Strauss (1983).

destructive-minded king, a compelling model for the hero who claimed Minos as his fictive grandfather. The chapter, thus, reassesses the centrality to epic of Minos, otherwise considered a marginal character.

The second chapter focuses on the fifth-century portrayal of Minos as a tyrant delivered by Bakkhylides' *Ode* 17 and the few fragments from Attic tragedies. In it, I argue that *Ode* 17, in particular, anticipates all the misdeeds later attributed to autocratic rulers in Herodotos' *Histories*: sexual deviancy, lawlessness, hybristic behavior, jealousy, and unaccountability inform this tyrannical incarnation of Minos. Ambiguity is, however, the hallmark of Minos: the *Ode* produces a polysemic portrayal, in which the figure of the tyrant blends with that of the destructive-minded individual of epic and that of an epic warrior and commander. The somewhat contradictory, multi-layered depiction may be explained as Bakkhylides' strategy to cater to a composite audience inclusive of both detractors of Minos, among whom were the Athenians, and supporters of the character. In an effort to elucidate the Athenian antipathy toward Minos, I bring to bear evidence from a sixth-century vase painting together with Euripides' *Cretans* to suggest that Minos attracted Athenian hatred specifically for his epic role as king-judge, which was felt to be incompatible with the current administration of justice in Athens. In my view, it was perhaps that role of judge that contributed to Minos' transition into a tyrant: the story of the Median Deiokes in Herodotos exemplifies the transformation of a foreign judge to tyranny, a trajectory that Minos illustrated as well.

The third chapter tackles Minos' connection with the sea. I argue that attestations of Minos' sea power are found in several archaic and non-Athenian traditions, including

epic. Sea power seems to be intimately related to monarchy in that its possession made its holder most kingly. I distinguish this earlier concept of sea power from Minos' thalassocracy, a construct devised by the fifth-century historians, which is influenced by the rise of the Athenian maritime empire, phrased more precisely, and endowed with a new implication: thalassocracy is now conducive to tyranny, as evidenced by Herodotos' parallel between Minos and the tyrant Polykrates. The chapter also delves into the question why Minos' thalassocracy was denied primacy by Herodotos, but accepted by Thukydides. Minos' inclusion in or exclusion from the realm of history has more to do with each historian's agenda than with their conception of historiography; in either case, whether accepted or denied, Minos' thalassocracy represented a reference point for the Athenian *archē*. Following Minos' evolution from holder of sea power to possessor of thalassocracy highlights the shift in the Greek perception of maritime power, a power enhancing the royalty of monarchs in archaic epic, instead serving the exercise of tyranny in the fifth century.

Consistently a model of contemporary salience, Minos embodied the supreme incarnation of epic kingship, illustrated the path of a judge who turned to tyranny, and cautioned an Athens at the peak of its maritime power of the risks inherent in holding a tyrannical thalassocracy.

CHAPTER 1

MINOS EPICUS: A DESTRUCTIVE-MINDED KING

The two Homeric poems together afford but a handful of glimpses at the figure of Minos. Overall, six passages concern the character: in the present chapter, we shall consider four of them.¹ For practical purposes, I shall number and list the instances in the order in which they appear in the poems, and provide a succinct description of the immediate context.

#1: *Il.* xiii.448-53.

Gleeful about spearing the Trojan warrior Alkatoos against all odds, the Cretan hero Idomeneus addresses his next enemy, Deiphobos, and brags about his own extraordinary bloodline stemming as it does from Zeus and Minos.

δαιμόνι' ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐναντίον ἵστασ' ἐμεῖο,
ὄφρα ἴδῃ οἶος Ζηνὸς γόνος ἐνθάδ' ἰκάνω,
ὃς πρῶτον Μίνωα τέκε Κρήτη ἐπίουρον·
Μίνως δ' αὖ τέκεθ' υἱὸν ἀμύμονα Δευκαλίωνα,
Δευκαλίων δ' ἐμὲ τίκτε πολέσσ' ἀνδρεσσιν ἄνακτα
Κρήτη ἐν εὐρείῃ.

“Oh wretch, you too come stand in front of me,
So that you may see what offspring of Zeus I have come here.
For Zeus at first fathered Minos, guardian (*epiourōs*) over Crete;
and Minos in turn fathered a son, the peerless Deukalion,

¹ I leave out of this chapter's inquiry the following passages concerning Minos: *Il.* xiv.315-7, 321-2, and *Od.* xvii.522-3. Neither passage is relevant for the argument laid out in this chapter. The former will be explored at length in the second chapter for its significance for Bakchylides' poetry (see pp. 95-9). The latter only confirms that in epic thought Minos inhabited Crete (φησὶ δ' Ὀδυσσεύος ξείνος πατρώϊος εἶναι, | Κρήτη ναιετάων, ὅθι Μίνωος γένος ἐστίν. [Eumaios speaking: “The foreigner] claims to entertain ancestral ties of hospitality with Odysseus, [the foreigner] who lives in Crete, where the offspring of Minos reside”).

and Deukalion fathered me, lord over many men
in wide Crete.”²

#2: *Od.* xi.321-5.

In the course of his catalogue of the heroines he saw in Hades, Odysseus glances at Ariadne, notes her kindred ties with ‘destructive-minded’ Minos, and continues on to recount summarily her departure from Crete with Theseus and her premature death at the hands of Artemis.

Φαίδρα τ' Προκρίν τ' ἴδον καλήν τ' Ἀριάδνην,
κούρην Μίνωος ὀλοόφρονος, ἣν ποτε Θησεὺς
ἐκ Κρήτης ἐς γουνὸν Ἀθηνάων ἱεράων
ἦγε μὲν, οὐδ' ἀπόνητο· πάρος δέ μιν Ἄρτεμις ἔκτα
Δίῃ ἐν ἀμφιρῦτῃ Διονύσου μαρτυρίῃσι.

“Both Phaidra and Prokris I saw, and fair Ariadne,
the daughter of destructive-minded Minos (*oloophron*), whom once Theseus
tried to lead from Crete to the hill of sacred Athens,
but had no joy of her; before (he could), Artemis slew her
in sea-girt Dia because of the accusations of Dionysos.”

#3: *Od.* xi.568-71.

Near the end of his otherworldly experience in Hades, Odysseus observes Minos who is acting in his capacities as both king and judge for the dead.

ἐνθ' ἣ τοι Μίνωα ἴδον, Διὸς ἀγλαὸν υἱόν,
χρύσειον σκῆπτρον ἔχοντα θεμιστεύοντα νέκυσιν,
ἥμενον· οἱ δέ μιν ἀμφὶ δίκας εἴροντο ἄνακτα,
ἥμενοι ἐσταότες τε, κατ' εὐρυπυλὲς Ἄϊδος δῶ.

“There I then saw Minos, the glorious son of Zeus,
golden scepter (*skēptron*) in hand, giving judgments (*themisteuōn*) for the dead,
from his seat, while they all around asked rulings of him, the king (*anax*),
sitting and standing across the wide-gated house of Hades.”

² The translations are all mine. Key Greek terms referred to in the main body of the text are transliterated and italicized.

#4: *Od.* xix.178-84.

When the disguised Odysseus finally meets with Penelope, he concocts a Cretan biography for himself. He claims to be named Aithon, younger brother of the Iliadic champion Idomeneus and consequently grandson to Minos, whom he describes as the king of Knossos and confidant of Zeus.

τῆσι δ' ἐνὶ Κνωσός, μεγάλη πόλις, ἔνθα τε Μίνως
ἐννέωρος βασίλευε Διὸς μεγάλου ὀαριστῆς,
πατρὸς ἐμοῖο πατὴρ, μεγαθύμου Δευκαλίωνος.
Δευκαλίων δ' ἐμὲ τίκτε καὶ Ἴδομενῆα ἄνακτα·
ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν νήεσσι κορωνίσιν Ἴλιον εἴσω
ῥχεθ' ἅμ' Ἀτρεΐδῃσιν· ἐμοὶ δ' ὄνομα κλυτὸν Αἶθων,
ὀπλότερος γενεῇ· ὁ δ' ἅμα πρότερος καὶ ἀρείων.

“Among these [Cretan cities] there is Knossos, a great city, where Minos used to reign every nine years (*enneōros basileue*), as the confidant (*oaristēs*) of Great Zeus, Minos, father of my own father, the great-spirited Deukalion. Deukalion gave birth to me and to king Idomeneus. He sailed to Iliion on the beak-curved ships Along with the sons of Atreus, whereas my renowned name is Aithon, Younger by birth; Idomeneus is of course older and superior.”

While passage #1 has received little attention, #2 and #3 occasioned a heated debate already in antiquity; the portrayal of a destructive-minded (*olophrōn*) Minos at *Odyssey* xi.322 was thought to clash with his celebration as the fair judge ruling for the dead at *Odyssey* xi.569. Minos' destructive-mindedness might also seem to be at odds with his benevolent guardianship over Crete claimed for him by his grandson Idomeneus in the *Iliad* (#1).

Alexandrine and later scholars advanced various interpretations in order to explain away the contradictory evidence. Krates, for one, considered the contradiction to

be irreconcilable and submitted that Homer was referring to two different individuals both named Minos: Ariadne's father on the one hand, and the judge in the Underworld on the other.³ The neo-Platonic scholar Porphyrios attempted to remove the inconsistency by proposing two solutions that dignify the meaning of *oloophrōn*. He contemplated taking *oloophrōn* as an allusion to Minos' woeful attitude directed towards those whom he judged guilty. Alternatively, in lieu of *oloophrōn*, Porphyrios suggested *holoophrōn* ('he who embraces all thoughts', 'the cunning one', from *holos* and *phronein*) on the authority of the stoic philosopher Kleanthes, who had earlier changed the soft breathing of the adjective *oloophrōn* to *holoophrōn* in its application to Atlas (*Od.* i.52).⁴ Eustathios, in the 12th century CE, accepted Porphyrios' solution of regarding Minos' harmful behavior to be directed against evildoers, substituting pirates for Porphyrios' errant dead.⁵ Other ancient commentators opted to regard either #2 or #3, or both, as later interpolations, a solution now dismissed by modern scholarship.⁶

It is, however, passage #4 that has aroused the interest of, and puzzled, ancient and modern commentators alike. Since the time of Plato, this passage resisted an unambiguous explication due to both lexical and syntactical difficulties. In particular, the use of the adjective *enneōros* (literally "nine seasons") is very problematic; while the

³ *Schol.* Q T *Od.* 11.322.

⁴ Porph. *quest. Hom.* 93.17. Cf. *Schol.* H. *Od.* 1.52.

⁵ Eustath. *in Hom.* 1688.55-8. The scholar thus conflated the Homeric passage with Thukydides i.4 and 8.

⁶ One of Aristarkhos' reasons for athetizing passage #3 along with the whole of *Od.* xi.566-627 hinged on the inconsistent presentation of Minos' *ethos*. Cf. Garbrah (1978) 1-11. However, for a convincing defense of passage #3's genuineness, based on structural considerations, see Heubeck-Hoekstra (1989) 111, which also presents an extensive list of previous scholars who adopted Aristarkhos' view. Passage #2 was thought to be an Attic interpolation due to the negative characterization of Minos. Cf. Heubeck-Hoekstra (1989) 97.

meaning ‘nine years old’ may well fit other contexts in epic,⁷ it hardly applies here to Minos, who would then have become king at nine years of age. Plato’s ingenious solution of construing the adjective in a cyclic sense and his suggestion that Minos climbed up to the Idaean cave every ninth year of his reign (*enneōros*) in order to converse with Zeus and receive from him laws for his subjects have been widely accepted.⁸

Preceded as it is by the most extensive description of Crete in archaic Greek literature (*Od.* xix.172-7), modern authors have reasonably regarded passage #4 as a precious piece of historical information that archaic Greek epic contributed on the political, ethnic and linguistic composition of Crete, as well as on the Bronze Age ideology of kingship. Beginning with Evans, who considered Homer as a repository of historical information concerning the Bronze Age, scholars have read in this passage an important confirmation of the archaeological evidence suggesting the Minoan king’s role as priest and intermediary between the divine and human realms.⁹ For instance, the adjective *enneōros* has been construed as evidence for the Minoan king’s acquaintance with an eight-year lunisolar cycle known to later Greeks as the *oktaēris*;¹⁰ such

⁷ *Od.* xi.311, of the gigantic sons of Poseidon and Iphimedeia; *Od.* x.19 and 390 of one ox and a few pigs ready for sacrifice; and presumably at *Il.* xviii.351 of a fatty oil used to plug the ears of Patroklos’ cadaver.

⁸ *Pl. Leg.* 624a-b; which keeps in line with [*Pl.*] *Minos* 319b-d. It is not certain whether to take the adjective in connection with *oaristēs*, making Minos entertain conversations with Zeus every ninth year as Plato did, or with *basileue*, having Minos rule at nine-year intervals. Nor can it be excluded that *enneōros* simply designated nine years of either education by Zeus or kingly rule without any cyclical implications. For a discussion of the *crux*, see Carlier (1984) 194, n. 274; Arbeitman (1988) 434; Morris (1992) 178-180; Russo (1992) 85.

⁹ Evans (1902/3) 38. For an early critique on the scholarly abuse of the term ‘priest-king’, see Bennett (1961/2) 327-35.

¹⁰ Andrews (1969), 62, argued that the Homeric reference to Minos *enneōros* and to his intimacy with Zeus symbolized the timely arrival of the moon (Minos) for its appointment with the sun (Zeus). In his view, the Homeric passage was a relic of a Minoan ‘calendar-year’, still far from a desirable degree of precision, however “quite good enough for Bronze-Age Aegean” (62). The eight-year cycle, ending with sun, moon

astronomical knowledge has also been postulated on the grounds of the location of Minoan peak-sanctuaries.¹¹ The Minoan king, sole holder of this celestial knowledge, would secure his political power on the basis of his religious-astronomical expertise and his intimate connection with the heavenly sphere.¹² According to the positivistic approach, then, the Homeric passage has become an important source for our understanding of Minoan or Iron Age kingship.

Another strand of scholarship has resorted to linguistic considerations in order to understand the description of Minos as *oaristēs* of Zeus. Cognate terms used elsewhere in Homeric epic¹³ confirm that *oaristēs* points to a close bond cemented by direct conversations between Minos and the king of the gods, and reminiscent of the relationship between Moses and Yahweh;¹⁴ the epithet is then best rendered as “confidant” of Zeus. *Oaristēs* is also thought to function as a gloss translating for Greek

and earth in nearly the same position to one another as at the cycle’s start, repeats itself every ninth year (*enneōros*) and was therefore called *oktaēris*, counting inclusively as was common in Greek reckoning.

¹¹ Blomberg-Henriksson (1996), 27-40. The authors argue that the position of the small sanctuary on Petsophas, a low mountain nearby the Minoan town of Palaikastro, together with the orientation of the walls afforded the Minoans a privileged view for astronomical observations, thus making their discovery of the *oktaēris* highly probable.

¹² The same kind of positivistic approach that uses Homer to reconstruct a remote historical reality is embraced by Morris (1992) 180, when she suggests that the expression *enneōros basileue* “may reflect early Iron Age constitutional practices, with revolving offices or temporary magistracies of the type guaranteed by the Dreros inscription.”

¹³ *Oar*, “spouse, wife” (*Il.* v.486; xi.327); *oarizō*, “have a conversation” (*Il.* vi.516; xxii.127-8); *oaristus*, “intercourse”, both sexual (*Il.* xiv.216) and martial (*Il.* xiii.291; xvii.218).

¹⁴ Morris (1992) 177. In *Exodus* 33.11 the Lord speaks to Moses, “face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” A similar concept figures in *Deuteronomy* 5.4 and 34.10, and in *Numbers* 12.8, where the Lord spoke to and knew Moses “face to face” (literally, “mouth to mouth” in the last reference).

speakers the otherwise obscure name Minos, whose stem seems to convey the notion of a king's intimate relation with god.¹⁵

Finally, Passage #4 has even elicited psychoanalytical reflections. The mention of the city *Knōssos* as the kingdom of Minos and the etymological connection of the toponym with the verb *knōssō* ("to sleep") have suggested that Minos may embody some kind of guardian of dreams. Odysseus' descent in the Underworld, then, is to be understood as an oneiric experience of his subconscious.¹⁶

My approach differs from previous treatments of the epic passages by both ancient and modern scholars. First and foremost, I argue that the perceived contradiction inherent in the Homeric portrayal of king Minos, namely his destructive-mindedness vis-à-vis his roles as judge of the dead and protector of Crete, resonates with, and perfectly mirrors, the ideology of monarchy in archaic Greek epic,¹⁷ whereby the sovereign appears as both a dangerous individual because of the power concentrated in his hands and the grantor of prosperity through the administration of justice. Furthermore, I maintain that the long-standing focus on the historical import of passage #4 has led scholars to overlook the fact that the Minos figure is primarily fashioned by Odysseus - out of the six passages that mention Minos in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, three (#2, #3 and #4) are Odysseus' own creation- and that Odysseus' genealogical claim in #4, fictitious as it may be, bears significant implications for his own standing within the *Odyssey*.

¹⁵ Arbeitman (1988) 435-8. The root *mi-n-* of Minos, the author claims, is related to *mi-t-* in Hieroglyphic Luwian where the Luwian leader Azatiwatas is *mitas*, the "steward/worshipper" of the god Taruntas, and to *mi-l-* in Balto-Slavic bible translations of the Hebrew title for Abraham ("the beloved of god").

¹⁶ Bonicatti (1996) 677-83.

¹⁷ For the existence of an ideology of kingship in Homer, see Andreev (1979) 361-84; Descat (1979) 229-40; Lenz (1993) *passim*; Palaima (2006) 56-8 ("wanaks ideology").

In the first section of this chapter (Minos *oloophrōn*: Destructive-Mindedness and Family Revenge), I consider the adjective *oloophrōn* describing Minos in passage #2 as directed toward his antagonist Theseus. Other contexts where the adjective itself or similar expressions appear suggest that destructive-mindedness qualifies as a *response* to personal slights done to individuals, or injuries to their family, and even to their kingdom. Destructive-mindedness, thus, is represented as a response to external events. It is in this sense that we should interpret Minos' destructive-mindedness against Theseus in passage #2, namely as a king's dreadful response to an attack leveled against his family (and kingdom).

In the second section (Destructive-Mindedness and Epic Kingship) I contend that the adjective *oloophrōn* describing Minos in passage #2 does not simply refer to the king's destructive attitude toward his antagonist Theseus, but also underscores an aspect of epic monarchy. When directed against outsiders, the king's destructive nature is an advantage to his community, which benefits from the king's role of protector. However, destructive-mindedness may also be unleashed against the king's own subjects. I hold that an expression akin to *oloophrōn* in the Homeric poems links the characterization of Agamemnon with that of Minos and signals that both kings may be detrimental to their own communities. The two sovereigns, however, balance the monarchy's destructive aspects by granting significant benefits to their subjects, namely the administration of justice and, as a consequence, the land's fertility.

In the third section (Odysseus, Grandson of Minos) I address the thematic significance of Odysseus' choice of Minos as his fictive grandfather. I argue that the

genealogical claim casts Minos as an auspicious model for Odysseus by foreshadowing the development of a progressively closer relationship between Zeus and the hero reminiscent of the intimacy between the god and his son Minos. Furthermore, this fictive genealogy serves to underline Odysseus' heart-wrenching conflict between the possibility of conciliatory justice and the necessity for brutal retribution, a tension nicely encapsulated in Odysseus' own characterization of Minos as judge and destructive-minded king.

In the fourth section (Minos *Basileutatos*) I explore the representation of Minos as “most kingly of kings” in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*: the portrayal of the king is shown to be compatible with that of the Homeric poems, with an emphasis on the positive aspects of Minos' monarchy.

Minos *Oloophrōn*: Destructive-Mindedness and Family Revenge

The adjective *oloophrōn* (“destructive-minded”) applied to Minos in passage #2 and occurring only six times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, has long been considered to denote the king's destructive attitude toward Theseus.¹⁸ As such, its use there has served to label the entire passage as a later Attic interpolation forcing a negative representation upon

¹⁸ The only other attestations of *oloophrōn* are found in Apollonios Rhodius (iv.828-9; used of Skylla) and in an epigram of Mnasalkes of Sikyon (*Anth. Pal.* vii.491; used of Artemis).

Minos in order to extol the Athenian hero.¹⁹ Such a hypothesis would eliminate the perceived contradiction between Minos' negative portrayal in #2 and the king's otherwise acclamatory representation in #1, #3 and #4. Alternatively, modern scholars have tried to resolve this contradiction by adducing positive connotations for the adjective and by proposing the not so literal meaning "crafty, sagacious" on the model of *deinos* ("skillful", and consequently "frightening").²⁰

I start from the assumption that the epithet *oloophrōn*, far from being a sequence of long and short syllables devoid of meaning and merely fitting metrical patterns, carries significance²¹ and its meanings have to be sought both in and even beyond the immediate context provided.²² In the following pages, I analyze the occurrences of the adjective itself and of expressions cognate to *oloophrōn*, which closely match the etymology of the adjective in combining intellectual activity expressed by *phroneo* or *phrēn* with the harmfulness indicated by *oloos*. My inquiry will show that characters marked with

¹⁹ Wilamowitz (1884) 149. Also, see Matthews (1978) 230-1 with n. 20; Mills (1997) 18-9, n. 69. The Attic form of Dionysos' name (Διόνυσος as opposed to Διώνυσος) has also contributed to condemning the whole passage as an Athenian interpolation: Ameis-Hentze (1879) 102; *contra* Herter (1939) 258 with n. 55 who cast doubts on the form being *exclusively* Attic. Two factors set off the hunt for expunging from Homeric epic all the Theseus-related passages: Peisistratos' reported insertion into the *Nekyia* of a flattering verse on Theseus (*Od.* xi.631) designed to indulge the Athenians (Plut. *Thes.* 20.2), and the questionable preconception that the epic poems could not have possibly known of the Theseus myth. For a critique of the latter, see Walker (1995) 16. As for the former, even if we accept that Peisistratos added a single verse to book eleven, we should not assume that his policy was consistent or pervasive.

²⁰ *LSJ*. The authors suggest a twofold meaning for *oloophrōn*: on the one hand, "baleful" in the *Iliad*, where the adjective is applied to animals (a snake, a wild boar, and a lion), on the other, "crafty, sagacious" in the *Odyssey*, where it refers to humans (Atlas, Aietes, and Minos).

²¹ Scholars have long reacted against Milman Parry's influential opinion that name-epithet formulae just respond to meter (Parry [1971]), holding that epithets are deployed appropriately in accordance with the contexts in which they appear (e.g. Whallon [1961]), that they capture "the traditional essence of an epic figure" (Nagy [1990] 23) and that they resonate with a tradition larger than the text or even the work (the so-called "traditional referentiality" of Foley [1991]). For a fuller account of the different views on Homeric epithets, see Russo (1997) and Edwards (1997).

²² This working hypothesis follows in the footsteps of Foley's "traditional referentiality" (1991), but limits its quest for meanings within the texts of the epic poems.

destructive-mindedness respond to personal slights, or injuries to their family and even to their kingdom. Destructive-mindedness, thus, is not associated with capriciousness, but is presented as a justifiable if violent response to external events. It is in this sense that we ought to construe Minos' destructive-mindedness against Theseus in passage #2, namely as a king's dreadful response to an attack leveled against his household, a pursuit of family vengeance in return for an injury suffered. Minos *oloophrōn* is consequently neither a negative nor a positive characterization of the king per se; his destructive-mindedness highlights, instead, his role as avenger on behalf of his family. Given the consistent use of destructive-mindedness in epic, Minos *oloophrōn* should accordingly not be interpreted as evidence for an Athenian interpolation, but rather as a genuine epic construct.

Destructive-mindedness marks both Agamemnon and Akhilleus, and in both cases seems to ensue as a response to a personal injury. At *Il.* i.342-4 Agamemnon is accused by Akhilleus to rage with destructive mind (ὀλοῖησι φρεσὶ θύει), as the son of Atreus sends two heralds to take away Briseis, thus causing the withdrawal of the best Akhaian fighter from the battlefield. The broader implications of the passage will be discussed later on (see pp. 37-40). For now it is sufficient to note that Akhilleus regards the abduction of Briseis as a sign of the Atreid's destructive-minded behavior. The abduction was meant to compensate for Agamemnon's forced surrender of what he regarded as his appropriate war prize, Chryseis. Agamemnon's destructive-mindedness is thus triggered by a slight to his honor, *i.e.* the loss of his war prize, and amounts to an ill-advised reaction. Likewise, in book fourteen of the *Iliad* Poseidon, in the guise of an elderly man,

approaches Agamemnon and describes Akhilleus' behavior in a way reminiscent of *oloophrōn* by calling the warrior's heart destructive (ὄλοὸν κῆρ) and denying him use of φρένες.²³ The god criticizes Akhilleus for rejoicing in the defeat of the Akhaians now bereft of their most valiant combatant. Akhilleus' destructive-mindedness is therefore related to his choice to abandon the battlefield, which he made in retaliation for the loss of Briseis. Once more, destructive-mindedness seems a response to a slight suffered by the character. By comparison with the cases of Agamemnon and Akhilleus, Minos' destructive-mindedness ought to be determined by an injury done to him: passage #2 clarifies that such injury was Theseus' abduction of Ariadne.

An individual's reaction to personal slights, destructive-mindedness oftentimes also appears to denote a response to acts of aggression directed against one's family. In passage #2 Minos becomes destructive-minded to avenge a slight to his family, namely, the abduction of Ariadne. This further interpretation of the adjective's meaning finds

²³ *Il.* xiv.139-42: Ἀτρεΐδῃ νῦν δὴ που Ἀχιλλῆος ὄλοὸν κῆρ | γηθεῖ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φόνον καὶ φύζαν Ἀχαιῶν | δερκομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐ οἱ ἔνι φρένες οὐδ' ἡβαιαί. ἰάλλ' ὃ μὲν ὥς ἀπόλοιτο, θεὸς δέ ἐσιφλώσειε ("Son of Atreus, now surely does the destructive (*oloos*) heart of Akhilleus rejoice within his breast, as he beholds the slaughter and rout of the Akhaians, since he has no mind (*phrenes*), not at all. At any rate, may he thus be destroyed (*hōs apoloito*), or may a god cripple him"). Poseidon both blames on Akhilleus' destructive character his choice to stay withdrawn from the battlefield and emphasizes how this decision has nothing to do with reason. The god here firmly rejects the possibility that Akhilleus may embrace destructive intentions against his war allies, the Akhaians, and at the same time resort to his intellect; Akhilleus' appetite for destruction is consequently situated in his heart rather than his *phrenes*. From Poseidon's standpoint, Akhilleus' conduct arguably defeats any logic: his joy at the defeat of the Akhaians would ultimately translate into self-destruction (*hōs apoloito*). Accordingly, Poseidon infers that no sane man could ever be rationally self-destructive, thus questioning the compatibility between Akhilleus' destructiveness and his *phrenes*. And, although Poseidon claims that Akhilleus' destructiveness evades reason, the warrior's choice to refrain from war entailed a certain amount of rationality; Akhilleus was clearly able to predict the toll of human lives his withdrawal would exact upon the Akhaian host (*Il.* i.241-4). Hence, Akhilleus' conduct is presented as wavering between reason and lack thereof; the same paradox affects Agamemnon's destructive-mindedness: see my discussion further on (pp. 37-40 with n. 63).

support in the context where a third expression evocative of *oloophrōn* appears. Apollo complains to the gods' council about Akhilleus' impious carnage of Hektor's corpse at *Il.* xxiv.39-41:

ἀλλ' ὄλοφ Ἀχιλῆϊ θεοὶ βούλεσθ' ἐπαρῆγειν,
ὧ οὔτ' ἄρ' φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναΐσιμοι οὔτε νόημα
γναμπτὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, λέων δ' ὥς ἄγρια οἶδεν.

"Nay, you gods want to defend destructive Akhilleus (*oloos*),
whose thoughts (*phrenes*) are not at all proper and whose intentions
are unbending in his heart, he only knows savagery, just like a lion..."

According to Apollo, Akhilleus is clearly capable of premeditated destructive behavior here unleashed on Hektor's body: Akhilleus is *oloos* and his *phrenes* are not appropriate. Akhilleus' fury, however, does not burst out without motivation. Rather, his appalling viciousness may be viewed as an overblown reprisal for Hektor's slaying of Patroklos. Patroklos doubtless belonged to Akhilleus' household ever since Menoitios, Patroklos' father, entrusted him to the care of Peleus, who welcomed him into his household and raised him along with his own son Akhilleus (*Il.* xxiii.83-92). Akhilleus' revenge against Hektor qualifies, then, as family retaliation, and it is in this precise context that Akhilleus barbarously mutilates the enemy's corpse, conduct that Apollo defines in a way reminiscent of *oloophrōn*. Therefore, the notion of destructive thinking developed in this passage tallies with the theme of family revenge I have posited for Minos in #2. In both instances, an external enemy imperils the cohesion of a household in different ways (the murder of Patroklos and the abduction of Ariadne), triggering a reaction on the part of a family member (Akhilleus, Minos), who is then characterized as destructive-minded.

Support for the view that destructive-mindedness may entail family vendetta can also be found in the four occurrences where *oloophrōn* identifies humans either directly (Aietes and Atlas) or through animal similes (Euphorbos and Hyperenor, and Hektor). The strongest case for this connection occurs in Odysseus' reference to Kirke's brother Aietes, king of Kolchis (*Od.* x.135-7):

Αἰαίην δ' ἐς νῆσον ἀφικόμεθ'· ἔνθα δ' ἔναιε
Κίρκη ἐϋπλόκαμος, δεινὴ θεὸς αὐδήεσσα,
αὐτοκασιγνήτη ὀλοόφρονος Αἰήταο.

"And we came to the isle of Aiaia, where dwelt
fair-tressed Kirke, a dreadful goddess of human speech,
sister of destructive-minded Aietes."

Odysseus' use of *oloophrōn* here has been understood to foreshadow the sinister actions of his equally dreadful sister.²⁴ The deployment of the adjective prompts a comparison with passage #2, where we find the disruption of a royal house by a foreigner (Theseus), who abducts the daughter (Ariadne) of an *oloophrōn* father and king (Minos). Although the passage above mentions only the sibling relationship between Kirke and Aietes, Homer was familiar with the legend of the Argonauts; at *Od.* xii.69-73 Kirke herself reminds Odysseus that Jason sailed away from Kolchis, Aietes' land, on the ship Argos. Such acquaintance with Aietes and Jason, and with events of the Argonauts' saga makes it very likely that Homer also knew of the Medea figure. In a perfect equation, Aietes may be compared with the *oloophrōn* father and king Minos, Jason with the foreign

²⁴ Matthews (1978) 229.

abductor Theseus, and Medea with the abducted daughter Ariadne.²⁵ *Oloophrōn* is associated with a king's reaction to a foreign offender jeopardizing his household.²⁶

The term *oloophrōn* also appears at the point in the *Iliad* when the Trojan Euphorbos has just dealt Patroklos a fatal blow and, elated by this achievement, boldly threatens to take Menelaos' life. At *Il.* xvii.20-8 Menelaos angrily replies by likening to a destructive-minded wild boar the sons of Panthoös, namely Euphorbos himself and Euphorbos' brother, Hyperenor, whom Menelaos had previously speared to death:

οὔτ' οὖν παρδάλιος τόσσον μένος οὔτε λέοντος
οὔτε συὸς κάπρου ὀλοόφρονος, οὐ τε μέγιστος
θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περὶ σθένει βλεμαίνει,
ὅσσον Πάνθου υἱὲς ἐϋμμελῖαι φρονέουσιν.
οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ βίη Ὑπερήνορος ἵπποδάμοιο
ἦς ἥβης ἀπόνηθ', ὅτε μ' ὤνατο καὶ μ' ὑπέμεινε
καὶ μ' ἔφατ' ἐν Δαναοῖσιν ἐλέγχιστον πολεμιστὴν
ἔμμεναι· οὐδέ ἔφημι πόδεσσιν οἷσι κλέοντα
εὐφρῆναι ἄλογόν τε φίλην κεδνοῦς τε τοκῆας.

“Not so much brags a strong leopard, nor a lion,
not even a destructive-minded wild boar, in whose chest
thumos most greatly revels in his might,
as much as the sons of Panthoös do, armed with good ashen spears.
Even mighty Hyperenor, tamer of horses,
had no joy of his youth, when he persistently insulted me
and said that among the Danaans I was the weakest warrior;
not on his own feet, I say, is he going
to make glad his dear wife and his worthy parents.”

²⁵ Not to mention the underlying theme of a king's daughter cooperating with the foreigner and betraying her father. For the affinity of Minos with Aietes and of Ariadne with Medea in Apollonios' *Argonautica* (iii.1106-8), see Williams (1996) 473.

²⁶ In later versions of the myth, Aietes initially does not direct his wrath so much at Jason as at Medea for assisting the hero and betraying her own father (Ap. Rh. vi.228-35). The Kolkhian king, however, certainly sought family revenge against Jason after the latter tried to slow down the pursuit of the Argo by dismembering Apsyrtos, Aietes' son; see Ap. Rh. iv.452-81 (Jason is single-handedly responsible for the murder of Apsyrtos); Pherekydes *FGrHist* 3 F32a-c (Jason participates with Medea in the murder). Other traditions instead deny Jason's involvement in the slaughter of Apsyrtos, thus placing the blame on Medea alone; see Eur. *Med.* 167, 1334; Apollod. *Bibl.* i.9.24. Needless to say, the scanty references to the Argonauts in Homeric epic do not allow us to reconstruct which strand of the tradition the poet was drawing upon.

Menelaos introduces the simile of an *oloophrōn* boar because this animal embodies lack of self-restraint more so than leopard and lion; as the relative clause underlines, the boar embodies this trait to the greatest extent possible (*megistos*). Yet, even the boar's notorious inability to curb its own *thumos* is surpassed by Euphorbos and Hyperenor, the former for the bold threats he has just uttered, the latter for the taunting attitude displayed in the past. Immediately after the simile Menelaos proceeds to underscore the consequences of Hyperenor's audacity by lingering on the Trojan's untimely death he himself dealt him and on the sense of loss Hyperenor's demise will cause to his parents and his spouse.

Prior to the simile embedded in Menelaos' response, Euphorbos did not explicitly mention seeking revenge against Menelaos for his brother's death; he seemed solely preoccupied with hanging on to Patroklos' corpse as a tangible proof of his own *kleos* (*Il.* xvii.12-7). Consequently, the destructive-minded boar simile used by Menelaos may be viewed as instrumental in evoking the theme of fraternal revenge. Following the simile, Menelaos in fact reminds Euphorbos of his brother's fate and of the grief of his parents and sister-in-law. In his reply, Euphorbos does not fail to pick up on Menelaos' cue clarifying how family revenge now takes precedence over *kleos*.²⁷ Instead of acting out of concern for his personal glory, Euphorbos now clearly seeks retribution from Menelaos,

²⁷ *Il.* xvii.34-40: νῦν μὲν δὴ Μενέλαε διοτρεφὲς ἦ μάλα τείσεις | γνωτὸν ἐμὸν τὸν ἔπεφνες, ἐπυχόμενος δ' ἄγορεύεις, | χήρωσας δὲ γυναῖκα μυχῶ θαλάμοιο νέοιο, | ἄρητὸν δὲ τοκεῦσι γόον καὶ πένθος ἔθηκας. | ἦ κέ σφιν δειλοῖσι γόου κατάπαυμα γενοίμην | εἴ κεν ἐγὼ κεφαλὴν τε τεῖην καὶ τεύχε' ἐνείκας | Πάνθῳ ἐν χεῖρεσσι βάλω καὶ Φρόντιδι δίῃ ([Euphorbos speaking] "Now, Menelaos, nurtured by Zeus, will you indeed pay the price for my brother whom you killed-and you speak boastfully about it-; you made his wife a widow depriving her of new bridal chamber, and brought unspeakable grief and sorrow upon his parents. I could relieve them, poor wretched folks, of their pain if I manage to bring back your head and armor and lay them in the hands of Panthoös and noble Phrontis").

acting as proxy for his parents and Hyperenor's wife in retaliation for an attack against his *oikos*, namely the slaughter of his brother; he will eventually die in the attempt (*Il.* xvii.43-60). The destructive-minded boar metaphor becomes the turning point in the transition to Euphorbos' newly found motivation for his conduct against Menelaos. The shift of perspective toward the theme of family vengeance is prefigured by Menelaos' application of the adjective *oloophrōn* to the animal. Further, the boar similes scattered throughout the *Iliad* are often peculiarly employed to illustrate resilience in the face of dangerous situations where characters under attack resort to counter-aggression and self-defense.²⁸ Therefore, Menelaos associates properly the imagery of the boar, emblem of counter-reaction to aggression, with *oloophrōn* which pinpoints the more specific case of responses to attacks against one's *oikos*; noun and adjective are then mutually compatible and actually reinforce one another.

On a superficial level, Menelaos targets Hyperenor and Euphorbos by using the wild-boar simile as a negative exemplar of trust in one's strength degenerating into overconfidence;²⁹ on a deeper one, he subtly employs the metaphor of the destructive-minded boar in order to present Euphorbos with a compelling behavioral model, namely retaliation on behalf of his household. Reminding Euphorbos of his parents and sister-in-law's sorrow expands on the subtler meaning of the simile and makes the necessity for

²⁸ Kirk (1990) 139, 269; Hainsworth (1993) 271. Beside Euphorbos and Hyperenor, other epic characters are compared with boars in the *Iliad*: Idomeneus (twice, iv.253; xiii.470-7); Ajax, son of Telamon (twice, xvii.281-2; xvii.725-34, along with the other Ajax); the Akhaian host as a whole (twice; viii.338-42; xi.292-5); Odysseus (xi.414-20); Hektor (xii.41-50); Patroklos (xvi.823-8). The boar similes also mark individuals' reliance on their exceptional strength, a trait common to other animal similes.

²⁹ It is worth observing that the narrative of the Trojan warrior's death does not mention at any point that Hyperenor taunted Menelaos (*Il.* xiv.516-9), as the latter now claims. Edwards (1991) 65 attributes the inconsistency between Menelaos' report and the narrative in book fourteen to the oral nature of the poem.

family vengeance explicit. Only after Menelaos' words does Euphorbos act like a destructive-minded boar by taking upon himself a defensive role in response to Menealos' injury to his family, the killing of Hyperenor. Similarly, destructive-minded Minos assumed a defensive role against Theseus for snatching Ariadne away from Crete in passage #2. That the two passages are related to one another is also supported by the striking contiguity of *oloophrōn* with the expression *oud' aponēto* (*Il.* xvii.21 and 24-25, with *Od.* xi.322 and 324). Although the characters' roles do not correspond, the two episodes clearly display the same motifs: a destructive-minded individual (Minos; Euphorbos) responding to an attack on his household (the abduction of Ariadne; the murder of Hyperenor), joy denied (Theseus; Hyperenor), and death (Ariadne; Euphorbos). As in the story of Euphorbos *oloophrōn* applies to a wild boar, the paradigm of counterattack, so in passage #2 does it apply to Minos in his protective capacity of guardian over his kingdom (and household) stated in #1.

The third case attesting to the use of *oloophrōn* in the context of family vengeance occurs as Hektor is likened to a destructive-minded lion (*Il.* xv.630), the text to follow later. First, this simile needs to be understood in its broader context. Zeus planned on tilting temporarily the balance of the war in favor of the Trojans because he felt bound to fulfill the promise he had previously made to Thetis in response to her request (*Il.* i.503-10) that he grant victory to the Trojans until the Akhaians conferred due honor on her son, Akhilleus. Her demand was motivated by Akhilleus' fate (505-6) and by Agamemnon's theft from Akhilleus of Briseis, her son's *geras* (506-7). On the brink of Akhilleus' imminent death and enraged at Agamemnon's affront, Thetis exacts from

Zeus a promise of reprisal against the Akhaians for both slights to her *oikos*. At *Il.* xv.596-604³⁰, fulfilling his promise, Zeus enhances Hektor's martial prowess in order to inflict a temporary defeat on the Akhaians. The god thus acquiesces to Thetis' request that he take revenge upon Agamemnon's behavior toward Akhilleus. Just as Euphorbos acted as a proxy for his parents Panthoös and Phrontis to avenge his brother, so does Zeus act vicariously for Thetis, using Hektor as an instrument of her revenge.

The poetic landscape is then prepared for the description of Hektor as destructive-minded, in that his actions are guided by Zeus and meant to retaliate for Agamemnon's slight to Akhilleus. After an accumulation of other similes where Hektor is likened to Ares (*Il.* xv.605-10), the Akhaians to a reef (618-22), Hektor again to a raging surge, and the Akhaians to a ship thrown about in the sea (623-29), the Trojan warrior is eventually compared to an *oloophrōn* lion (630-8):

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ὥς τε λέων ὀλοόφρων βουσὶν ἐπελθὼν,
αἶ ῥά τ' ἐν εἰαμενῇ ἔλεος μεγάλοιο νέμονται
μυρίαί, ἐν δέ τε τῇσι νομεὺς οὐ πω σάφα εἰδὼς
θηρὶ μαχέσασθαι ἔλικος βοὸς ἀμφὶ φονῆσιν·
ἦτοι δὲ μὲν πρόωπῃσι καὶ ὑστατίῃσι βόεσσιν
αἰὲν ὁμοστιχάει, δὲ δέ τ' ἐν μέσσησιν ὀρούσας
βοῶν ἔδει, αἶ δέ τε πᾶσαι ὑπέτρσαν· ὥς τότε Ἀχαιοὶ
θεσπεσίως ἐφόβηθεν ὑφ' Ἑκτορι καὶ Διὶ πατρὶ
πάντες.

³⁰ *Il.* xv.596-604: Ἑκτορι γὰρ οἱ θυμὸς ἐβούλετο κῦδος ὀρέξαι | Πριαμίδῃ, ἵνα νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν
θεσπιδᾶς πῦρ | ἐμβάλοι ἀκάματον, Θέτιδος δ' ἐξαΐσιον ἀρῆν | πᾶσαν ἐπικρῆναι· τὸ γὰρ μένε
μητίετα Ζεὺς | νηὸς καιομένης σέλας ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ιδέσθαι. | ἐκ γὰρ δὴ τοῦ μέλλε παλίωξιν παρὰ
νηῶν | θησέμεναι Τρώων, Δαναοῖσι δὲ κῦδος ὀρέξειν. | τὰ φρονέων νήεσσιν ἐπὶ γλαφυρῆσιν
ἐγειρεν | Ἑκτορα Πριαμίδην μάλα περ μεμαῶτα καὶ αὐτόν (For his [Zeus'] heart was set on giving
glory to Hektor, son of Priam, so that upon the beaked ships tireless fire he might cast and Thetis' unholy
prayer utterly fulfill. For Zeus the counselor waited for this moment, to behold with his eyes the glare of a
burning ship; after that he was to ordain a withdrawal of the Trojans from the ships, and to grant glory to
the Danaans. With this in mind, he was rousing against the hollow ships Hektor son of Priam, eager though
he was already on his own).

But he fell upon them like a destructive-minded lion on cows
that are grazing in the bottom-land of a great marsh,
countless, and among them is a herdsman as yet unskilled
to fight with a beast over the carcass of a slaughtered cow;
the man, now among the foremost cows, now among the hindmost,
always walks alongside them, but the lion leaps in the middle
and devours a heifer, and they all flee in terror; thus then the Akhaians
in wondrous wise were all terrified by Hektor and Zeus father.

The simile of a destructive-minded lion appears then significantly in the context of family vengeance enacted by Zeus through Hektor on behalf of Thetis. The final remark appended to the simile about the Akhaians being frightened by Hektor *and* Zeus together underscores once again that the Trojan's destructive conduct against the Akhaians aligns with Zeus' will and represents the fulfillment of Zeus' obligation to Thetis' plea.

I have kept the reference to the Titan Atlas as *oloophrōn* last, because this attestation, unlike the previous instances, presents only a likely, not decisive, connection with the theme of family vengeance. At *Od.* i.51-4 Athena describes Atlas as the destructive-minded father of Kalypso:

νήσος δεινδρήεσσα, θεὰ δ' ἐν δώματα ναίει,
Ἄτλαντος θυγάτηρ ὀλοόφρονος, ὅς τε θαλάσσης
πάσης βένθεα οἶδεν, ἔχει δέ τε κίονας αὐτὸς
μακράς, αἱ γαῖαν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσι.

"A wooded isle, and therein dwells a goddess [Kalypso],
daughter of destructive-minded Atlas, who of every sea
knows the depths, and by himself holds the tall pillars
which keep earth and heaven apart."

The epithet has perplexed both ancient and modern scholars alike.³¹ I propose that the Homeric attribute be explained in light of Atlas' possible involvement in the

³¹ Finding no reason for a negative depiction of Atlas, Kleanthes proposed to replace *oloophronos* with *holoophronos*. By glossing the adjective τοῦ περὶ τῶν ὅλων φρονούντος ("the one who thinks about the whole world"), Kleanthes' emendation neatly anticipates the Titan's role of sky-holder detailed in the following relative clause. Aside from Kleanthes, other questionable solutions have been offered in an

Titanomachy. The Titanomachy described by Hesiod as a feud between the Titans, the brothers of Kronos, and the offspring of Kronos, the Olympian gods spearheaded by Zeus, may provide the context of family revenge suitable for explaining the Homeric reference to Atlas *oloophrōn*. Homer refers again incidentally to Atlas in the *Odyssey* (vii.245) as the father of Kalypso without contributing further information about the Titan. In Hesiod's *Theogony* Atlas, the *kraterophrōn* Titan (*Theog.* 509), is compelled by Zeus to carry the burden of supporting the sky (*Theog.* 517-520). He next appears after the battle of the Titans against the gods (*Theog.* 617-719) standing at the entrance to Tartaros and holding up the heavens (*Theog.* 746-8). Structural considerations help us to reconstruct the somewhat disconnected narrative. Hesiod caps the end of the Titan's battle with the brief description of Atlas' fate (*Theog.* 746-8) without claiming a causal relationship between the two. The use of parataxis, however, is a recognized mark of Hesiod's method of composition:³² it is reasonable, then, to assume that on the basis of contiguity Zeus' punishment of Atlas had something to do with the role he played in the Titanomachy. Moreover, the narrative of Zeus outwitting Kronos and compelling him to regurgitate his own sons (*Theog.* 493-7) closely precedes the first mention of Atlas (*Theog.* 509) and of the task willed by Zeus for him (*Theog.* 517-520); again contiguity

attempt to disengage the negative adjective from Atlas; for instance, taking *oloophronos* in connection with *thalassēs*, or reading *oloophrōn* instead of *oloophronos* and thus associating it with Kalypso. Cf. Armstrong (1949) 50. Scholia to the passage have instead preferred to retain the transmitted text attributing *oloophrōn* to Atlas' hostility as a Titan to the Olympian gods: Schol. H *Od.* i.52; Eusth. 1390.15. While accepting the reading of the scholia, modern scholars have proposed to interpret Atlas as the personification of a volcanic (hence, destructive-minded) mountain that might have seemed to tower straight from the sea (hence, Atlas who knows the depths of the sea). Armstrong (1949) 50 identifies Homeric Atlas with the peak of Tenerife; Matthews (1978) 232 opts for a location on the island of Thera. Both interpretations stem from Herodotos (iv.184.3), who locates Mt. Atlas in Africa.

³² See, for instance, Frazer (1981) 5-6.

may suggest that the actions for which Atlas was punished are connected with Zeus' overpowering of Kronos. If Atlas participated in the Titanomachy and the deception of Kronos by Zeus occurred before the epic struggle, as suggested by the sequence of events in the *Theogony* (the Olympian gods had first to be vomited up by Kronos in order to participate in the theomachy, cf. 624-6; 633-4),³³ Atlas *oloophrōn* in the *Odyssey* might aptly refer to his attempt to avenge his uncle Kronos.³⁴ Assuming that Atlas participated

³³ Later sources (*Orph. Frag.* 58 K.; *Apol. Bibl.* i.2.1)

³⁴ To be sure, the reconstruction proposed here remains speculative, yet tenable, given the loose structure of the Hesiodic narrative. This interpretation challenges three authoritative views of the Titanomachy held by modern scholars. First is the position (West [1966] 308, 310) that Atlas did not partake in the Titanomachy: had he done so, we would find him confined to Tartaros along with the other Titans; further, punishment in the *Theogony* may be unmotivated and not apportioned according to a character's fault. The arguments buttressing this view, however, are far from compelling. For one thing, in later sources Atlas' special punishment is attributed to his role as ringleader of the Titans (for instance, *Hyg. Fab.* 150); further, in the *Theogony* Zeus' retribution seems indeed to relate to a character's actions (most notably, the story of Prometheus). Even though Hesiod is silent about the reasons for the punishment of Atlas, the paratactic structure of *Theogony* suggests some involvement of Atlas in the Titanomachy, for which Zeus punished him; since Atlas' task of holding the skies appears also in the *Odyssey*, we may assume that Homer attributed the Titan's assignment to his role in the Titanomachy. The second view (West [1966] 273, 337; Mondi [1984] 334-6 with n. 28) attributes the instigation of the Titanomachy to Zeus and the Olympian gods. Due to the level of familiarity with the Titanomachy that Hesiod presupposed on the part of his audience (Mondi [1986] 36), the poet did not dwell on the origins of the Titanomachy and limits himself to recount the epilogue of the ten-year struggle; the only possible reference to the outset of the battle (*Theog.* 390-6) has been understood to mean that the Olympians started the hostilities in their attempt to overthrow the Titans. The Titanomachy, then, ought not to be construed as a war waged by the Titans to retaliate for Zeus' aggression against Kronos and, accordingly, Atlas *oloophrōn* of *Odyssey* could not be read in the context of familial revenge. However, this view that sees the Olympians as aggressors against the Titans in the *Theogony* is based on a passage that does not in fact shed any light on the genesis of the Titanomachy. Rather, the passage recounts the arguments Zeus used to rally support from other gods for the battle against the Titans, namely the concession of adequate privileges, and the reason why the god accorded special honors to Styx and her children, the first deities to adhere to Zeus' side. That the Hesiodic narration was ambiguous on the question of responsibility for the outbreak of the war is suggested by a similar ambiguity in later traditions. For instance, Aeschylus (*PV* 201-24) has Prometheus recall the war, but the character only talks of a general *cholos* and reciprocal *stasis* amongst the gods without indicating from which part the offensive was first carried out. In later antiquity the Titanomachy is cast decidedly as a revolt of the Titans against Zeus (Diod. Sic. iii.61.4; *Hyg. Fab.* 150; *schol. B Il.* xv.229). Several references to the Titanomachy in the *Iliad* suggest that the author envisaged the battle as a rebellion of the Titans against Zeus. At *Il.* xv.222-5 Zeus remarks that Poseidon managed to avoid his wrath by ceasing to meddle with the Trojan war and thus finally submitting to his will. He reminds Apollo of the dire consequences of defying his orders; other gods, who now live under the earth along with Kronos, Zeus continues, remember the ensuing *machē* to their own chagrin. Here Zeus draws a parallel between Poseidon's rebellion and the Titans' war; for the comparison to work Zeus must be casting the Titanomachy as a revolt against his authority much like

in the Titanomachy on the basis of Hesiod's paratactic composition and presupposing that the *Odyssey* referred to the same myth of Atlas developed later by Hesiod, Atlas *oloophrōn* might well indicate his involvement in the Titanomachy as avenger on behalf of his uncle Kronos, deceived (and perhaps dethroned) by Zeus' trickery. Destructive-mindedness strikes here against a close relative: Atlas is exacting revenge upon his own nephew Zeus.³⁵

Poseidon's disobedience. Along the same lines, at *Il.* viii.7-16 Zeus threatened to hurl into Tartaros any gods failing to comply with his orders and interfering in the Trojan war. However slender, the evidence in the *Iliad* points to the Titanomachy as a revolt against Zeus' authority; combined with the fact that the outwitting of Kronos by Zeus and the liberation of the Olympians precede the war in the *Theogony*, the notion of the Titanomachy as a war undertaken by the Titans on behalf of Kronos against Zeus and the other sons of Kronos gains credibility. In this context, the qualification of Atlas as *oloophrōn* in the *Odyssey* fits the pattern discerned elsewhere. The reduplicated narrative of Zeus' rise to kingship, *i.e.* his deception of Kronos and the Titanomachy, presents the third and final obstacle to the position argued here. Scholars have maintained that Hesiod was the first to juxtapose these two traditions, originally unrelated to one another on the basis that Kronos is notably absent from the Titanomachy (Mondi [1984] 336, 343-4). If these two traditions were unconnected until their conflation in Hesiod's *Theogony*, we should assume that Homer knew of them as separate tales too; consequently, if the myth of Kronos had nothing to do with the Titanomachy prior to Hesiod, Atlas *oloophrōn* of *Odyssey* cannot be viewed within the context of family vengeance. This view, though, does not take into account that at *Il.* xv.224-5 the Titans share Kronos' fate and are detained along with him in the depths of Tartaros for their defiant war against Zeus. This shared punishment confirms that the Titans must have fought alongside Kronos already in the *Iliad*.

³⁵ Why of all the Titans mentioned in Homeric epic (Tethys, Okeanos, Hyperion, Iapetos, Themis; see *Il.* xiv.201, 302; *Il.* xiv.201, 246; xviii.606; xx.7; *Od.* xii.176; *Il.* viii.479; *Il.* xv.87, 93; xx.5; *Od.* ii.68) Atlas alone earned the epithet may depend on two factors; first, his prominent role as ringleader of the insurrection attested in later sources and perhaps known already in archaic epic; second, his fathering of Kalypso, the goddess who manages to delay Odysseus' return to Ithaka. As we have seen, *oloophrōn* also defines king Aietes, brother to Kirke, a goddess who plays a part similar, if not identical, to Kalypso's in postponing Odysseus' *nostos*. Tracing destructive-mindedness into the family line of these two goddesses aims to underscore their inborn dangerous nature and justifies their ability to thwart the hero's voyage. Atlas' relation to Kalypso, therefore, makes him more suitable for the epithet *oloophrōn* than the other Titans. Finally, in order to understand the implications of the clause specifying that Atlas knows the depths of the sea, we have to turn to the only other character in the *Odyssey* who shares the same characteristic (*Od.* iv.385-6: ὅς τε θαλάσσης | πάσης βένθεα οἶδεν), the divine seaman Proteus. Alongside this knowledge of the sea, Proteus is equally well-versed in destructive practices, *olophōia eidōs* (*Od.* iv.460; cf. *ibid.* 410), an adjective which has to mean destructive rather than deceptive (from *ollumi* rather than *elephairomai*; cf. Heubeck [1988] 220; Russo [1992] 30-1). Since expertise of the sea goes hand in hand with mastery of destructive arts in the case of Proteus, the same may hold true for Atlas; Atlas' knowledge of the sea then serves to reiterate what the literal meaning of *oloophrōn* already announced, namely his propensity for destructiveness.

While a response to crimes against one's family, destructive-mindedness also identifies a monarch's reaction to attacks leveled against his kingdom. The last expression reminiscent of *oloophrōn* occurs in the narrator's description of Patroklos' bold attack against Troy. Elated by the slaughter he inflicted upon the Trojans, Patroklos attempts to climb up the city wall; his audacity is eventually frustrated by Apollo's intervention (*Il.* xvi.699-702):

Ἐνθά κεν ὑψίπυλον Τροίην ἔλον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
 Πατρόκλου ὑπὸ χειρσί, περὶ πρὸ γὰρ ἔγχεϊ θύεν,
 εἰ μὴ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος ἐϋδμήτου ἐπὶ πύργου
 ἔστη τῷ ὀλοᾷ φρονέων, Τρώεσσι δ' ἀρήγων.

The sons of the Akhaians would have conquered lofty-towered Troy,
 at the hands of Patroklos -he was raging around with his spear like nobody else-,
 had Phoibos Apollo not stood in front of the well-built tower,
 harboring destructive thoughts (*oloa phroneōn*) against him, and defending the Trojans.

As Apollo shields the Trojans from Patroklos' rampage, he contemplates destructive thoughts, *oloa phroneōn*, against the Akhaian enemy. The intertextual clue (*oloa phroneōn*; *oloophrōn*) linking this passage with #2 establishes a significant analogy between the roles of Apollo and Minos, and of Patroklos and Theseus. On the one hand, Minos' guardianship of Crete (#1: Κρήτη ἐπίουρον) corresponds to Apollo's defensive role over Troy (Τρώεσσι δ' ἀρήγων), which is understandable since both exemplify the definition of *anax*,³⁶ that is the king in his capacity as guardian of the community he lords over.³⁷ On the other hand, both Patroklos and Theseus acted, respectively, against a community and a family placed under the protection of an *anax*, although with opposite

³⁶ Minos in #3; Apollo first at *Il.* i.36.

³⁷ Chantraine (1968), s.v. *anax* ("protecteur"). As opposed to *basileus*, which is used to identify kingly authority in an absolute sense, *anax* commonly expresses the idea of sovereignty over and on behalf of the subjects: Descat (1979) 232.

outcomes. Patroklos tried to conquer Troy by directly assaulting its last standing defense, but failed because of Apollo's prompt reaction; Theseus on his part managed to harm the foremost *oikos* of Crete (or of Knossos) by snatching Ariadne and effectively eluding Minos' watch.³⁸ Both *anactes*, then, become destructive-minded only to protect their communities from external attack: the case of Minos is only more specific, in that the Cretan king suffers an aggression against his own family. Even so, destructive-mindedness represents an unavoidable consequence of the king's defensive duties. Furthermore, despite the immediate upshot of their actions, namely failure for Patroklos and success for Theseus, divine retribution finally catches up with both heroes. Apollo will in fact orchestrate Patroklos' demise;³⁹ similarly, Theseus does not escape divine payback for his abduction of Ariadne. In passage #2 the hero finally "had no joy" of the maiden, because she prematurely passed away at the hands of Artemis en route to Athens. The expression *oud' aponēto* ("had no joy") may be construed as a remark with a tinge of moral reproach directed at Theseus, whose action in abducting Ariadne did not eventually afford him any long-term profit.⁴⁰ In conclusion, Theseus' abduction of Ariadne from

³⁸ Minos' role as *epiourous* must have entailed protecting Crete's inhabitants, including his daughter. Eumaïos, as *epiourous* of Odysseus' swine (*Od.* xiii.405; xv.39), is entrusted with defending the swine against theft.

³⁹ Apollo's qualification as *oloa phroneōn*, beside referring to his immediate warding off of Patroklos' assault, also looks forward to the treacherous behavior of the god, who will later strip Patroklos of his defensive accoutrements, thus making him an easy target for Euphorbos' spear first and then for Hektor's (*Il.* xvi.787-821).

⁴⁰ The three-line scrap can hardly be construed as an Athenian interpolation designed to glorify Theseus (see p. 13, n. 19); it is at best neutral toward the hero's behavior, or even possibly slightly negative as implied by the comment "had no joy". Above all, I would be hesitant to associate passage #2 with the later Attic mythography aimed at elevating Theseus to the detriment of Minos because Homer's brief story of Ariadne's death on the island of Dia does not figure in any later versions of the myth that generally have Ariadne become Dionysos' lover on the island of Naxos (e.g. Plut. *Thes.* 20); this confirms that the subsequent traditions are not connected with, and developed independently from, the short Homeric passage. Furthermore, Athenian writers went to great lengths in trying to exculpate Theseus' behavior

Crete, the island over which Minos is said to preside, motivates the king's description as destructive-minded: Minos' reaction is a defense against an external enemy who threatens the welfare of the royal household much like Apollo's stand to protect the Trojans against Patroklos. Minos *oloophrōn* (#2), then, flows from the king's custody over Crete (#1: *epioulos*).

In sum, destructive-mindedness points to retributive, not to gratuitous violence.⁴¹ Destructive thinking seems to arise as a response to injuries perpetrated against an individual's honor (Agamemnon; Akhilleus), his family or, on a larger scale, a community under the aegis of an *anax* (Apollo against Patroklos). Injuries to families range from the abduction of a daughter (Ariadne by Theseus; Medea by Jason) to the murder of a brother (Patroklos by Hektor; Hyperenor by Menelaos), even to slights against one's status (Agamemnon's theft of Briseis from Akhilleus; Zeus' overpowering of Kronos). When bent on family revenge, the *oloophrōn* individual takes matters into his own hands (Akhilleus; Aietes; Euphorbos; Atlas) or has his revenge implemented vicariously (Thetis, in which case the characterization of destructive-mindedness

toward Ariadne; Pherekydes, for one, had Theseus leave Ariadne stranded at the bidding of Athena (*FGrHist* 3 F148). Deserting Ariadne ought to have been indeed a quite disturbing episode for Athenian propaganda in its effort to promote Theseus as national hero, to the extent that the incident is rarely represented on Attic vases: Miller (1997) 251. If the Homeric passage was, then, as commonly assumed, an Athenian creation, I think it likely that either the abandonment of Ariadne would not have been mentioned altogether or that some sort of justification for Theseus' actions would be in order, such as Athena's orders in Pherekydes' apology of the hero.

⁴¹ The only instance where it cannot be demonstrated that destructive-mindedness shapes up as a response to an injury is when *oloophrōn* labels the treacherous serpent that bit Philoktetes (*Il.* ii.723). This is also the only occurrence where an animal is called destructive-minded, as opposed to the similes of the *oloophrōn* boar and lion, both of which are ultimately relevant for humans. Arguably, Philoktetes might have somehow provoked the snake's destructive reaction (*e.g.* by stepping on it), but the text does not provide sufficient details to draw conclusions.

transfers onto the actual executor, Hektor). The object of destructive-mindedness is usually limited to the perpetrator of the crime against the family (Jason; Hektor; Menelaos; Zeus); in one case, retribution grows to encompass an entire army (Thetis strikes at Agamemnon by having the Akhaians punished through Hektor). At times destructive mindedness is successful in seeking revenge (Apollo on Patroklos; Akhilleus on Hektor), at times it fails to do so (Aietes on Jason; Euphorbos on Menelaos; Atlas on Zeus), and in one case it is largely unsuccessful (Hektor's rampage on the Akhaians willed by Thetis results in the death of just one warrior; cf. *Il.* xv.638-40).

Since all the examples above point to a consistent use of the adjective *oloophrōn* deployed to identify an individual's reaction to external events affecting him personally, his family or even his community, this inquiry has demonstrated that the definition of destructive-mindedness was engrained in epic. *Oloophrōn* was thus appropriately applied to Minos in that the adjective denotes the king's vengeful attitude against Theseus for the abduction of his daughter Ariadne. Accordingly, we need to abandon the prevalent view that considered passage #2 as an Athenian interpolation meant to revile Minos and praise Theseus. We shall now tackle the question of what type of revenge Minos undertook against Theseus. The answer is not to be found in Homer since the only other reference to Cretan mythology in the poem is of little help.⁴² For the most part, later versions of the myth do not seem to register Minos' vengeful actions against Theseus.⁴³ However, given

⁴² *Il.* xviii.590-2 (Daidalos has a ritual dance performed in Knossos for Ariadne).

⁴³ For instance, Jason even claims that Minos' anger toward Theseus tapered off (*Ap. Rh.* iii.1001-2), to the point that the two of them came to agree on having Ariadne sail off with the Athenian (*Ap. Rh.* iii.1101-2). Jason, however, is only concerned here with securing Medea's cooperation in the tasks imposed on him by Aietes; if Minos and Theseus reached an agreement, Medea should consequently feel confident that Aietes

the resemblance of their circumstances, we would expect a story along the lines of Aietes' pursuit of Medea and Jason. And indeed we hear from Pherekydes (*FGrHist* 3 F106) about Theseus' clever idea of staving in the Cretan ships to hinder the Cretans from sailing after him: the implication is that a chase by Minos would have occurred, were it not for hero's cunning. Moreover, Demon reports that Theseus was forced to sail his way out of the Cnossian harbor with Ariadne, thus causing the death of Minos' general Tauros dispatched to halt the hero's flight (*FGrHist* 327 F5 and 6). Although his is clearly a rationalization of the myth (the Tauros of Minos has to be the Minotaur), Demon's version confirms that Minos exacted revenge for the abduction of Ariadne by forcing Theseus to engage in a naval skirmish before he fled Crete.

Both authors, then, allude to Minos' retaliation against Theseus as a consequence of his daughter's abduction; the Cretan king's vengeful intents were thwarted by either the Athenian's shrewdness or his prowess. I take these two tales to represent a later example of the kind of revenge that the adjective *oloophrōn* in epic suggests Minos might have undertaken after Ariadne was kidnapped.⁴⁴ The fact that these two later accounts relate a frustration of Minos' vengeance squares with the possible failure a destructive-minded individual could incur in epic.⁴⁵

and Jason will do the same. Jason's recounting of the Theseus and Ariadne story is therefore consciously altering important details of the story and we cannot take at face value the resolution of the conflict between Theseus and Minos; Jason, after all, does not hesitate to leave out the tale of Ariadne's abandonment on Naxos in order to make his argument more persuasive to Medea.

⁴⁴ *Contra*, Calame (1990) 102 merely credits Pherekydes and Demon with gusto for enriching with new details the plot of the well-known episode of the abduction of Ariadne.

⁴⁵ The failure of Minos' attacks on Theseus might also be explained by the fact that both Pherekydes and Demon were Attidographers, who presented traditions favorable to the Attic hero.

Thus far, Minos' destructive-mindedness has been understood strictly in relation to the characters and circumstances mentioned in passage #2. Such an approach has steered us to identify Minos' destructive behavior toward Theseus *after* the abduction of Ariadne and has the advantage of finding a suitable parallel in the story of Aietes, Jason and Medea referred to in the *Odyssey*. Modern scholars have instead preferred to interpret the negative depiction of Minos as an allusion to the infamous tribute of seven maidens and youths that the Cretan king exacted from the Athenians; in other words, notwithstanding the lack of any explicit mention, they deem it likely that Homeric epic was acquainted with the complete Cretan saga, including the war of Minos against Athens and the sacrifice of the young Athenians to the Minotaur.⁴⁶ We do not know for certain whether epic knew of the entire saga of Minos and Theseus. However, following this perspective, I think that the adjective *oloophrōn* might also reference an episode relevant to the myth of Minos, which, addressed implicitly in the passage in question, is rooted in early epic, is compatible with the theme of family revenge posited for the adjective, and lends itself to explaining Minos' destructive attitude toward Theseus *prior* to the abduction of his daughter.

I am referring here to the story of Androgeos, son of Minos, probably developed already in a fragment from the *Catalogue of Women*, where the name of Androgeos

⁴⁶ Herter (1939) 258 n. 56; Matthews (1978) 230; Mills (1997) 18-19, n. 69; Maehler (2004) 173-4. These authors' claims hinge on the relative antiquity of traditions and artifacts representing the Minotaur and his fight with Theseus. While the first literary attestation of the Minotaur is found in [Hesiod] *Fragm.* 145 M-W, eighth-century bronze tripods from Olympia already carry decorations with a bull-headed man; if this creature actually represents the Minotaur (and not just any monster), his fight with Theseus must have been known in the eighth century BCE. For both literary and material evidence on the Minotaur, and problems of interpretation, see Walker (1995) 16-7 with notes.

appears in a poorly preserved portion of the papyrus preceding the account of the Minotaur's birth.⁴⁷ Although the details are not clear given the poor condition of the papyrus, the fragment may have alluded to the story of Androgeos as we know it from later sources:⁴⁸ the death of the young Androgeos in Attica after the Panathenaia occasioned Minos' war against the Athenians, a war that ended with the victory of the Cretan king resulting in the imposition of the gruesome tribute of fourteen Athenian youths. The fragment attests to the knowledge of Androgeos in early epic, and therefore gives credit to the assumption that the Homeric poems may have been familiar with this character, too. The interest in the story of Androgeos is not just occasional in early epic, since to Hesiod was also attributed a verse where the poet provided the other name by which Androgeos was known, namely Eurygyes:⁴⁹

†Εὐρυγύης δ' ἔτι κοῦρος Ἀθηναίων ἱερῶν†
Eurygyes, still a youth, of the sacred Athenians.

Hesychios here reports a verse from Hesiod to corroborate the existence of an athletic competition that the Athenians set up in memory of Eurygyes/Androgeos in the Kerameikos where the son of Minos was buried. Unable to make sense of the text as handed down, editors have proposed the following emendations:

Εὐρυγύηι δ' ἔπι κοῦροι Ἀθηνάων ἱερῶν
In honor of Eurygyes the youths of sacred Athens. (Dindorf)

Εὐρυγύηι δ' ἔτι κοῦροι Ἀθηναίων <*** Ἀθηνάων> ἱερῶν
For Eurygyes still nowadays, the youths of sacred Athens. (West)

⁴⁷ [Hesiod] Fragm. 145 M-W (1.9).

⁴⁸ Philoc. *FGrHist* 328 F17; [Pl.] *Minos* 321a; Diod. Sic. iv.60.4; Apollod. iii.15.7-8; Paus. i.27.10; Plut. *Thes.* 16.1. See Calame (1990) 79-81.

⁴⁹ [Hesiod] Fragm. 146 M-W.

Importantly for our purposes, both editors found the attribute “sacred” given to the Athenians puzzling and intervened to erase the iota, thus reading Athens instead of Athenians. If the emendation is correct, “sacred Athens” caps the verse here as it does in passage #2 at line 323.⁵⁰ While this might be a mere coincidence owing to the needs of meter, the epithet “sacred Athens” occurs only in these two instances throughout early epic and appears just twice in later classical literature.⁵¹ I submit that the epithet in passage #2 might then belong to an ensemble of stock formulae employed by early epic poets when relating the story of Androgeos. Some of the later prose accounts attest indeed to the sacredness of Athens as they associate the death of Minos’ son with the conclusion of the Panathenaia in the city.⁵² Similarly, the original story should have set the murder of Androgeos in connection with an Athenian festival, later identified with the Panathenaia, during which Athens could be legitimately called “sacred”. The epithet was not thereafter associated with Athens, perhaps because it reminded the Athenians of the notorious incident.⁵³ The description of Athens as sacred in passage #2 may then be understood as an allusion to the killing of Androgeos, the blame for which was placed on

⁵⁰ Huxley (1969) 118 noticed it first.

⁵¹ Aristoph. *Eq.* 1037; 1319.

⁵² Diod. Sic. iv.60.4; Apollod. iii.15.7-8.

⁵³ Another reason for the rare use of the epithet in later literature might lie in its expressing a non-permanent quality of Athens, regarded as a holy place only in concomitance with religious occasions and/or with sporadic, yet wondrous events. This seems indeed to be the case in Aristoph. *Eq.* 1319, where the chorus leader pompously greets Sausage Seller as “light of sacred Athens” (ὦ ταῖς ἱεραῖς φέγγος Ἀθηναῖς) at a time when the city is ready to celebrate with the scent of sacrifices (1320) the miraculous rejuvenation of Demos. The other instance of the epithet from Aristophanes (*Eq.* 1037) is found in the oracle prophesizing that a woman will give birth to a lion “in sacred Athens”; the formula seems again occasioned by the mention of a miracle, although here not related to a particular celebration.

Athens in non-Athenian traditions.⁵⁴ If, as I suggest, passage #2 should not be understood as an Athenian interpolation,⁵⁵ the epithet there does not pay homage to the city nor does it represent an inherent quality of Athens, but rather references the (temporary) status that the city achieved for the duration of a religious festival linked with the murder of Androgeos. The formula “sacred Athens” is introduced to recall the Androgeos episode, thus engaging with the adjective *oloophrōn* applied to Minos: the king’s destructive-mindedness is determined by the loss of his son and relates once more to the theme of family revenge that the adjective has been shown to imply in Homeric epic. Minos’ destructive-mindedness describes the attitude of a father who has taken revenge upon the Athenians for his son’s assassination and intends to do so upon their representative, Theseus.

In conclusion, the adjective *oloophrōn* underscores in Homeric epic responses to external attacks, often launched against the family of the destructive-minded individual, who then proceeds to implement his revenge. This interpretation of the adjective fits the case of Minos in passage #2: the Cretan king can be thought of as displaying destructive behavior against Theseus for the abduction of his daughter Ariadne and/or the murder of

⁵⁴ Relics of these non-Athenian traditions are found in Diod. Sic. iv.60.4, where Androgeos was murdered for political reasons at the behest of the Athenian king Aigeus, and Apollod. iii.15.7-8, where Aigeus himself sent Androgeos to certain death against the bull of Marathon. Versions of the story that deny a direct involvement of the Athenians in the assassination of Androgeos (Paus. i.27.10, where the bull of Marathon kills the youth with Minos stubbornly refusing to believe in the Athenians’ innocence; Apollod. iii.15.7-8, where jealous fellow competitors carry out the murder), or betray skepticism about it (Plut. *Thes.* 16.1, where the author reports that Androgeos was *thought* to have been killed treacherously), must have been circulated in Athens in order to counter competing traditions that found the Athenians at fault and thus justified both Minos’ motivations for the war against them and the imposition of the tribute.

⁵⁵ Cf. also p. 13, n. 19 and p. 29, n. 40.

his son Androgeos. Minos is qualified as *oloophrōn* in that he was viewed as avenger on behalf of his family.

Minos *Oloophrōn*: Destructive-Mindedness and Epic Kingship

In the previous section, we explored the case of Minos *oloophrōn*, who aimed his destructive mind at Theseus in passage #2 in retaliation for an injury to his family, as corroborated by other instances in which the adjective or equivalent expressions marked individuals responding to external aggressions against their *oikos*. In comparing Minos' case with that of Apollo fending off Patroklos' attack on Troy, we also noted that destructive-mindedness has a bearing on epic monarchy. Minos and Apollo are both *anactes* who turn on their destructive-mindedness in order to protect their communities from external attack. In other words, destructive thinking, when directed against outsiders on behalf of both a king's subjects and family, represents a positive aspect of monarchy and derives from the monarch's custody over his territory: for this reason, Minos was called *epiourōs*, guardian of Crete in passage #1, an epithet meant to emphasize the king's defensive duties for his community.

I contend now that the adjective *oloophrōn* applied to Minos may also highlight a more sinister side to the epic kings' otherwise positive representation of destructive-mindedness. An expression synonymous with *oloophrōn* describes in fact Agamemnon's destructive attitude towards his own subjects, a meaning that the compound form

oloophrōn, I argue, conveys also for Minos in #2: the adjective thus denotes the king's destructive behavior against his subjects and not exclusively against his contender Theseus, as commonly held.⁵⁶

The expression reminiscent of *oloophrōn* is found at *Il.* i.342-4, where Akhilleus complains about Agamemnon's deplorable lack of foresight.

[...] ἦ γὰρ ὃ γ' ὀλοιῆσι φρεσὶ θύει,
οὐδέ τι οἶδε νοῆσαι ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω,
ὅπως οἱ παρὰ νηυσὶ σόοι μαχέοιντο Ἀχαιοί.

“For Agamemnon is actually raging with destructive mind (*oloiēsi phresi thuei*), he is not able at all to consider both past and future at the same time, how his Akhaians might fight unscathed beside the ships.”

As the two heralds dispatched by Agamemnon carry away Briseis, Akhilleus underscores the disastrous consequences of the king's action. The hero has just emphasized how his prowess in the battlefield had guaranteed the safety of his Akhaian comrades-in-arms hitherto (*Il.* i.340-2). His withdrawal from the battlefield in response to the taking of Briseis will predictably cause numerous losses in the ranks of the Akhaians. Akhilleus here criticizes Agamemnon's failure to grasp that his participation in the war has safeguarded the Akhaians in the past as well as that it will be vital for their survival in the future.⁵⁷ Akhilleus blames the combination of rage (*thuei*) and *oloiai phrenes* for stirring such an emotional turmoil in Agamemnon as to cloud his judgment. Therefore, in the eyes of Akhilleus, Agamemnon's *phrenes* are destructive because the king ultimately

⁵⁶ See p. 13, n. 19.

⁵⁷ The expression νοῆσαι ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω refers to drawing upon the experience of the past in order to predict what will occur in the future; Kirk (1985) 87; Caswell (1990) 24. *Contra*, Sullivan (1988) 77, who interprets less convincingly “immediate future and more distant future.” For a list of supporters of each interpretation, see Sullivan (1988) 106, n. 18.

fails to ensure protection for his own Akhaians.⁵⁸ Although *phrenes* are most often involved in determining an individual's conscious decisions and choices,⁵⁹ it has also been recognized that the presence of emotions may impair their proper functioning.⁶⁰ The passage above describes precisely a malfunction of Agamemnon's *phrenes* that under the compulsion of anger become destructive and do not perform an appropriate rational process as they normally do, leading him to act against what should be his objective, namely, the well-being of his soldiers. Destructive-mindedness seems to be used as a synonym for the (temporary) loss of one's mind⁶¹ because it certainly entails a component of self-destruction; endangering the Akhaians is obviously a self-defeating policy for Agamemnon that makes his destructive-mindedness hardly interpretable as a rational activity. In sum, Agamemnon's destructive-mindedness is concomitant with anger, affects adversely his subjects, the Akhaians, and eludes paradoxically his control of reason.

Agamemnon, however, is also capable of displaying what I construe as a rational kind of destructive-mindedness. Odysseus voices a significant concern about Agamemnon's behavior to the leaders of the Akhaians who are ready to desert the field and journey back home (*Il.* ii.192-7):

⁵⁸ Envisaging that the Akhaians might fight unscathed is not a "needless paradox" due to an unskilled rhapsodic expansion, as Kirk (1985) 87 holds. Rather, this image serves Akhilleus' argument in that it overemphasizes the benefits of his contribution to the war. More reasonably, his military expertise in the battlefield may be thought to increase the chances of survival of the other Akhaians.

⁵⁹ Sullivan (1994a) 109; Sullivan (1994b) 11 (with instances from Homer in nn. 16 and 17); Sullivan (2001) 212-3; Collobert (2002/3) 204.

⁶⁰ Sullivan (1988) 77, 183; Caswell (1990) 24.

⁶¹ Significantly, Agamemnon will attribute in hindsight his ill decisions to the absence of *phrenes*, "stolen" by Zeus (*Il.* xix.136).

οὐ γάρ πω σάφα οἶσθ' οἷος νόος Ἀτρεΐωνος·
 νῦν μὲν πειρᾶται, τάχα δ' ἵψεται υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν.
 ἐν βουλῇ δ' οὐ πάντες ἀκούσαμεν οἶον ἔειπε.
 μή τι χολωσάμενος ῥέξῃ κακὸν υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν·
 θυμὸς δὲ μέγας ἐστὶ διοτρεφέων βασιλῆων,
 τιμὴ δ' ἐκ Διὸς ἐστὶ, φιλεῖ δέ ἐ μητίετα Ζεὺς.

“For you do not know yet for sure what is the mind (*noos*) of Atreus’ son;
 now he is just testing you, but soon he will press hard on the sons of the Akhaians.
 Did we not all hear what he said in the council?
 Beware lest Agamemnon in a fit of rage (*cholōsamenos*) may harm the sons of the Akhaians.
 Great is the *thumos* of the god-nourished kings (*diotrepheis basileis*),
 Their prestige stems from Zeus, Zeus the counselor is fond (*philei*) of them.”

Approaching the Akhaian chiefs one by one, Odysseus appeals to the inscrutability of Agamemnon’s *noos* to make them realize that the king, should anger take hold of him (*cholōsamenos*), may be concocting secret hurtful plans against them. Two important clues point to the identification of this passage as one instance of Agamemnon’s destructive mindedness even in the absence of the specific term. First, the target of Agamemnon’s hurtful behavior is again the Akhaians, just as in the previous passage. Second, the king’s harmfulness is thought to manifest itself when Agamemnon surrenders to anger (*cholos*), a situation which resembles the angry state of Agamemnon raging with his destructive mind (*oloiēisi phresi thuei*).⁶² In the present passage, then, Agamemnon’s anger will result in the victimization of the Akhaians, a pattern that defines Agamemnon’s destructive-mindedness in the former passage, but differs in that Odysseus here credits the king with a rational and conscious decision to hurt the Akhaians, unlike in the previous instance where Agamemnon does not intentionally plan to harm his men.

Consequently, Agamemnon’s destructive-mindedness is paradoxical in that it represents a failure of the king’s intellect, but at the same time may operate in full

⁶² Caswell (1990) 39 suggests that this expression is equivalent to *cholos*.

compliance with it. In both cases, destructive-mindedness occurs in concomitance with the sovereign's anger (*thuei/cholos*)⁶³ and, whether intentional or not, always results in harm to his community and consequently to the king himself, thus approximating the notion of self-destruction.

An expression virtually equivalent to *oloophrōn*, thus, has been shown to designate a destructive quality of an epic king, Agamemnon, who was detrimental to his own *laoi*. When turned outwards, destructive-mindedness may be considered a positive characteristic for a community ruled by a king: in the previous section, we have observed that this quality complemented Minos' guardianship over Crete and was confirmed by the example of Apollo (see pp. 27-29). Destructive-mindedness may, however, be deployed also to the detriment of a community under the protection of an *anax*: destructive thinking was thus a characteristic of an epic monarch, both beneficial and harmful for his *laoi*.

In terms of monarchy's benefits for its community, beside destructive-mindedness turned on the enemy, an epic king such as Agamemnon was expected to apportion justice in the interests of his people. Nestor clearly articulates Agamemnon's duty (*Il.* ix.96-9):

Ἀτρεΐδῃ κύδιστε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγάμεμνον
ἐν σοὶ μὲν λήξω, σέο δ' ἄρξομαι, οὕνεκα πολλῶν
λαῶν ἐσσι ἄναξ καὶ τοι Ζεὺς ἐγγυάλιξε
σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισι βουλεύῃσθα.

“Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, king (*anax*) of men,
with you will I begin and with you make an end,
for of many hosts you are the king (*anax*), and to you Zeus has handed over

⁶³ Perhaps the dual nature of destructive-mindedness, both intentional and non-intentional, owes to its association with anger, *cholos*, which, it has been argued, usually displays rationality, but at times escapes the control of reason. Cf. Cairns (2003) 26.

scepter and judgments (*skēptron* and *themistes*), so that you deliberate for them.”

The king in his capacity as *anax* ought to warrant his community a prosperous future by making proper deliberations based on his knowledge of precedents (*themistes*)⁶⁴ and on the authority conferred to him by the possession of the scepter.⁶⁵

This “double-sidedness” of Agamemnon, at once nurturing destructive thoughts and still appointed by Zeus as a sceptered king in charge of ruling and deliberating on behalf of his *laoi*, ultimately stems from Zeus’ monarchy, which similarly exhibits the same two extremes. Although Homer does not use *oloophrōn* or similar expressions to describe the harmful side of Zeus’ rule, Zeus’ destructive behavior towards the Olympian gods closely resembles the human king’s destructiveness against his army. In light of Minos’ special position as son and intimate of Zeus in #4, it is worthwhile to explore in greater detail the characterization of Zeus in archaic epic.

Zeus, at once king and father of the gods, instills dread in them because of his behavior. For instance, Hephaistos wisely advises that his mother Hera avoid approaching Zeus tactlessly for fear that he might extend his wrath even to all the other gods and banish them from their banquet seats.⁶⁶ Hephaistos’ words conjure the picture

⁶⁴ For the *themistes* as precedents for the judge or king to draw upon, see Janko (1992) 366; Lisi (1994) 157-8; Penta (1998) 678-9, 681. For an extensive bibliography on *themis/themistes*, see Lisi (1994) 153-4; Penta (1998) 678-9, notes 5-7.

⁶⁵ Odysseus had already stressed the same point about the beneficial purpose of monarchy as he wielded Agamemnon’s scepter and threatened the lower-ranking Akhaians at *Il.* ii.204-7: οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίῃ· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, | εἷς βασιλεύς, ᾧ δώκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω | σκῆπτρόν τ’ ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισι βουλευῆσι (“No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of wily Kronos has entrusted *skēptron* and *themistes*, that he may deliberate for his people”).

⁶⁶ *Il.* i.577-84: μητρὶ δ’ ἐγὼ παράφημι καὶ αὐτῇ περ νοεοῦσῃ | πατρὶ φίλῳ ἐπήρα φέρειν Δί, ὄφρα μὴ αὐτὲ | νεικείῃσι πατήρ, σὺν δ’ ἡμῖν δαῖτα ταράξῃ. | εἴ περ γὰρ κ’ ἐθέλῃσιν Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητῆς | ἐξ ἐδέων στυφελίξαι· ὃ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτατός ἐστιν. | ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέεσσι

of a Zeus who is ready to use his thunderbolt against any of the gods he lords over due to a simple dispute with his wife, but will not do so if he is addressed properly. Athena also voices her fear that Zeus may not take care to distinguish the guilty from the innocent, should Ares pursue his own vendetta in defiance of Zeus' designs.⁶⁷ However, this unrestrained Zeus, who does not bother differentiating between the guilty and the innocent, by the same token hands over the royal scepter to mortal kings, transmits the juridical knowledge (*themistes*) required for them to carry out justice, and is even angered by men who are responsible for crooked verdicts.⁶⁸ This image of Zeus as the champion of justice is also attested by Hesiod; the poet identifies the Olympian god as the one who settles disputes with straight judgments (*Theog.* 85-6) and makes him the husband of *Themis* and father of *Dikē* (*Theog.* 901-2).⁶⁹ In the *Iliad*, Zeus' attitude appears far more ambiguous, in that he endorses the spirit of justice, yet, as we have seen, often seems oblivious to it. This tension, though, corresponds with the portrayal of Zeus' human

καθάπτεσθαι μαλακοῖσιν· ἰαυτίκ' ἔπειθ' Ἰλαος Ὀλύμπιος ἔσσεται ἡμῖν ([Hephaistos speaking:] "And I suggest my mother, wise though she be herself, to bring our dear father Zeus appropriate gifts, that the father quarrel not with her again, and bring confusion upon our feast. What if the Olympian, the lord of the lightning, wished to dash us from our seats! For he is mightiest by far. But address him with gentle words; so shall the Olympian forthwith be gracious to us").

⁶⁷ *Il.* xv.137: μάρψει δ' ἐξείης ὅς τ' αἴτιος ὅς τε καὶ οὐκί ([Athena speaking:] "Zeus will catch us one after another, both who is responsible and who is not").

⁶⁸ *Il.* xvi.385-88: ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἄνδρεςσι κοτεσσάμενος χαλεπήνη, ἰοὺ βίη εἰν ἀγορῇ σκολιὰς κρῖνωσι θέμιστα, ἰὲκ δὲ δίκην ἐλάσσωσι θεῶν ὅπιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες (When Zeus pours down rain most furiously and is angrily infuriated at those men who forcefully judge crookedly in their courts and rebuff justice without heeding the gaze of the gods).

⁶⁹ The Hesiodic echoes in the Homeric passage have led scholars to regard the latter as a later interpolation. See Leaf (1902); Dodds (1951) 32; Munding (1961) 161-77. Janko (1992) 65-6, however, rejects the theory that *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Theogony* and *Erga* draw upon different and successive stages in the development of the concept of justice and argues in favor of a common repository of stock ideas suited to each poem's poetic end. This very argument has been used by Bertelli (1966/7) 371-93, in defending the authenticity of the Homeric passage despite its similarity with Hesiod's *Erga* (221, 224, 264).

counterpart in archaic epic: Agamemnon, who is potentially harmful towards the members of his community, yet in charge of delivering justice to them.

Agamemnon and Zeus thus appear to be capable of bringing their destructive thoughts and actions to bear upon their subjects and yet are thought to implement justice even-handedly on their behalf. Minos' kingship is constructed in a similar way. The portrayal of Minos in fact closely mirrors the overall depiction of Agamemnon. Both kings possess a latent hurtful side: Minos is destructive-minded (#2: *olophrōn*), and Agamemnon in his rage embraces destructive thoughts (*oloiēsi phresi thuei*) that are detrimental to his subjects. Both are *anaktes* and both bear judicial responsibilities; Minos sits among the dead holding the scepter and pronouncing his rulings (#3: *themisteuōn*) as he presumably did in his lifetime;⁷⁰ Agamemnon deliberates for his subjects because Zeus handed to him the scepter and the knowledge to deliver judgments (*themistes*). Despite their potential harmfulness, both enjoy Zeus' unconditional support; Minos is the confidant, the *oaristēs* of Zeus (#4); Agamemnon is dear to Zeus who is fond of (*philei*) the god-nourished king.⁷¹ Finally, both kings should bear in mind the welfare of their own people: Minos is the guardian over Crete (#1: *epiourōs*); Agamemnon should in principle make decisions aimed at the safety and wellbeing of the Akhaians, as both Akhilleus and Nestor stress.

⁷⁰ The *eidōlon* continues in Hades the activities that he used to tend to in life (the so-called 'iteration'); Nilsson (1967) 454; Heubeck-Hoekstra (1989) 111.

⁷¹ This parallel is strengthened by the sexual connotation of *oaristēs* that shares its root with *oar* (wife) and indicates Zeus' affection for Minos, and by the fact that Zeus *philei* (loves) Agamemnon. For the connection between *oar* and *oaristēs*, see Arbeitman (1988) 416.

A fragment from the *Catalogue of Women* supports the connection between Minos and Agamemnon that has been suggested here:⁷²

ὅς βασιλεύτατος ἴγένετο θνητῶν βασιλῆων
καὶ πλείστων ἤνασσε περικτιόνων ἀνθρώπων
Ζηνὸς ἔχων σκῆπτρον· τῷ καὶ πολέων βασίλευεν.

[Minos] who was the most kingly among mortal kings,
in that he lorded over very many neighboring men,
holding the scepter of Zeus: therewith he also used to rule cities as a king.

Minos, like Agamemnon, received his scepter from Zeus.⁷³ Moreover, Minos is referred to as most kingly (*basileutatos*), the same superlative that Nestor applies to Agamemnon (*Il.* ix.69). Finally, that the two kings entertained a special connection was not lost on later Greek traditions. Three testimonies in fact advocate a Cretan lineage for Agamemnon. Sophokles attributed an unnamed Cretan mother to Agamemnon (*Ajax* 1291-7), Apollodoros identified Agamemnon and Menelaos as great-grandsons of Minos through their maternal line (*Bibl.* 3.2.1-2),⁷⁴ and Diktys of Crete in the second century CE composed a poem that made Atreus, Agamemnon's father, a son of Minos.⁷⁵ These later attempts to link Agamemnon's genealogy with Minos at least in part may have originated from the notable similarities between the two kings in epic⁷⁶. Thus, the apparent

⁷² [Hesiod] *Fragm.* 144 M-W=[Pl.], *Minos* 320d.

⁷³ Agamemnon's ancestors passed down to him Zeus' golden scepter, cf. *Il.* ii.100-8.

⁷⁴ According to Apollodoros, Katreus, son of Minos, disowned his daughter Aerope, whom Pleisthenes, a son of Pelops, eventually married fathering Agamemnon and Menelaos. Agamemnon is more commonly represented as son of Atreus, himself another son of Pelops (*Il.* ii.100-8).

⁷⁵ Cf. Reece (1994) 168-9. The question whether Diktys linked the two sagas to cater to second-century Greek (Cretan) tastes or on the basis of an early source is irrelevant here. Homer along with Hesiod's fragment provided enough parallels between Minos and Agamemnon to have inspired Diktys' invention.

⁷⁶ Despite the many resemblances between the two sovereigns, however, the unique relationship of Zeus with Minos still places the Cretan king in a privileged position over Agamemnon and makes him a desirable archetype for, yet beyond the reach of, later monarchs. Agamemnon, far from enjoying the position of Zeus' confidant, falls instead prey to Zeus' deceptive dream (*Il.* ii.1-40) and blames Zeus for his

contradiction between Minos' judicial responsibilities and his protectorate over Crete on the one hand, and his description as *oloophrōn* on the other, significantly compares with Agamemnon's representation. Destructive-mindedness was a characteristic of another epic monarch who directed his anger against his own subjects.

The many similarities between Minos and Agamemnon encourage us to entertain the possibility that Minos *oloophrōn* in passage #2 may refer to the king's destructive behavior against his subjects. The difficulty is that the adjective's significance posited here does not explicitly emerge from the passage, where it only seems directed to Theseus, an outsider attacking Minos' kingdom and family. However, the adjective may be understood to express a general quality that transcends its context.⁷⁷ To paraphrase Aristarkhos' exegetical tenet οὐ τότε ἀλλὰ φύσει, epithets may convey broader and more profound notions (*physis*) not necessarily dictated by the circumstances in which they are mentioned (*tote*).⁷⁸ In a word, the adjective may bear a meaning that is independent from both the contextual mention of Theseus and the whole story outlined in passage #2. Further, while epic does not preserve traces of Minos' destructive behavior against the Cretans, later traditions seem to develop this notion I have posited for Minos in epic.⁷⁹

own deranged decisions (*Il.* xix.86-90) and for robbing him of his *phrenes* (*Il.* xix.136). For Zeus' role in clouding Agamemnon's judgment, see Lloyd-Jones (1983) 22-7.

⁷⁷ This working hypothesis follows in the footsteps of Foley's "traditional referentiality" (1991), but limits its quest for meanings within the texts of the epic poems.

⁷⁸ See Edwards (1997) 276 with n. 21.

⁷⁹ Herodotos reports that when Cretan envoys went to consult the Delphic oracle as to whether or not they ought to participate in the Persian war, the prophetess reminded them of the sufferings Minos caused them post-mortem. The Cretans' failure to avenge Minos' death in Sicily, the Pythia continues, and their participation in the Trojan war occasioned the semi-divine king's wrath (*mēnion*; Hdt. vii.169). Minos in fact, Herodotos deduces, caused famine and disease across Crete and eventually brought about the island's depopulation, all baleful events confirmed by the historian's Cretan informants in Praisos (Hdt. vii.171). This tradition preserved by Herodotos may be reasonably thought to develop the epic notion of destructive-

In conclusion, destructive-mindedness qualifies the behavior of Agamemnon: this further confirms my view that Minos *oloophrōn* in passage #2 should not be read as an Athenian interpolation. The adjective *oloophrōn*, I have argued, conveys the notion of destructive-mindedness applied both outwards, against external enemies, and inwards, against one's own community. From the standpoint of Homeric kings, this ambivalence ensured the perpetuation of their status: typified by Agamemnon and Zeus, these *anactes* strive constantly to strike a balance between the need for instilling fear in their subjects (destructive-mindedness directed against them) and the necessity of guaranteeing them a compensatory reward (destructive-mindedness directed against outsiders).⁸⁰ Similarly, king Minos, at once destructive-minded, champion of justice, and guardian over Crete reflects the epic monarchs' endeavor to achieve and maintain such equilibrium.

This portrayal of a king apportioning justice and deploying destructive behavior is also symbolized by possession of the golden scepter. Although modern studies have recognized the staff as the emblem of god-granted authority, enabling the holder of it to speak in assemblies and rule by *themistes*,⁸¹ it is worth pointing out that it also serves as an intimidating reminder of the king's potentially harmful retribution.⁸² The scepter, a

destructive-mindedness directed against a king's subjects: for the epic echoes in the Herodotean passage, see Visintin (1998) 33-42. One might add that anger (*mēnis*) is instrumental in motivating Minos' use of his destructive powers against his own people, as it was in the case of Agamemnon (*thuei/cholos*).

⁸⁰ See Rihll (1992) 46-7, who emphasizes Zeus and Agamemnon's use of threat or force for the survival of their monarchy.

⁸¹ Combellack (1947-8) 209-17. Bérard (1972) 219-27; Easterling (1989) 104-21; Palaima (1995) 135-6.

⁸² Mondì (1980) 207-16. The author persuasively points out that the etymology of *skēptron* may derive from *skēptos/skēptein* (as opposed to the traditional *skēpthesthai* "to lean on"), with both terms used in post-Homeric literature to denote natural phenomena "striking" mankind, such as plague or lightning, in general manifestations of divine wrath: for the noun, see Aesch. *Pers.* 715 (plague); Soph. *Ant.* 417-9 (a storm of dust, "a grief from heaven"); Arist. *De Mundo* 395a28 (thunderbolt); for the verb including its compounds, see Aesch. *Ag.* 362-6 (of Zeus's bolt); Hdt. vii.134.1 (of the *mēnis* of Talthybios); Hdt. vii.106

visible object signifying its possessor's knowledge of *themistes*, is wielded by kings whenever they are about to utter threatening words⁸³ and in a few cases is even used to strike individuals.⁸⁴ It is the scepter-bearing kings who potentially display the same double-sidedness as Zeus, Minos, Agamemnon and Akhilleus, as Athena suggests in her proclamation to the inhabitants of Ithaka.⁸⁵ Sceptered kings such as Minos and Agamemnon, Athena says, are prone to change suddenly their attitude towards their people, turning from benign (*prophrones*) and divinely appointed upholders of *themistes* into the opposite, namely destructive-minded (*oloophrones*). Athena formulates a wish that may in fact materialize⁸⁶ and draws upon the contradictory nature of monarchy.

However, regardless of how frightful sceptered kings may appear to their people, they must also extend a compensatory reward to their subjects for the sake of perpetuating their own status. The administration of justice, symbolized by the very same scepter, may be understood as such compensation because it is conducive to the land's

(of lightning); Soph. *OT* 27-8 and Thuc. ii.49 (of the plague). The royal *skēptron*, Mondi concludes, might then have evoked already in Homeric epic the menace of divine wrath as possible retribution, since the king's authority rested ultimately on Zeus.

⁸³ Instances of intimidating speeches accompanied by the use of the scepter are *Il.* i.233-44 (Akhilleus anticipating that his absence from the war will bring woes upon the Akhaians and Agamemnon); ii.185-97 (Odysseus pointing out to the Akhaian leaders that Agamemnon may be willing to harm them); xxiii.566-85 (Menelaos scolding Antilokhos for his dishonesty in the chariot race); *Od.* ii.37- (Telemakhos rebuking the Ithakans for allowing the suitors' outrageous actions to his family).

⁸⁴ Examples of the violent use of the scepter are: *Il.* ii.198-9 (the Akhaian "men of the *demos*" being hit by Odysseus); ii.265-6 (Thersites); xiii.59-60 (Poseidon strikes both Ajaxes with his *skēpanion*); xxiv.247-8 (Priam wielding the *skēpanion* to drive the Trojans out of his palace).

⁸⁵ *Od.* ii.230-2: μή τις ἔτι πρόφρων ἀγανὸς καὶ ἥπιος ἔστω | σκηπτούχος βασιλεύς, μηδὲ φρεσὶν αἴσιμα εἰδῶς, | ἀλλ' αἰεὶ χαλεπὸς τ' εἴη καὶ αἴσυλα ῥέζοι ([Athena speaking:] "Let no sceptered king be any longer well-disposed (*prophrōn*), kind or gentle, or embrace appropriate thoughts in their mind (*phresin aisima eidōs*); instead may he be harsh forever and commit unseemly acts"). Athena later addresses with identical words the gods gathered in council at *Od.* v.9-11.

⁸⁶ Athena's statement perhaps exaggerates the permanent character of the sovereign's change for the worse. Homeric kingship seems bound to avoid any stationary condition, thriving rather on the oscillation between the two extremes.

fecundity and, consequently, to the people's prosperity. Odysseus clearly expresses this nexus of cause and effect between justice and fertility as he discloses to his wife Penelope the benefits of an ideal king's rule.⁸⁷ The king's *eudikiai*, his proper administration of justice, ensure both agricultural and human excellence, a notion also expressed in Hesiod (*Erga* 225-47).⁸⁸

As we have already seen in #3, Minos also renders *themistes* in Hades, thus exhibiting the king's judicial competence so beneficial for his community. Several clues hint more specifically at his function as a sceptered king who blesses his lands with fertility. Minos is emphatically called *anax* at the end of the hexameter in #3. In the judicial context of the passage such definition takes on a special significance in light of recent work on the etymology of *anax* as "the one who brings gain, profit".⁸⁹ If the connotations of this term are correctly understood, then we obtain further confirmation of the link between justice and fecundity also in the case of Minos.

Furthermore, the adjective *enneōros* that appears in #4 may convey the notion of fertility. It has been suggested that *enneōros* might reflect Cretan knowledge of a rainfall cycle recognized by modern meteorologists and registering exceptional downpours every

⁸⁷ *Od.* xix.107-13 ἡ γὰρ σευ κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνει, | ὥς τέ τευ ἡ βασιλῆος ἀμύμονος, ὅς τε θεοῦδης | ἀνδράσιν ἐν πολλοῖσι καὶ ἰφθίμοισιν ἀνάσσω | εὐδικίας ἀνέχῃσι, φέρῃσι δὲ γαῖα μέλαινα | πυροὺς καὶ κριθάς, βρίθῃσι δὲ δένδρεα καρπῷ, | τίκῃ δ' ἔμπεδα μῆλα, θάλασσα δὲ παρέχῃ ἰχθῦς | ἐξ εὐγγεσίας, ἀρετῶσι δὲ λαοὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ([Odysseus speaking:] "For your fame reaches up to the wide sky, such as the fame of a flawless king, who, god-fearing and lording (*anaxōn*) among many and valiant men keeps his judgments straight (*eudikiai*), and the dark earth holds out wheat and barley, trees bear the burden of fruits, sheep breed constantly, the sea provides fish as a consequence of his good leadership, under him men achieve virtue").

⁸⁸ The same notion connecting the king's righteous judgments with the land's fertility appears in Psalm 72, where the sovereign exercising justice is likened to rain watering his land; Brown (1993) 72.

⁸⁹ Hajnal (1998) 60-9. Cf. Palaima (2006) 55-6.

nine years on average.⁹⁰ This suggestion is based on a passage from Theophrastos,⁹¹ where the author tries to provide a scientific explanation for the growth of an extraordinarily plump reed in the waters of Lake Copais near Chaironeia by looking into the relationship between precipitation rates and the water retention of the lake. Theophrastos here wishes to dismantle the mistaken belief that the growth of this exceptionally fleshy plant would occur only every nine years and thus conform to a nine-year cycle of fecundity (*to phyesthai dia enneatēridos*). Although Theophrastos never linked precipitation with such a cycle (*enneatēris*), thus proving the suggestion wrong,⁹² for our purposes it is sufficient to note that Theophrastos attests to the existence of a tradition associating nine-year cycles with extraordinary fertility and that this tradition was connected with the growth of a reed blessed with remarkable luxuriance (*eutrophia tēs physeos*). If *enneōros* may be understood to refer to a nine-year cycle, as Plato construes it (*Leg.* 624a-b), we might suggest that the expression *enneōros basileue* in #4 conveys the notion that Minos' reign secured for Crete an unprecedented fertility renewed at nine-year intervals with the blessing of Zeus. Such notion of Minos' gift to his kingdom resonates with the geophysical description of Crete by Odysseus who presents the island in the first place as a fertile land, *gaia pieira* (*Od.* xix.172-3). That Crete continues to enjoy fertility under Minos' legitimate successors, Idomeneus and Aithon, is also confirmed by the gifts Aithon lavishes on Odysseus' companions to honor his guest:

⁹⁰ Marinatos (1951) 131-2.

⁹¹ Theoph. *De Causis Plantarum* iv.11.2-4.

⁹² *Pace* Marinatos (1951), Theophrastos, if anything, contrasts *epombria* (abundant rainfall) with the nine-year cycle (*enneatēris*), thus describing them as two different and unconnected phenomena. Consequently, Marinatos' fascinating hypothesis that the encounter of Minos with Zeus in #4, renewed every nine years, would symbolize a year of intense downpours, has to be refuted.

barley and wine collected from the Cretan *dēmos* (196-7). Consequently, in addition to his judicial powers, the attributes of *anax* and *enneōros* confirm that Minos exemplifies the role of the kings as guarantors of the land's fertility and, accordingly, of their people's wealth.

To conclude this section, I have argued here that the qualification of Minos as *oloophrōn* ("destructive-minded") in #2 engages with the same negative aspect inherent in the kingship of both Agamemnon and, in general, of Zeus. The description of Agamemnon who seethes with destructive thoughts (*oloiēisi phresi thuei*) indicates that *oloophrōn* implicitly points to the king's destructive-mindedness toward his subjects. This approach allows us to understand the significance of Minos *oloophrōn* independently from the mention of Theseus in #2 and in connection with the king's harmful behavior toward his own people. Insofar as the adjective reflects a trait shared by Agamemnon and is not induced exclusively by the mention of Theseus, hypotheses construing #2 as a later Attic interpolation should be abandoned. Furthermore, I have argued that the contradiction between Minos' destructive behavior conveyed by *oloophrōn* (#2) and his otherwise positive functions as the upholder of justice in Hades (#3) and guardian of Crete (#1) conforms to a model of kingship represented by Agamemnon and ultimately Zeus. These monarchs, in spite of occasionally threatening their subjects with destructive behavior, also turn their violence against external enemies and administer justice, thus bestowing on their communities prosperity and even lands' fertility, compensatory benefits that make their monarchy acceptable and consequently durable. Minos' portrayal evidently encapsulates this very contradiction as well; the

adjective *enneōros* (#4) may in fact identify Minos as the source for Crete's prosperity and fecundity renewed every nine years.

Odysseus, Grandson of Minos

In the *Odyssey*, Minos represents more than an occasional concern for Odysseus who singlehandedly shapes the figure of the Cretan king. Among the six passages mentioning Minos in Homeric epic, the ones contributing more detailed information on the Cretan king are spoken in Odysseus' voice. The hero underscores Minos' contradictory role of even-handed judge and destructive-minded sovereign (#2, 4) and finally portrays him as confidant of Zeus (#4). Odysseus' interest in sketching out the image of Minos is validated by, and culminates with, his claim of descent from him in #4, the so-called third "Cretan Lie", wherein Odysseus assumes the identity of Aithon, grandson of Minos. While for some time now valuable studies have attempted to illustrate the ways in which 'digressions' in archaic epic such as Odysseus' Cretan lies or genealogical catalogues are relevant to, and engage with, both immediate events in the main narrative and the larger context of the epic poems,⁹³ the third Cretan lie has not drawn nearly as much attention to its thematic significance within the *Odyssey* as to the

⁹³ Many scholars have taken issue with views interpreting digressions as expressions of the epic poet's gusto for storytelling per se or as mere displays of erudition; see e.g. Austin (1966) 295-312; Gaisser (1969) 1-43; Haft (1981); Davies (1992); Alden (1996) 257-63. Reece (1994) 157-73 has suggested that digressions would condense stories fully developed in alternative versions of the poems.

historical information it is thought to contain.⁹⁴ The focus on this passage's historical import has for the most part led scholars to underestimate the implications of Odysseus' genealogical claim for the epic poem. In my view, the genealogy devised by Odysseus in order to connect himself with Minos expresses the hero's desire to align himself with the model of kingship embodied by the Cretan king, a model that Odysseus himself went to great lengths to craft throughout the poem. The genealogical link, then, complements his repeated efforts to mold the figure of Minos, which provides both a model for the hero and a precedent justifying Odysseus' own behavior in the epic poem. On the one hand, Minos as confidant of Zeus has been made to represent an ideal monarchy in which the king enjoys the privilege of engaging in communications with the god; such a model will be partially attained by Odysseus in the remainder of the *Odyssey*, as Zeus in fact begins interacting with Odysseus in a way that may recall Minos' intimacy with the god. On the other hand, the model of Minos as judge and destructive-minded king exemplifies the dilemma that Odysseus himself faces as he is called upon to choose between a bloodless solution to the conflict with the suitors, and a violent and indiscriminate revenge.

⁹⁴ Exception to this general trend is Haft (1981) 59-70, 81, who focuses on explaining Odysseus' choice of Idomeneus as his brother, acknowledges that this fictitious identity is but one step removed from the hero's real status and instrumental in gaining him credibility in the eyes of Penelope, and finally claims that the third Cretan lie would not presage any future events to the extent that the first two do. I would argue instead that genealogies are designed to link the starting and ending point of a given family line with one another erasing any gap in between; it is therefore Odysseus' choice of Minos as forefather, not of Idomeneus as brother, that is worth investigating. Idomeneus, though admittedly one of the main characters in the *Iliad*, remains a figure only incidental to the *Odyssey*. Odysseus' genealogy has to hinge on his alleged kinship to Minos, whose figure the hero took great care to shape on previous occasions. Moreover, regarding Minos as the focus of Odysseus' genealogy allows us to appreciate the role of the third Cretan lie in foreshadowing elements (a closer relationship of Zeus with Odysseus and the resolution of the conflict with the suitors), consistently with Haft's identification of presaging clues in the two previous lies (*Od.* xiii.256-86; xiv.199-359).

Zeus' attitude toward Odysseus can be viewed as neutral in the *Iliad* where the god and the hero have no close dealings with one another. The only possible hint of Zeus' care for the hero is perhaps discernible in the epithet Διὶ φίλος, "dear to Zeus", applied twice in reference to Odysseus. This epithet has been recognized as one of the meaningless stock formulae employed throughout the poem⁹⁵ and may not prove the god's special affection toward Odysseus any more than toward the other heroes it qualifies. Even so, it is worth pointing out that the two instances of the epithet describing Odysseus occur in association with the only simile likening him to a boar. Completely encircled by hordes of Trojans, Odysseus has to defend himself the same way a boar would against hounds and hunters (*Il.* xi.414-8). The first occurrence of the expression "dear to Zeus" immediately follows this boar simile (*Il.* xi.419); the second one, some fifty verses later (*Il.* xi. 473), is tagged on after Menelaos' call for help to Ajax where he reiterates the concept of the boar simile by stressing Odysseus' dangerous isolation against the Trojans (*Il.* xi.467-71).⁹⁶ As we have seen (p. 21), the boar imagery presents traits compatible with the description of Minos, in particular counterattack in face of injury, and this may serve to link Odysseus with Minos, famed for being the confidant of Zeus. Hence, the stylization of Odysseus as "dear to Zeus" emerges appropriately (and exclusively) when it is contiguous with the boar metaphor or is related to its range of meanings: the boar simile applied to Odysseus connects him with Minos, and the hero, too, by extension can be said to enjoy the god's sympathy.

⁹⁵ Hainsworth (1993) 271.

⁹⁶ The following simile (xi.473-6) comparing Odysseus with a stag reinforces the hero's predicament signaled earlier by the boar metaphor and is probably due to the poet's desire for *variatio*.

The epithet “dear to Zeus” is understandably absent from the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus’ initial predicament results from Zeus’ unresponsiveness to his plight, as Athena puts it (*Od.* i.59-62). Even after Zeus’ commitment to grant Odysseus a safe return to Ithaka (*Od.* i.76-9), the god does not appear concerned at all about Odysseus’ case throughout the following books. This holds true until the third Cretan lie in book 19, wherein Odysseus vests himself with the identity of Aithon, grandson of Minos, the king blessed with the distinctive prerogative of conversing with Zeus. By appropriating Minos through his genealogical fabrication, Odysseus wishes for himself a more intimate connection with Zeus of a kind similar to that of his fictitious grandfather Minos, the conversant of Zeus. In this new capacity as Minos’ grandson Odysseus is now entitled to unprecedented interaction with Zeus, which in fact develops in the aftermath of the third Cretan tale. One subtle sign of a closer relationship of Zeus with Odysseus occurs further on in the same book at *Od.* xix.538-50. Penelope dreams about an eagle swooping down on her geese and slaughtering them; in her vision the eagle speaks to her in human voice interpreting the dream. He, the eagle, is her husband Odysseus, while the geese are the suitors, whom Odysseus will slay.⁹⁷ While an eagle simile had already been deployed for Odysseus earlier⁹⁸ and another will occur near the end of the poem (*Od.* xv.161-178), the prophecy in book nineteen actually identifies Odysseus with the eagle through the device

⁹⁷ Pratt (1994) 149-52 hypothesizes that Penelope, despite the allegory of the geese for the suitors offered by the eagle, might have interpreted the twenty geese as the years of her marital commitment to Odysseus; the death of the geese would then signify that her fidelity had gone to waste, *i.e.* that her husband had passed away. This alternate interpretation works well to explain why Penelope needs to ask Aithon/Odysseus for a confirmation of the dream’s meaning, which the eagle has already unveiled.

⁹⁸ *Od.* xv.161-78: Helen here unraveled the omen of an eagle snatching off a white goose; similarly to the eagle’s prophecy in book nineteen, she equated the eagle with Odysseus who will bring death upon the suitors, represented by the goose.

of the dream. In other words, Odysseus *is not merely like an eagle*, he *is the eagle* itself in the context of the dream. The eagle is significantly Zeus' most beloved bird and recognized as harbinger of the god's will and favor; an eagle's flight is in fact consistently scrutinized in both epic poems because, if correctly interpreted, it offers insight into the designs of Zeus who was thought to dispatch the bird himself.⁹⁹ Consequently, the identification of Odysseus with Zeus' favorite bird and messenger, and the eagle's prophecy about the slaughter of the suitors imply that Odysseus will act as Zeus' instrument in carrying out the violent reprisal against the suitors.¹⁰⁰

The third Cretan tale thus begins to establish the close relationship between Zeus and Odysseus that is reflected later in the dream. Moreover, the choice of the name Aithon may subtly anticipate the hero's association with the eagle. Aithon, a speaking name whose significance is largely obscure to us, originates from the adjective *aithōn*, which has been shown to indicate a gamut of colors approximating our red-brown; the adjective is applied to a variety of objects and animals, among others, an eagle (*Il.* xv.690).¹⁰¹ In the context of the third Cretan lie, where Odysseus positions himself in relation to Minos and emphasizes his alleged grandfather's intimacy with Zeus, the use of

⁹⁹ Zeus sets his eagles on a westbound course in order to show his willingness to accomplish vows; e.g. *Il.* viii.246-7 (Agamemnon's wish for his army to survive); xxiv.290-8, 308-16 (Priam's plan to reach into the Akhaians' encampment). If the bird flies eastbound instead, Zeus was thought to send an unfavorable omen; e.g. *Od.* xx.242-6 (the suitors infer from the omen that their planned assassination of Telemakhos was not feasible).

¹⁰⁰ Athanassakis (1994) 130-4 sees in the speaking eagle of the *Odyssey* simply a common motif, namely the return of the dead or absent husband in the shape of a bird, to be found in modern Greek and Serbian folk songs.

¹⁰¹ Russo (1992) 86 provides a list of animals and items described as *aithones* in epic (lion, horse, oxen, eagle; tripods, cauldrons, iron); cf. Edgeworth (1983) 35-6. According to the latter author, since *aithōn* denotes a dark complexion, an exterior sign of manliness, the proper name Aithon employed by Odysseus would imply the notions of virility and bravery. Incidentally, Aithon is also the name of one of Hektor's horses (*Il.* viii.185).

the proper name *Aithon* may perhaps evoke the traditional color of the plumage of the eagle, the very bird dear to Zeus, thus prefiguring Odysseus' identification with the animal later in the same book.

Further on in the poem, Zeus' support of the hero becomes both explicit and tangible as the god twice signals his approval of the hero's vengeful plans; from a cloudless sky the god thunders in response to the prayer of Odysseus that he be given a recognizable sign of divine favor before carrying out his revenge (*Od.* xx.98-121);¹⁰² Zeus' thunder rumbles again to the delight of Odysseus as he prepares to shoot the arrow in the bow competition (*Od.* xxi.413-5). Finally, Zeus expresses his displeasure with Odysseus for disregarding Athena's demand of a peaceful reconciliation and for his assault against the suitors' relatives; Zeus does not hesitate to cast lightning in order to halt his murderous frenzy (*Od.* xxiv.539-40). The guidance offered by Zeus late in the *Odyssey* is not previously attested. Zeus' 'communications' with Odysseus, although conveyed from afar in the form of omens without the intimacy of the god's conversations with Minos,¹⁰³ express nonetheless the god's advice on the proper course of action. The god sends omens approving the hero's vengeful plans, and guides Odysseus toward a peaceful resolution of the hostilities with the suitors' families by thundering disapproval. Zeus was in fact believed to place in chosen men good counsel, from which many others could profit, as Polydamas states in the *Iliad* (*Il.* xiii.732-3).¹⁰⁴ Compatibly with

¹⁰² Zeus even accords Odysseus' wish of hearing auspicious words from a servant.

¹⁰³ However, Zeus' relation with Minos in *Bacchyl.* xvii.67-71 resembles that with Odysseus in the epic poem; again only at a distance does Zeus flash lightning to confirm his paternity of Minos.

¹⁰⁴ Zeus is specifically singled out here as the god granting the gift of good advice, as opposed to the generic *theos* conferring on men other kinds of abilities, such as martial skills, dancing, poetry. (*Il.* xiii.730-

Polydamas' assertion, the guidance of Zeus does not profit Odysseus alone in the *Odyssey*. In addition to restoring Odysseus to his former position, the elimination of the suitors benefits the faithful members of Odysseus' household, including Eumaios who had been lamenting the loss of privileges he expected from Odysseus should his king be dead (*Od.* xiv.61-67). Moreover, the reconciliation between Odysseus and the suitors' kinsmen occurs only after Zeus signals to Odysseus the need to quit the slaughter: Zeus' 'advice' to the hero is clearly essential to pacifying both parties and setting the conditions for a general prosperity across Ithaka (*ploutos* and *eirēnē*: cf. xxiv.482-6). When endorsed by Zeus, all of Odysseus' undertakings foster the interests of persons other than Odysseus and promote affluence for the whole island. Similarly, while fashioning Minos into an exemplar of familiarity between human kings and Zeus (*oaristēs* in #4), Odysseus also described the Cretan king as *enneōros*, namely guarantor of fertility (see pp. 49-51). The two definitions ought to be linked; Odysseus portrayed Minos' reign as conducive to the fecundity of the land and, consequently, to his people's wealth through Zeus' advice, a model that will later apply to Odysseus himself and his kingdom. The prosperity of Crete, stemming from the close rapport between Minos and Zeus, in fact foreshadows that of Ithaka, accomplished through the newfound access of Odysseus to Zeus' guidance. The model represented by Minos, relevant though it be for Odysseus, remains partially unattainable for the hero: the god's instructions to him are formulated only through omens, while direct conversations with Zeus are Minos' exclusive privilege.

4: ἄλλω μὲν γὰρ ἔδωκε θεὸς πολεμήϊα ἔργα, | ἄλλω δ' ὀρχηστύν, ἐτέρω κίθαριν καὶ ἀοιδήν, | ἄλλω δ' ἐν στήθεσσι τιθεὶ νόον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς | ἐσθλόν, τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἐπαυρίσκοντ' ἄνθρωποι, | καὶ τε πολέας ἐσάωσε, μάλιστα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω).

In addition to prefiguring the hero's new relationship with Zeus, Odysseus' claim of ancestry from Minos bears upon one of the central issues of the *Odyssey*, that is the hero's conduct toward the suitors. In the *Nekyia*, Odysseus noted Minos' destructive-mindedness (#2: *oloophrōn*) possibly toward Theseus in response to his abduction of Ariadne and/or the Athenians' murder of Androgeos. Several lines later he described Minos as the fair judge who was appointed to make rulings for the dead (#3: *themisteuōn*) at their request. Such a seemingly paradoxical depiction of Minos constructed entirely by Odysseus becomes relevant to the hero's situation at the very moment when he associates himself with the Cretan king through the fictitious genealogy in #4. By claiming Minos as grandfather Odysseus adopts him as model and precedent for his own behavior in the *Odyssey*. The ambiguity embedded in the figure of Minos, at once destructive-minded avenger and even-handed adjudicator, mirrors Odysseus's own position. The epic hero needs to destroy the suitors and his disloyal servants in order to preserve his *oikos* and kingdom, and yet, at various stages, he is called upon to perform or seems himself concerned with performing tasks typical of a judge.

That Odysseus while reigning undisturbed over Ithaka performed judicial activities can be inferred from the fact that knowledge of *themistes* is a hallmark of all Homeric kings. More significant, however, is that Telemakhos serves as *dikaspolos* in the absence of his father (*Od.* xi.185-6), a role that ought to have consisted in upholding the *themistes* sanctioned by Zeus, as is the case of the other Akhaian *dikaspoloi* (cf. *Il.* i.237-9). We may thus infer that his father Odysseus, too, held a similar judicial competence while in Ithaka: his absence determined in fact the need for someone else, his son, to

become acquainted with *themistes*.¹⁰⁵ Odysseus' claim of descent from Minos (#4), the judge *themisteuōn* for the dead in #3, is therefore appropriate because the hero already recognized in Minos a precedent for his own judicial prerogatives.

Odysseus' acquaintance with legal proceedings prompts him to contemplate, if briefly, the possibility of dispensing justice within the context of a wholesale bloody act of self-help against the suitors. Granted that the punishment of the suitors will turn out to be indiscriminate,¹⁰⁶ Odysseus' preoccupation with determining *ad personam* culpability emerges at *Od.* xvi.304-11 where he urges Telemakhos to join him in testing and assessing the slaves' loyalty. Although Telemakhos approves of his father's intention only in the case of the female servants and dismisses making trial of the male slaves as a dangerously time-consuming process (*Od.* xvi.313-5), the passage suggests that Odysseus at least contemplates the notion that punishment should be commensurate with actual responsibility and that proof ought to be garnered through a surreptitious test. Moreover, when his nurse Eurykleia volunteers to identify who among the female servants was guilty and who was not, Odysseus declines her offer, instead appointing himself the task of determining the truth in each case (*Od.* xix.497-501).¹⁰⁷ In the same book where he establishes his genealogical connection with Minos, the judge in the Underworld, Odysseus also stresses that he is solely responsible for choosing the method of proof and

¹⁰⁵ Tellingly, the prerogative of adjudicating remains within the reigning dynasty of Ithaka. How exactly the transmission to Telemakhos of this type of knowledge would have taken place, we do not know. Odysseus left his infant son too early for the latter to learn from his father: a father-son transmission has, then, to be excluded. Perhaps, Telemakhos received guidance from the community itself.

¹⁰⁶ Cook (1995) 156.

¹⁰⁷ Odysseus later changes his mind and relies upon Eurykleia's testimony in pronouncing death for the twelve female servants who colluded with the suitors and disrespected Penelope, Telemakhos and his faithful nurse (*Od.* xxii.417-29).

arriving at a proper decision (501: εὖ νυ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ φράσομαι καὶ εἶσομ' ἐκάστην). The same concern about appraising individual responsibility as opposed to collective guilt has Athena prompt Odysseus to collect loaves from the suitors, so that he might discriminate the lawless (*athemistoi*; *Od.* xvii.360-3) from the lawful. The goddess urges Odysseus to probe covertly the suitors and to judge each one of them individually.¹⁰⁸

Another passage clarifies that Odysseus has still to make a final decision as to how to settle the conflict with the suitors in book eighteen. Odysseus in the guise of a beggar warns one of the more decent suitors, Amphinomos, that the return of the king into the palace will bring dire consequences upon him and his partners in crime (*Od.* xviii.149-50):

οὐ γὰρ ἀναιμωτί γε διακρινέεσθαι οἴω
μνηστήρας καὶ κείνον, ἐπεὶ κε μέλαθρον ὑπέλθῃ.

“I don’t think that they will *part ways/settle their dispute* without bloodshed,
the suitors and he, once he comes back under his roof.”

The verb *diakrinein* is commonly translated as “separate one from the other”, hence “separate from one another”, “part ” in the middle voice as in the future infinitive of the

¹⁰⁸ The third-person narrative adds that none of the suitors will escape their doom regardless of their individual responsibility (*Od.* xvii.364). Does this remark imply that Odysseus had already decided to reject the propriety of apportioning a just punishment on the suitors? I think that at this point Odysseus had *not* already resolved to pursue an indiscriminate revenge, unless we want to think that Athena’s advocacy for a trial of the suitors fell flat on him and that he did not take it seriously to begin with. As I have suggested, Odysseus decides to slaughter the suitors only after Zeus’ omen in book twenty of the poem; the hero finalizes his plan following this divine encouragement. At this stage, in book seventeen, the problem of how to deal with the suitors is still open to solutions other than the blind mass-scale murder for which Odysseus will finally opt: *ad personam* punishment of the deserving suitors is at this time one of the options. The narrator’s remark is then best understood as an anticipation of the events as they will actually unfold.

passage above, and “be separated”, “be parted” in the passive voice.¹⁰⁹ A more specific nuance in the meaning of the verb has been overlooked, namely the idea of settling quarrels through compromise and agreement. At *Od.* xxiv.532 Athena urges Odysseus along with his family and the kinsfolk of the murdered suitors to refrain from fighting, so that they may be parted without spilling any more blood (ὥς κεν ἀναιμωτί γε διακρινθῆτε τάχιστα). It has been remarked that *diakrinein* in the passive here means specifically “to be parted peacefully on the basis of an agreement”.¹¹⁰ In the passage quoted above, then, phrased in terms almost identical with *Od.* xxiv.532, the verb should imply as well that Odysseus and the suitors will likely not reach an agreement whereby they can part ways without bloodshed. What kind of agreement does the verb allude to? A passage from Hesiod (*WD* 35-6) wherein the poet proposes a quick solution to the quarrel with his brother Perses, may shed light on this question:

ἀλλ' αὖθι διακρινώμεθα νεῖκος
 ἰθείησι δίκῃς, αἳ τ' ἐκ Διὸς εἰσιν ἄρισταί.

But let us settle the dispute forthwith
 with straight judgments which are the best when from Zeus.

The verb *diakrinein* in the middle voice here indicates the settlement of a dispute. This technical meaning of the verb clearly derives from its use in the active voice, which qualifies the king's impressive skills to appease quarrels between litigants as in *Theog.* 84-7. *Diakrinein themistas* here indicates that the king-judge sifts through (*dia*) the

¹⁰⁹ Among others, Fagles (1997) 380 (“part”); Lombardo (2000) 280 (“escape”). Plenty of examples from both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* support this translation; see e.g. *Il.* ii.387, 475; iii.102; vii.292, 306, 378, 397; xx.212. *Od.* xx.180. The related meaning “to discern” is found at *Od.* viii.195.

¹¹⁰ Russo (1992) 416-7; the authors rely on the analogy with *Il.* iii.98 and 102, where Trojans and Akhaians separate from one another after sealing a truce with an oath.

various *themistes* and chooses (*krinein*) the appropriate ones on a case-by-case basis; his selecting the proper *themistes* amounts to settling disputes, hence the meaning of *diakrinein* as “settle litigations”.¹¹¹ However, there is some disagreement as to whether the middle *diakrimesthai* in *Works and Days* indicates settling the quarrel among the litigants themselves (without recourse to a judge)¹¹² or having the dispute settled by a judge.¹¹³ The context indeed suggests that Hesiod is propositioning the now destitute Perses with a private settlement as opposed to the costly liability of a formal trial presided by a third-party judge. In *Od.* xviii.149 *diakrinein* appears in the middle voice as in *Works and Days*; even though the object *neikos* is absent in the *Odyssey*, in addition to the meaning “part ways from one another”, the verb may also signify that the litigants reach a compromise *on their own* as it does in *Works and Days*. These two meanings of the verb are complementary: the litigants parted ways once satisfied with a decision, either on their own or offered by a third party.¹¹⁴ Odysseus therefore denies the possibility that he and the suitors would ever settle their dispute *among themselves* peacefully.

¹¹¹ West (1966) 184. The king’s successful choice of the proper *themistes* in every single dispute stands in jarring contrast with other cases, in which the judging authority draws upon (*krinein*) unfit *themistes*, thus issuing crooked verdicts; cf. *Il.* xvi.387 (men can forcefully select *skoliai themistes*, that is *themistes* inappropriate for a dispute); *WD* 221 (bribe-devouring judges pick *themistes* rendering crooked judgments). The verb *krino* is associated with unfair rulings in the two previous citations, whereas *diakrino* seems to be consistently paired with straight judgments; cf. Pind. *Ol.* viii.24-5 (ὁρθᾶ διακρίναι φρονὶ μὴ παρὰ καιρὸν δυσπαλές; deciding with a straight mind and suitably is difficult); *Apoll. Rh.* iv.1178-9: λαοὶ ἰθείας ἀνὰ ἄστρῳ διεκρίνοντο θέμιστας; people across the city were being judged [by Alkinoos] according to straight *themistes*). The suffix *dia* indicates a more careful process of selection than the mere *krinō*, a process that perhaps guarantees the fairness of the final decision.

¹¹² Gagarin (1974) 105-7; Gagarin (1992) 72; West (1980) 150.

¹¹³ Verdenius (1985) 35 holds that *dikai itheiai* imply unambiguously formal rulings delivered by a judge (cf. *WD* 221; *Theog.* 86); hence, he aligns with *LSJ* in translating *diakrino* as “get (our dispute) decided (by a judge)”. The problem with this interpretation lies with the causative force of the middle, rarely encountered in Greek literature; cf. Gagarin (1974) 105-7, n. 11.

¹¹⁴ Gagarin (1986) 143. Submitting disputes for settlement by authorities (kings, judges, boards of elders) was a viable alternative to self-help. Thür (1996) 61 maintains *contra* that authorities did not prevent self-

Although Odysseus states that a pacific settlement among the litigants on their own would fail thus paving the way for self-help, he omits to mention the other viable alternative for settling disputes. In Homeric epic, as well as in Hesiod, the alternative to a private agreement reached by the litigants themselves (and to self-help) was submitting the dispute to a third party for settlement.¹¹⁵ Odysseus was fully aware of this option, even if he omits it here; he had previously envisioned in Hades a trial scene where the dead voluntarily submitted their disputes to king Minos for settlement (#3). His vision of Minos who delivers rulings to the dead in the Underworld at their own request ensures Odysseus' familiarity with this practice. Odysseus' familiarity with this alternative is, in turn, fundamental to the audience's understanding of the hero's admonition to Amphinomos. The poet might well not have intended that Amphinomos fully appreciate the subtleties of Odysseus' warning, which comes across to him plainly as an ominous threat: the two choices proposed narrow down to one, self-help, because Odysseus rules out the possibility of a private settlement. However, from the perspective of an audience acquainted with Odysseus' portrayal of Minos adjudicating in Hades and generally with the procedures for appeasing quarrels in early Greek epic, Odysseus, by denying the feasibility of a private settlement, implies that two options are available in order to settle his dispute with the suitors: either self-help, or recourse to a judge.

help, only deliberated on the propriety of resorting to it. Likewise, Cantarella (2002) 161-4 sees litigation before a judge as an attempt to force self-help under public control, not to abandon it.

¹¹⁵ This is clear from the quarrel between Menelaos and Antilokhos (*Il.* xxiii.570-85); see Gagarin (1992) 72. Menelaos at first relies on the intervention of the Akhaian leaders to settle his quarrel with Antilokhos, but then they end up reaching a compromise on their own, without any external arbitration.

The choice between violent self-help and peaceful resolution is encapsulated in Odysseus' own characterization of Minos. The hero had qualified Minos as *oloophrōn* in #2. As argued in the first section, Minos' destructive-mindedness is triggered by threats posed to the welfare of his family, whether it be the abduction of his daughter Ariadne or the murder of his son Androgeos. Granted that the suitors by consuming his resources represented for Odysseus a financial burden, protection of his family is equally at stake for the hero (*Od.* xiv.163-4): the suitors disrespected his wife Penelope (*Od.* xviii.143-5) and even attempted to murder his son Telemakhos. Odysseus is greatly concerned about the fact that these intruders imperiled his son's life. Athena informs him of the suitors' murderous intentions as soon as he lands on Ithaka (*Od.* xiii.425-8) and Eumaios as well makes him privy to the ambush they had set up against Telemakhos on his way back to the island (*Od.* xiv.180-2). The attempted assassination of Telemakhos, in my view, is for Odysseus what the abduction of Ariadne or the murder of Androgeos had been to Minos. This analogy helps to explain why Odysseus selected Minos as grandfather: the Cretan king's destructive-mindedness constitutes a suitable precedent for Odysseus' own actions in retaliating for the injuries his family suffered. In spite of his familiarity with settling disputes through his own rulings, the Cretan king chose to resort to acts of self-help in response both to the abduction of Ariadne and the killing of Androgeos: for his daughter, Minos attacked Theseus while in the harbor of Knossos; for his son, he waged war against Athens and imposed a cruel tribute to be paid with human lives. Odysseus' manslaughter thus finds a precedent in the actions of his fictive grandfather Minos. With Minos as his model, however, Odysseus must consider, if only to abandon, the possibility

of submitting to a judge his dispute with the suitors. However, as Minos did not opt to have his disputes settled through arbitration, so Odysseus does not, and in his decision he is supported by Zeus.¹¹⁶

The circumstances of both characters illustrate the unfeasibility of resolving quarrels bloodlessly when one of the disputants happens to be the king-judge; Minos and Odysseus seem incapable of relinquishing their prerogative as judges to anybody else. Entrusting a third party with a settlement for a king-judge is in the end not a viable alternative –although Odysseus considers it momentarily. As the suitors’ kinsmen seek retaliation for Odysseus’ murder of their dear ones, the problem presents itself again: Odysseus cannot envisage any bloodless solution, thus negating the possibility of a pacific settlement and yielding to his destructive nature. The cycle of vengeance will end only by virtue of Zeus’ tangible intervention to check Odysseus’ violent temper, as it was prefigured in the close association of Zeus with Minos, signifying that human justice cannot bring about any stable conciliation without the god’s will.

In sum, Odysseus’ claim of descent from Minos is programmatic for the hero’s evolution in the *Odyssey*. His fictitious genealogy signals that his relationship with Zeus will draw closer to the point that the god will guide Odysseus’ conduct in the interests of general prosperity across Ithaka by manifesting his approval or disapproval. Such ‘communications’ between the god and Odysseus resemble the intimacy the hero has with Minos share with Zeus: those conversations enabled Minos to bestow the blessing of

¹¹⁶ The suitors could no longer appeal to a judge’s settlements because these are based on *themistes* that they had already transgressed. With their outrageous behavior in defiance of recognized *themistes*, the suitors *-athemistoi* in Odysseus’ words at *Od.* xviii.141-5 for abusing his possessions and courting Penelope- had estranged themselves from the realm of societal rules; see Cook (1995) 97-8.

fertility upon his community (Minos both *oaristēs* and *enneōros*). Moreover, Odysseus' representation of Minos as destructive-minded king, and fair judge for the dead, reflects his own situation and the alternatives he faces: sanguinary retaliation, or *ad personam* punishments and dispute settlement with the suitors through a judge's arbitration. Odysseus does not seem to settle upon a course of action until he connects himself with Minos through the fictitious lineage in book nineteen and prays for and receives Zeus' support in the following book. In the end, Odysseus will follow in the footsteps of the Cretan king, his *oloophrōn* grandfather, thus renouncing arbitration and instead exacting revenge on the suitors.

Minos *Basileutatos*

A fragment from the *Catalogue of Women* (full text on p. 45), cited by Socrates in the pseudo-Platonic *Minos* concerning Minos appears to belong to the same epic tradition that informed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹¹⁷ The fragment reports that Minos was the most kingly (*basileutatos*) of all mortal sovereigns and details his accomplishments:¹¹⁸ by holding the scepter of Zeus, he exercised monarchic power (*anassō/basileuō*) over very many neighboring communities, and also *poleis*. We have already observed how the

¹¹⁷ Identifying a precise date for the *Catalogue* is a hard task; scholars, all with good reasons, propose dates ranging from the eighth to the sixth century BCE. See, e.g., Janko (1982) 85-7; West (1985) 130-7; Hirschberger (2004) 32-51.

¹¹⁸ In the second line of the fragment, *kai* rather than introducing a new clause explains the preceding one; see Smyth (2002), 650, § 2869a. In other words, instead of adding a new and distinct piece of information, *kai* presents the rationale for the assertion that Minos was the most kingly monarch.

superlative *basileutatos* serves to establish a link between Minos and Agamemnon (see p. 45). The fragment also echoes the Iliadic notion that the ranking of a *basileus* hinges on the possession of Zeus' scepter and the number of the king's subjects: these two criteria in fact qualify Minos as the most kingly. For instance, in the *Iliad* Nestor asserts that Agamemnon is superior to Akhilleus on two accounts: the former is a sceptered king whom Zeus blessed with *kudos* (*Il.* i.279) and rules over more men than the latter (*Il.* i.281). For these reasons, Nestor regards Agamemnon as the most kingly among the Akhaians (*basileutatos*: *Il.* ix.69) and Agamemnon himself can boast about being more kingly than Akhilleus (*basileuteros*: *Il.* ix.160). By analogy, in the *Catalogue*, Minos, endowed with Zeus' scepter and lording over a great number of men, deserves the first place among scepter-bearing kings.

Moreover, the three lines encapsulate most of the elements that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* claim for Minos. Shared with the *Iliad* is the idea that the scope of Minos' kingly authority reached beyond the confines of Knossos (passage #1, wherein Minos oversees Crete in its entirety as *epiourous*): Minos' kingly power extends to communities and *poleis* all over Crete.¹¹⁹ Moreover, by assigning Minos to the category of *mortal* kings, the fragment appears cognizant of the tradition that we found in the *Odyssey*, wherein the king is envisioned among the dead in Hades. Finally, the scepter that in the *Odyssey* Minos holds while rendering verdicts for the dead in Hades (#4) seems to express here the legitimization of the king's rule: the object comes from Zeus and

¹¹⁹ As will be argued later (see pp. 130-2), the term *periktiones anthrōpoi* ought to encompass also neighbors by sea, *i.e.* outside Crete.

bestows upon Minos *basileia* over Cretan *poleis*. In the *Odyssey*, it is Minos' role as the confidant of Zeus that legitimizes his reign (#4); the *Catalogue*'s fragment refers to the same relationship between Minos and Zeus by mentioning the scepter as the object linking the two of them.

What the fragment fails to address, at least explicitly, is the destructive aspect of Minos noted in the *Odyssey* (#2: *oloophrōn*), but this must be expected because in the *Minos* Socrates (or the author) sought a passage from archaic literature that would eulogize Minos incontrovertibly. As a result, Sokrates' selection unsurprisingly omits any hint at the king's destructive-mindedness. However, we ought to consider that the parenthetical statement regarding Minos was part of a larger story about one of the *ē hoiai*, likely Ariadne. If so, the full passage might have nodded at Minos' destructive-mindedness: it is in connection with his daughter that Minos was defined *oloophrōn* in the *Odyssey* (#2). Further, the *Catalogue*'s insistence on the scepter, a symbol of royal authority, might subtly remind of the king's destructive powers, as we have observed (see pp. 46-8).

Thus, overall, the fragment from the *Catalogue* yields a picture of Minos' reign compatible with the epic notion of a thriving monarchy ranked foremost on the basis of the number of subjects and founded on a god-given right, as implied by the king's possession of Zeus' scepter. In light of the *Catalogue*'s Pan-Hellenic appeal¹²⁰, we can infer that during the archaic age Minos was largely regarded as the embodiment of the quintessential monarch, most kingly (*basileutatos*) long before Agamemnon could boast

¹²⁰ See West (1985) 164-71.

that title. The *Catalogue* seems, therefore, to lay emphasis on the positive side of Minos' monarchy, exemplary for its divine endorsement by Zeus bestowed on the Cretan king through the scepter. However, the staff, if understood in its polyvalent implications, might also have nodded to Minos' darker, destructive aspect, likely fleshed out in the remainder of the broader context, the lost story about Ariadne, if the heroine in question was indeed the king's daughter.

Conclusions

My inquiry set out to explain why in archaic Greek epic the figure of Minos displays a dichotomy between the king's role as fair judge and his qualification as destructive-minded individual. Such depiction, rather than resulting from an Athenian interpolation in passage #2 incongruous with the portrayal of Minos elsewhere, responds to the epic representation of monarchy, which Minos embodies to the fullest degree (*basileutatos*) according to the *Catalogue of Women* and whereby sovereigns such as Agamemnon and Zeus are at once capable of administering justice for their subjects and displaying destructive behavior against them. Minos' hurtful side is a condition necessary for his kingship to perpetuate itself; fear of his destructive-mindedness ensures that his people be and stay tamed. Minos' destructive nature, however, when directed against external enemies on behalf of both his subjects and family, becomes a positive aspect and stems from the king's custody over Crete (#1: *epiourous*). His destructive-mindedness

therefore helps make Minos' monarchy an acceptable institution for his community, who, while in awe at the king's capacity to injure, can profit from his custody of the island.¹²¹ Minos' competence in settling disputes (#3: *themisteuōn*) constitutes one more appealing feature of his kingship.¹²² In addition to appeasing quarrels peacefully, his knowledge of *themistes* is thought to bestow fertility upon the lands over which the king rules (#4: *enneōros*). Moreover, his legal expertise also ought to grant peace by keeping away internecine strife: Minos stands opposite the ignorance of *themistes* embodied by Ares, the very personification of war,¹²³ and by the *athemistos* man who craves for intestine war.¹²⁴ Finally, his intimacy as the confidant of Zeus guarantees that Minos make appropriate decisions toward improving the general welfare of his kingdom; the god was believed to sow good advice in men chosen for this purpose.¹²⁵ Among other things, the conversations of Minos with Zeus probably concerned adjudication. The only other figure who shares in the privilege of conversing with Zeus is the goddess Themis, embodiment of justice:¹²⁶ thus, defining Minos as confidant of Zeus means that he was understood to take the god's legal advice.

¹²¹ Minos' community should have comprised all the Cretans, because, while his kingdom is centered in Knossos (#4), Idomeneus can still glorify his grandfather as the guardian of the entire island (#1: *epiourous*).

¹²² Minos resorts to *themistes* (*themisteuōn*) on behalf of the dead (dative of advantage) who in fact ask for his intervention (#3). Quite different is the situation of the *Kyklopes* who are said to use *themistes* (*themisteuō*) over their wives and children (genitive), thus in essence claiming right over them. See *LSJ* under *themisteuō* for the different meanings of the verb.

¹²³ *Il.* v.757-61. According to Hera Ares knows of no *themis* whatsoever. She appropriately invokes the intervention of Zeus, who is the primary holder of *themistes* and transfers them to human kings, against Ares, the god who instead is ignorant of any *themis*.

¹²⁴ *Il.* ix.63-4 (Nestor speaking).

¹²⁵ Although Zeus misleads Agamemnon, he does so indirectly, through a deceptive dream. We should consider in a different light cases in which he dispenses his advice directly.

¹²⁶ The undated Homeric hymn to Zeus (xxxiii.2-3) sings the praises of the god "who engages frequently in intimate conversations (ὁ ἄρ' οὖς ὁ ἀρ' ἔει) with Themis sitting next to him." The wording in the hymn (*oarus*

Furthermore, the portrayal of Minos as fair judge and destructive-minded sovereign results from the nifty manipulation of Minos by Odysseus who molds the Cretan king into a precedent for his own behavior, as the hero gives up the possibility of solving his conflict with the suitors through adjudication and chooses instead a violent reprisal against them. The notion of destructive-mindedness occurs in contexts where the individual affected by it resorts to violence in order to retaliate for an injury to his family, in the case of Minos, the abduction of Ariadne and/or the murder of Androgeos. Odysseus' revenge against the suitors qualifies in part as a murderous deed on behalf of his family, since Odysseus nearly lost his son Telemakhos to the ambush set up by the suitors. Through the example of Minos whom Odysseus appropriates by claiming to be his grandson in #4, the hero conjures an illustrious model that justifies his own choice of self-help over arbitration.

oarizei) is significantly reminiscent of the definition of Minos in passage #4 (*oaristēs*). Morris (1992) 177 hypothesizes that Themis was being instructed by Zeus to become a lawgiver herself, and so was Minos. Minos, however, does not appear as lawgiver in Homeric epic, rather as judge.

CHAPTER 2

MINOS TYRANNUS: THE TRANSITION FROM JUDGE TO TYRANT

The present chapter studies the development of the Minos figure subsequent to his epic portrayal. Attention is devoted to both continuities with the Homeric model, and innovations, among the latter Minos' transformation into a tyrant in the fifth century. The first section surveys the few archaic vases that represent Minos: the iconography delivers an overall negative portrayal of the figure represented in his destructive aspect and whose status as judge seems to be contested on an Attic *hydria*.

The second section delves into Bakkhylides' *Ode* 17: a masterful compromise where elements drawn from the epic archetype are intertwined with original ones, the poem delivers a multi-layered image of Minos that ranges from the destructive-minded individual, to the tyrant, both Greek and Oriental, to helpless victim of Aphrodite's schemes.

The third section deals with the few extant fragments from Attic drama: vilified for his inability to render sentences according to Athenian sensibilities, Minos emerges as the stereotypical tyrant. The conclusions to the chapter account for the development of Minos from judge to tyrant: a model for that type of devolution, the Herodotean story about Deiokes, illustrates a similar degenerative pattern from administration of justice to establishment of tyranny. The path leading from justice to tyranny shows that Minos' epic fame as archaic judge earned him notoriety as tyrant in the fifth century.

Minos in Vase Painting of the Archaic Age

The seventh-century artistic production outside of Attica appears to have completely omitted the figure of Minos: the relief designs on an amphora from Tenos (*ca.* 675-650 BCE), gold plaques from Corinth (*ca.* 650), and shield armbands from Olympia (*ca.* 600) all represent the fight between Theseus and the Minotaur in the presence of Ariadne without Minos.¹ Only in the mid-sixth century BCE does Minos make his first appearance on three artifacts as onlooker, along with Ariadne, to the struggle between Theseus and the Minotaur. These are an Attic black-figure amphora of unknown provenance (*ca.* 575-50), an Attic black-figure *hydria* from Vulci, (*ca.* 560-50), and a Khalkidianidian *hydria* from Caere (*ca.* 550);² among the hundreds of sixth-century vases portraying the fight of Theseus against the Minotaur (with or without Ariadne),³ only these three show Minos as spectator.

Even taking into account the vagaries of preservation and discovery, the figure of Minos appears to have received little attention in vase painting of the Archaic Age.⁴ Assessing the significance of Minos' absence is a daunting task. In literary works of the archaic period the character embodied the quintessential notion of epic kingship. If, as so many scholars assert, representations on artifacts were informed by performances of

¹ See *LIMC* VI, "Minotauros," nos 33, 16, 15. For the interpretation of the scenes, see Stern (1978) 3; Gantz (1993) 265-6; Bažant (*LIMC* VI, "Minotauros," 579-80).

² Beazley (1971) 56.27bis; Leiden PC 47 (= *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 16); Louvre F 18 (= *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 17).

³ See Woodford (*LIMC* VI, "Minotauros," 580).

⁴ Bažant (*LIMC* VI, "Minos I," 573).

poetry,⁵ why was Minos so infrequently depicted? I would suggest that the character's exclusion should not be understood as evidence of his insignificance, but rather that in the 'artistic economy' of the scene Minos was an easily expendable element: his harmfulness was subsumed by the Minotaur, a monstrous creature likely to excite the imagination of both the painter and the viewers more so than the representation of the king.

As for the three sixth-century vases on which we *do* have a representation of Minos, I will assume that performances of poetry might have inspired them. By inspiration, however, I mean that while performance of poetry offered a model for vase painters, the latter were free to shape their work according to their own preferences and sensibilities. It is my contention that the painters of the Attic black-figure amphora as well as of the Calchidian *hydria* elaborate on the epic destructive-mindedness of Minos: the visual rendering of that impalpable quality is already an interpretation, therefore, an innovation, as they transposed it to a new medium. The painter of the Attic *hydria* from Vulci offered a representation based on Minos' epic fame as judge, but adapted it to a new message.

The Attic black-figure amphora represents the earliest attempt in Greek art to portray Minos and does so within the context of Theseus' fight against the Minotaur. The amphora also marks the very first extant exploration of the Theseus myth from Athens.⁶

⁵ This hypothesis is commonly held; see, e.g., Maehler (2004) 174-5; Mills (1997) 19.

⁶ If we accept the highest date of 575 BCE proposed for it, the amphora definitely precedes the earliest vase depicting Theseus' slaughter of the Minotaur *without* Minos, an Attic cup dated around 550 (*LIMC* VI, "Minotauros," no 19). Beazley assigned the amphora to the so-called Group E without attempting a more precise identification ([1971] 56.27bis); he thought that this ensemble of painters operated between 575 and

The panel portrays Theseus in the act of striking the final blow on a kneeling Minotaur; Minos and Ariadne frame the scene, the former standing behind his bull-headed son, the latter behind Theseus; an owl figures on the ground between Theseus' legs. The owl representing the goddess Athena testifies to the fact that Theseus here acts as an Athenian hero. Minos' accoutrements, a scepter in his left hand and a richly embroidered *himation*, signify his royalty. As mentioned in chapter 1 (see pp. 46-8), in epic the scepter while bestowing kingly authority upon its owner also stands for a king's retributive powers, and this seems the case here as Minos tilts his staff toward Theseus in hostile fashion. Even Minos' body language forcefully betrays his harmful potentiality; the king stretches out his right arm toward Theseus in a gesture that complements the menace conveyed by the lowered scepter.⁷ The message to Theseus is then to stop the murder of the Minotaur, lest he wishes to incur the wrath of Minos, who enjoys kingly status and would be more than

525. The iconography on the amphora, however, provides a relatively solid ground for preferring the earlier date range, 575-550. Minos disappears from Attic vases as early as the 550's, for he is left out from the scene already in the Attic cup mentioned above. The character resurfaces consistently only 80 years later on eight vases dated to the period *ca.* 470-450 BCE (*LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no.s 18-25). Such an extensive gap makes it likely that the Attic amphora belongs to the higher range, 575-550's, around the same period when the painter of the Attic *hydria* from Vulci (Leiden PC 47) incorporates Minos in his work (560-550), rather than it being an otherwise isolated resurgence of the character between 550 and 525.

⁷ A comparison with fifth-century incarnations of Minos reveals that the scepter's orientation and Minos' gesture on this sixth-century amphora give the scene a precise meaning. Two red-figure Attic vases recovered in Spina and dated to the 470-450's (*LIMC* VI, "Minos I," nos 21-22) repeat the schema of the sixth-century black-figure amphora: in both cases, Minos tilts the scepter tip toward Theseus and extends his right arm toward him in a gesture that, coupled with the hostile pointing of the scepter, seems to threaten Theseus. On a red-figure Attic *stamnos* (470; *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 19) Minos holds his scepter in an upright, neutral position; Minos' general demeanor here, his left arm bent to hold up his *himation*, conveys the notion of a king wrapped in his royal garb and almost detached from the impending slaughter of the Minotaur. Similarly, an Attic *pelike* from Gela (470-450's; *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 19) portrays a motionless Minos, scepter held straight up, witnessing the combat from behind Theseus. Finally, on an Attic amphora from Vulci (470-60; *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 23), Minos' scepter is pointed backwards, away from Theseus, his right hand raised up (and not stretched toward his antagonist) in a gesture that can be construed as horrified surprise, understandably so as his daughter Ariadne is patently helping Theseus from behind. In all these instances, the scepter's inclination helps to clarify the response of Minos to the conflict.

able to retaliate. In my opinion, Minos' iconography on the amphora is meant to engage with and visually render the literal meaning of *oloophrōn*, destructive-minded, that *Od.* xi.322 attaches to Minos; both the vase painting and the poem highlight the sovereign's frightening power and sinister intentions in a context where Theseus and Ariadne also appear. An Athenian depiction of Minos emphasizing this aspect of the king is hardly surprising since the Athenians promoted Theseus as their own hero through the copious sixth-century production of Attic vases portraying his accomplishments. The Athenian appropriation of Theseus meant that Minos had to become the foe.⁸

The Khalkidianian *hydria* from Caere may also be construed as an artistic reworking inspired by Minos *oloophrōn* in the *Odyssey*. All characters are labeled: Ariadne interposes herself between the combat of Theseus with the Minotaur and her father Minos, who is about to raise what appears to be a long spear. Ariadne prevents Minos from interfering in the struggle of Theseus and the Minotaur.⁹ Minos' "spear" resembles his scepter, which the king may in fact hold here.¹⁰ Minos thus is ready to employ the scepter as a weapon; the violent use of this emblem of royal authority, fraught as it is with reminiscences from the Homeric poems,¹¹ ensures that the viewers identify Minos as the epic king of *Od.* xi.322, whose destructive potential fully emerges here.

The position of the characters to one another, particularly the central spot taken by Ariadne, suggests that the scene, although inspired by the same passage in the *Odyssey*

⁸ See Mills (1997) 19.

⁹ Bažant, *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," 571-2.

¹⁰ A comparison with iconography from later vases reveals that Minos' scepter is represented as a long staff with a pointy arrow-head: see *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," nos 20-21.

¹¹ See ch.1, note 48.

and utilizing the scepter/spear as a signifier of Minos' harmfulness, developed independently of the Attic amphora. The *hydria* was produced in a Khalkidianidion colony in Italy¹² and was meant for the consumption of an Etrurian/Italian 'audience'. While it makes a great deal of sense for sixth-century Athenians to have been the first to bring out in art the negative facet of Minos, antagonist of Theseus, no evident reasons can be adduced for the choice of a Khalkidianidion artist to do so, or for the Etrurian consumers in Caere to prefer this explicitly violent representation of Minos. At any rate, the *hydria* suggests that the Cretan saga enjoyed popularity either among Khalkidianidians or Etruscans, or both, with Minos being an integral part of the tale.

We conclude our survey of sixth-century depictions of Minos with the Attic black-figure *hydria* discovered in Vulci, attributed to the so-called Prometheus Painter and accordingly dated to the 550's. Like any other Attic vase found in Etruria, the artifact poses the question of whether its iconography was determined in Athens regardless of the vase's final destination or it was geared towards the expectations, maybe even the demands of the Italian market for which the vase was intended.¹³ While manufactured in Attica, our vase bears ornamental schemes reminiscent of patterns used on artifacts from South Italy.¹⁴ Hence, the decoration implies that the Attic painter knew of these South Italian vases and painted our *hydria* with an eye to the Italian market. Did the painter also

¹² Bažant, *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," 573.

¹³ See the contrasting stances of Marconi and Osborne in Marconi (2004), respectively 27-40, 41-54, the former pushing for an Italian reading of the iconography on Attic vases found in Italy, the latter insisting on the more traditional viewpoint that the iconography is informed primarily by Athenian culture.

¹⁴ The vase belongs to the so-called 'Tyrrhenian' group. The label indicates recognizably *Attic* vases whose ornamental schemes were inspired by patterns on South Italian artifacts proper: see Kluiver (1995) 55-9 with n.1.

shape the vase's iconography for the Italian consumers? This is more difficult to conclude. Imitation of decorative elements on foreign, exotic vases only indicates the painter's superficial acquaintance with the ornamental motifs, not necessarily knowledge of the cultural environment that produced the vases. To be sure, we cannot exclude the possibility that some of the iconographic elements on the *hydria* were designed to appeal to the recipients of the product in Vulci, if the city was the final destination: we simply do not possess information to assess in what ways the buyers might have influenced what Athenian painters painted.¹⁵ Therefore, the interpretation of the *hydria* scene offered here is sought primarily in the context of early sixth-century Athens. An Athenian artisan shaped the figure of Minos in terms arguably compatible with the ways in which the figure of Minos was viewed in Athens at that time.

The vase weaves together both traditional and unconventional motifs. In the center of the scene, Theseus (ΘΕ[ΣΕΥΣ]) while clutching the left arm of the Minotaur ([MINOTA]ΥΡΟΣ) who grasps a stone, pierces him with his sword; to the right, Ariadne (ΑΡΙΑΝΝΗ) looks on. Further to the right, Minos, (ΜΙΝΟΣ) with his back turned to the fight, scepter in hand, wearing a star-studded *himation*, engages in a conversation with *Dēmodikē* (ΔΕΜΟΔΙΚΗ), a female figure seated on a throne and holding a wreath. Athena and Hermes, unnamed but securely identified, stand to the left of Theseus. Except for the two deities, all other characters are named, including nine additional figures,

¹⁵ All we can point out is that Minos kept meeting with interest in Vulci even in the fifth century, when the character reappears on an Attic amphora found in the city (470-60; *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no 20). In iconographical terms, however, the sixth-century *hydria* and this fifth-century amphora do not present a consistent portrayal of Minos that might reveal information as to how the character was received in Vulci: the former focuses on the interaction between Minos and *Dēmodikē*, while the latter on the surprised reaction of a shocked Minos to Ariadne's betrayal.

whose relation to the main theme remains obscure, unless they are meant to represent the Fourteen Athenian youths.¹⁶

The odd scene featuring Minos has been construed as the king's plea for the Minotaur with *Dēmodikē*, who sits as a judge ready to award the wreath in her right hand: the Prometheus painter evidently presented the combat as an athletic contest.¹⁷ It is not difficult to imagine that Minos is here protesting with *Dēmodikē* about the obvious disadvantage against his son, the Minotaur, who, armed simply with a rock, is losing his battle and life to a sword-wielding Theseus. Minos seems to discuss animatedly with *Dēmodikē*, who, as a judge of athletic competitions, is responsible for ensuring that the athletes do not commit fouls and who officiates at the crowning ceremony to proclaim the winner.¹⁸ What is striking about the scene is that Minos, in spite of his royal status underlined by his rich garment¹⁹ and his epic fame as the adjudicator of disputes, responds to an authority higher than himself. *Dēmodikē* is here in charge of detecting irregularities and crowning the winner; as a result, Minos ends up in a position subordinate to hers.

Who, then, is *Dēmodikē*? In myth, she is the second wife of the Boeotian king Athamas, or, alternatively, the wife of Cretheus, brother of Athamas; she appears as a doublet of the more famous Phaidra in that she becomes infatuated with her nephew (or

¹⁶ ΚΑΛΙΚΡΑΤΗΣ, ΠΡΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ, ΧΑΙΤΟΣ, ΣΦΕΚΙΣ, ΧΑΙΤΟΣ, ΛΕΥΚΟΣ, ΑΣΤΥΔΑΜΑΣ, ΤΙ[ΜΟΔ]ΙΚΗ, ΦΑΙΝΙΠΙΟΣ.

¹⁷ Young (1972) 132; *LIMC* VI, "Minotauros," no 18.

¹⁸ Miller (2004) *passim*.

¹⁹ The Prometheus Painter marks off Minos's kingly status through the complexity of his attire's embroidery as opposed to the more somber garments of all other figures; unlike other vases, the scepter here does not seem to convey specifically the notion of Minos' royalty, since other figures such as Kalikrates and Prokritos, hold staffs virtually identical to the king's scepter.

stepson) Phrixos, who rejects her and whom she schemes to kill.²⁰ Hence, *Dēmodikē* belongs to Boeotian mythology and has no known link with the saga of Minos, or the administration of athletic games, or justice. Perhaps, then, *Dēmodikē* is better understood as a speaking name and personification: “the *Dikē* of the *dēmos*”. The *hydria* was produced at a time when personifications had already started to appear as labels in vase paintings.²¹ Likely, *Dēmodikē* does not embody here a moral notion of ‘justice’. As in contemporary literary works, the word *dikē* ought to have a precise legal meaning: *Dēmodikē* thus personifies “the Law of the *dēmos*”, or “the Ruling of the *dēmos*”.²² The specific meaning of *dikē* is confirmed by *Dēmodikē*’s interaction with Minos, known since the *Odyssey* (*Od.* xi.568-71) as the judge dispensing *dikai* (sentences) to the dead, who requested and were willing to accept them. The *dēmos* that *Dēmodikē* represents ought to refer to the Athenians, as the presence of the city’s tutelary goddess, Athena, indicates: the Athenian *dēmos* embodied by the female figure is to crown its own Attic hero Theseus. Since Theseus is the hero of all Athenians, the term *dēmos* is probably used here as an all-encompassing, general term for the whole ‘people’, ‘population’ of Athens/Attica, not a specific segment of it. Minos, distributor of *dikai* in epic and dressed in a richly embroidered *himation* signifying his royal status, is thus made to negotiate with the *dikē* of the people of Athens in a clear position of subordination, as he stands in

²⁰ Pind. fr.49 (*Damodikē*) along with *schol.* Σ *Pind. Pyth.* iv.288a; Apollod. i.9.1; Hyg. *astr.* ii.20. Less useful a fragment from *The Catalogue of Women* (fr. 22, 10a50 MW) relating that *Dēmodikē* refused the courtship of many kings (the story, perhaps, is picked up by Apollod. *Bibl.* i.7.7). See Gantz (1993) 177, 196-7, 317.

²¹ The earliest personification is *Themis* on an Attic black figure vase, ca. 590; see Shapiro (1993) 217-9. The chest of Cypselus dedicated ca. 600 BCE in the Pan-Hellenic sanctuary at Olympia bore the struggle of *Dikē* and *Adikia*; the theme was later reprised on two Attic vases dated to the 520’s and is interpreted as the triumph of democracy over the Peisistratids’ tyranny; Shapiro (1993), 23-4, 39-44.

²² Gagarin (1974) 186-97 cites ‘ruling’ in Sol. iv.36 and Theogn. 54, 544, 688; ‘court’ in Sol. xxxvi.3.

front of the enthroned figure. Therefore, the *hydria* scene not so subtly claims the superiority of Athenian Law over an old way of administering justice represented by the king-judge Minos, now compelled to relinquish his epic prerogative of judge and to plead his case with *Dēmodikē*. The Prometheus Painter thus brings a fundamental innovation to the epic model: Minos' role as judge is negated and replaced by the Law of the Athenian People.

The two Attic vases explored so far attest to the fact that Minos' epic destructive-mindedness against Theseus was but one factor accounting for the Athenian hostile stance toward the Cretan king. Once the Athenians chose to endorse Theseus as their city's hero during the sixth century, it was perhaps inevitable that they would cast Minos as the foe; they did so on the Attic amphora utilizing an imagery meant to render visually the epic definition of Minos as *oloophrōn*. The epic epithet conveniently offered the Athenians a basis for attacking Minos, but the character seems to have incurred antipathy from Athens in the sixth century due to his epic portrayal as king-judge. The Attic *hydria* attests that Minos came to be construed as the representative of the old order when justice was in the hands of kings. Both the Attic *hydria* and the amphora thus reflect Minos' unpopularity in Athens and establish the foothold for the demonization of the character in the fifth century.

Bakkhylides' *Ode 17: The Genesis of Minos the Tyrant.*

Bakkhylides' *Ode 17*, a dithyramb known by the double title *Theseus* or *Eitheoi* (*The Youths*),²³ is the earliest extant literary work to present an extended narrative concerning Minos. The *Ode* begins with the description of a ship sailing to Crete with Theseus and the fourteen youths of the title. As Minos brushes his hand against the cheek of the maiden Eriboia, Theseus, unwilling to tolerate any wrong done to the youngsters, bids that the Cretan king restrain his sexual drive. The young hero threatens that Minos, though son of Zeus and Europa, will find him a worthy opponent, since he, too, can boast a divine father, Poseidon. The Cretan king, angered at Theseus' boldness, addresses a prayer to his father Zeus, who promptly acknowledges his paternity by hurling a flash of lightning. Emboldened by Zeus' portent, Minos dares Theseus to fetch the golden ring that he has just thrown into the sea; Theseus' survival would unmistakably prove his

²³ The genre, to which the piece belongs, has been disputed. The Alexandrian scholars classed the *Ode* as the third dithyramb in Bakkhylides' *corpus*. However, near the close of the poem (129), the youths are said to burst out into a paean, rejoicing at Theseus' unexpected return from the depths of the sea. Moreover, the *Ode* concludes with an invocation to Apollo (130), more appropriate for a paean. The disagreement over the formal characteristics of paeans and dithyrambos begun in antiquity (e.g. the controversy over Bakkhylides' *Ode 23* between Kallimakhos, who labeled the poem a paean, and Aristarkhos, who instead regarded it as a dithyramb) has persisted to this day. Most modern scholars read *Ode 17* as a dithyramb (Comparetti [1898], 25-38; Gerber [1965] 212; Wüst [1968] 528; Pieper [1972] 398; Villarrubia [1990] 31-2; Fearn [2007] 174-7 with n. 34), with one notable exception (Jebb [1905] 223-5 argues for a paean). Recently, it has even been proposed to interpret the poem as an *hyporkhema*, a song performed in honor of Apollo and featuring dance moves that reproduced the action described by its words (Schmidt [1990] 28-9). For our purposes, the genre of the poem has a bearing, in so far as it may have influenced the treatment of Minos. The *Ode* doubtless carries strong resemblances with tragedy. First, it starts abruptly *in medias res* (Comparetti [1898], 27-8). Further, the poem centers on an *agon*, a dialogical contest between the protagonists, so common in tragedy (Dodd [1998]). Finally, the largely negative portrayal of Minos squares with that constructed by Athenian drama (see Cantarella [1963] 164-5, n. 9; Mills [1997] 39-40, n. 170). These considerations suggest to me that the *Ode* should have belonged to the genre of dithyrambos, whose conventions and themes tragedy ought to have borrowed since it was thought to derive from them (Arist. *Poet.* iv.1449a10). The unfavorable characterization of Minos, a staple *topos* in Attic tragedy, may thus speak in favor of the *Ode* being a dithyramb.

kinship with Poseidon. When the Athenian hero dives bravely into the sea, Minos orders a change in the ship's course to deny his antagonist any chance of success. To the dismay of a prematurely gloating Minos, Theseus re-emerges beside the vessel with a cloak and a wreath, gifts received from his stepmother, Amphitrite, and meant to confirm that the hero is related to Poseidon.

The circumstances of the *Ode*'s performance can only be reconstructed from evidence internal to the poem. Textual clues indicate that a Kean chorus performed *Ode* 17 before an Ionian audience at a festival in Delos.²⁴ The poem's content has also led most scholars to suggest that the piece expresses Athenian propaganda in the aftermath of the foundation of the Delian League (478/7 BCE).²⁵ From the very outset, the *Ode* endorses Theseus' role as protector of the fourteen youths, significantly called "sons of the Ionians" (Bacchyl. xvii.3). Depicted as a fully Athenian hero in that he enjoys the goodwill of the city goddess Athena during his journey to Crete (xvii.7),²⁶ Theseus, the

²⁴ Ieranò (1989) 158-9; van Oeveren (1999) 35-6; Maehler (2004) 172-3. The very end of the poem reveals that a chorus of Keans performed it, as the paean shouted by the youths celebrates the performance of the actual chorus in a perfect example of *mimesis* where myth and performance blur into one another (Bacchyl. xvii.130-2: Δάλιε, χοροῖσι Κηίων | φρένα ἰανθεῖς | ὅπαζε θεόπομπον ἐσθλῶν τύχαν. [Apollo] of Delos, pleased in your heart by the choruses of the Keans, may you grant a god-sent share of delights). Apollo's epiclesis "*Dalios*" (130) suggests that the *Ode* was executed during a festival held in Delos in honor of Apollo, identified with the *Delia*: the festival is attested as early as the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (Ap. 147-50) and ought to have provided an appropriate venue for the *Ode*'s performance since it featured, among other activities, singing competitions. Further, near the beginning of the poem, the reference to the Athenian youths as "sons of the Ionians" (3) would presuppose an Ionian audience, encouraged to empathize with the Athenians' predicament, and for which the *Ode* was written and performed.

²⁵ Jebb (1905) 229; Severyns (1933) 58-9; Maniet (1941) 49-50; Pieper (1972) 180-1; Giesekam (1976) 238; Scodel (1984) 137; Ieranò (1989) 160 with n. 16; Villarrubia (1990) 30, n. 65; Mills (1997) 20-1; van Oeveren (1999) 39.

²⁶ The presence of Athena as the young hero's tutelary goddess undermines Schmidt's view that Theseus would not necessarily represent an Athenian hero in the *Ode* (Schmidt [1990] 29-31). While it is true that other non-Athenian Ionians were interested in recounting the myth of Theseus as much as the Athenians were, Theseus in the *Ode* is unmistakably linked with Athens through Athena. Furthermore, I am skeptical of Schmidt's argument for dating the poem in the early 460's on the basis that Bakkhylides borrowed two

champion of the Ionian youths, provides an exemplum useful for Athenian propaganda of the 470's. Understood in light of the recent past, Theseus' story mirrors on the mythical plane the fight that Athens undertook against the Persians in the interest of the Ionians at the time of the Hellenic League (480-78 BCE). Projected into the future, the tale warrants the Athenian commitment to the welfare of the Ionians in its capacity as leader of the newly founded Delian league. Accordingly, the mid to late 470's, when Athens was appropriating for herself the figure of Theseus,²⁷ seems the most suitable historical context for the dithyramb's performance.²⁸ A Kean chorus was thus made to perform

rare expressions from Aeschylus' *Persians* (πόντιον ἄλσος in Bacchyl. xvii.84-5 and Aeschyl. *Pers.* 103; καρδίαν ἄμυξεν in xvii.18-19 with *Pers.* 161, καρδίαν ἀμύσσει). Even if intentional, these verbal echoes cannot prove whether Bakkhylides drew upon Aeschylus and not vice versa.

²⁷ In 476/5 Kimon orchestrated the exhumation of Theseus' bones in Skyros and, in observance of a Delphic oracle, had the relics transferred to Athens (Plut. *Thes.* 36.1-3; *Cim.* 8.3-7). In the late 470's the Theseion in Athens underwent refurbishings; see Gieskam (1976) 249, n. 6.

²⁸ Maehler has repeatedly rejected this traditional dating of the *Ode*; see Maehler (1991) 114-26, Maehler (1997) 179-84, and Maehler (2004) 174-5. The scholar has argued that *Ode* 17 must have inspired the scene with the encounter between Theseus and Amphitrite painted on an Attic red-figure *krater* from Cerveteri (*ARV*² 318.1) possibly dating between 500 and 490 BCE; the vase would thus constitute a *terminus ante quem* for *Ode* 17, on the assumption that the painter reproduced that scene to meet customers' demands *after* the public performance of the poem. According to this view, Bakkhylides' poem would then have no connection with the creation of the Delian League. The one-way relationship Maehler posits from poetic performance to representation in visual arts rests on solid ground (see Mills [1997] 19); for instance, Mikon's painting on the walls of the freshly rebuilt Theseion displayed as its centerpiece the quarrel between Minos and Theseus (Paus. i.17.2-6), made famous *after* the success of the *Ode*'s performance (the date for the painting oscillates between 470 according to Gieskam [1976] 239 and shortly after the 440's in *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no. 15). One difficulty, however, affects the cogency of Maehler's thesis. The *krater* is not securely dated to the end of the sixth or start of the fifth century BCE because, while bearing the signature of the potter Euphronios, it lacks the painter's signature. Invoking stylistic considerations, Beazley recognized the anonymous painter of the vase as Onesimos and dated it accordingly (500-490BCE; see *ARV*² 318.1), but the *krater* has also been dated to the 440's (see Mills [1997] 40, n. 171). Even if we accept the earlier date for the vase, two other considerations speak against Maehler's view. First, the Attic *krater* indeed depicts Theseus meeting with Amphitrite, but does not contain any reference to the fact that Minos imposed this mission upon him as shown in *Ode* 17. Maehler himself states that vase painters tend to integrate within the representation of a scene key elements belonging to the larger story (Maehler [2004] 174). The absence of Minos in the cup's painting, then, weakens the hypothesis that the painter was referring specifically to the myth in Bakkhylides' poem. Second, we cannot credit Bakkhylides with being the sole source for that depiction on the *krater*; the late VI-century Theseid, an extremely popular epic poem at that time, although lost to us, may well have detailed Theseus' marine adventure among his other feats. On the vase, Theseus' meeting with Amphitrite is included in an iconographic cycle, as one episode

poetry imbued with Athenian mythology and propaganda for an Ionian audience.²⁹ Consequently, Bakkhylides' *Ode* ought to have accommodated the sensibilities of the Athenians and the Ionians in the audience, but also of the Keans performers and likely of their fellow-islanders in the audience as well.

For the *Ode*'s political content to be conveyed effectively, we would expect Minos, foe of Theseus and consequently anathema for both Athenians and Ionians, to be utterly discredited in order to extol Theseus. Surprisingly, this is hardly the case. Notwithstanding the poem's prejudice in favor of the Athenian Theseus, the construction of Minos is not entirely negative. While casting Minos' sexually unbridled behavior and haughty attitude as a foil to Theseus' virtue, Bakkhylides throughout the dithyramb still highlights Minos' martial prowess. Theseus addresses Minos as hero (23) and warlord of the Cnossians (*polemarchos* at 39). The narrative, too, defines him as hero steadfast in battle (*menepolemos hērōs* at 73) and Cnossian general (*stratagetes* at 120-1). In addition, Bakkhylides repeatedly insists on Minos' exceptional pedigree as son of Zeus (20; 29-32; 53-4). The narrative even underscores how outstanding an honor Minos obtained from Zeus, as the god confirmed paternity of his beloved child with a lightning bolt, a portent for everybody to look upon (67-71).

among other juvenile deeds of the hero, namely his confrontations with Kerkyon, Prokrustes, Skyron and the Marathon bull. Likely, the encounter of Amphitrite and Theseus, along with the other illustrations on the *krater*, were drawing upon a unified cycle of Theseus' early adventures, such as the Theseid must have established. On the whole, since Maehler's arguments in favor of dating the *Ode* to the 490's or earlier do not rest on forceful evidence, we must consider the 470's as a probable period during which *Ode* 17 was written and performed, with the implication that the poem endorses Athens' leading role within the Delian league.

²⁹ Athens' influence on the subject matter of a Kean choral performance might be understood as a sign of the cultural domination of Athens over her ally: Fearn (2007) 244-46. Fearn, however, also infers that the Keans surrendered their own identity and looked at themselves as Athenians. Quite the opposite, I think, *Ode* 17 shows the resilience of the Keans, who were still clinging to their traditions about Minos.

These contradictions indicate that the *Ode* weaves together a complex and multi-layered picture of the Cretan king. In the following pages, I argue that Bakkhylides constructs three representations of Minos. The poet resumes and develops the Homeric portrayal of the destructive-minded king, while also presenting Minos in the fashion of an eastern autocrat and Greek tyrant. Simultaneously, the poet sketches a third portrayal that emphasizes positive attributes of Minos and builds an *apologia* for the king's misdeeds. The three depictions of Minos, while obviously distinct from one another, are built upon common, polyvalent elements that serve multiple and even contrasting purposes. My 'polysemic' reading of Bakkhylides' poem confirms the assumption of a composite audience made of Athenians, Ionians, and Keans, for which the different representations of Minos were intended.

Bakkhylides shapes a story that literally interprets the king's destructive-mindedness against Theseus of *Od.* xi. 321-5. The Cretan king cunningly devises an impossible challenge and makes sure that, even if Theseus were to swim back up to the surface, he would still be left stranded in the middle of the sea.³⁰ Moreover, the poet seems to explore the subtler nuance that destructive-mindedness carried in epic, in particular its association with family revenge (see pp. 13-27). The *Ode* relies on the audience's knowledge of the whole saga.³¹ The story of Androgeos, already attested in

³⁰ Gieseckam's interpretation of lines 88-9 (κέλευσέ τε κατ' οὐρον ἴσχευ εὐδαίδαλον νᾶα) that Minos would order to stop the ship seems forced (Gieseckam [1976] 242-6). Several parallels support the use of ἴσχειν for steering a ship's course rather than halting it: see Maehler (2004) 183. Besides, κατ' οὐρον means unambiguously "before, according to the wind": obviously, a ship's route cannot be arrested κατ' οὐρον; see Jebb (1905) 384-5.

³¹ Scodel (1984) 142-3.

the *Catalogue of Women* and therefore known at the latest by the sixth century BCE,³² ought to provide the background for the *Ode*, thus explaining Minos' return to Crete with the fourteen youths, whom he is carrying to Knossos in retaliation for the murder of his son. Implicit in the king's plans to annihilate Theseus through an unfair challenge, Minos' destructive-mindedness appears in the context of family revenge as it did in epic. Moreover, Minos' special relationship with Zeus, which had been the basis for his distinction in epic, becomes here the underpinning for his arrogance and claim of superiority over Theseus. Bakkhylides thus recasts an important element in the epic description of Minos, giving it a new negative meaning. We may finally add that Minos' destructive-mindedness against Theseus turned out to be unsuccessful in the end, but so was its epic counterpart for the most part (see p. 30).

Alongside this reworking of the epic tradition about Minos, Bakkhylides introduces a fundamental innovation; he molds the character into the stereotypical figure of the autocrat/tyrant. Contentions that Minos embodies traits typical of a tyrant have already been advanced. These claims, however, either do not offer specific arguments,³³ or propose models that would have been foreign to an early fifth-century BCE construct of the tyrannical figure.³⁴ Instead, Bakkhylides' portrayal of Minos seems to anticipate

³² For the dating of the *Catalogue*, see p. 66, n. 117. Moreover, the role of the fourteen Athenian victims was known as early as the mid-sixth century BCE, since they appear along with Epiboia (*sic!*), Theseus and Ariadne on the famous François vase.

³³ Morris (1992) 352 hints at Minos' "typical wickedness of a tyrant in the Herodotean image", without elaborating any further.

³⁴ Calame (1990) 220 identifies correspondences between Minos' traits and the definition of tyrant in Plato's *Republic*; the fourth-century characterization of a tyrant, however, should not be mapped onto the fifth-century construct, because each of them responds to concerns and issues of its own: Dewald (2003) 25. Louden (1999), in hypothesizing an Indo-European origin for the struggle between Theseus and Minos, suggests that the latter would reprise the role of the foreign tyrant Frangrasyan, whom the Iranian hero

the notions about tyrannical power outlined in the well-known constitutional debate that Herodotos sets in 522 BCE (Hdt. iii.80-2). The debate concerns the kind of government that the Persians should choose for their nation, but certainly relates *Greek* reflections on the nature of different regimes.³⁵ Otanes, one of the Persians, while endorsing democracy, criticizes what he defines interchangeably as rule of one (80.3: *mounarkhiē*) and tyranny (80.4: *tyrannos anēr*; 81.1: *tyrannis*), and what we may call autocracy.³⁶ He emphasizes how autocracy releases the ruler from the responsibility of accounting for his actions (80.3: *aneuthunos*). The autocrat's unconstrained *hubris* and *phthonos*, envy directed at the best of men, inform all of his actions (80.3-4), among which are subversion of a country's laws and rape of women (80.5).

For *Ode* 17, Bakkhylides selects an episode that allows casting Minos in the same terms as the autocrat of the Persian debate: the story is suitable for showing the relationship between subjects, the fourteen Athenians, and their newly acquired master, Minos. The central episode, Minos' harassment of Eriboia, subsumes two of the dire consequences of an autocratic regime pointed out by Otanes. The king's touching of the maiden's cheek forebodes her rape; moreover, Minos' gesture violates the norm whereby maidens of aristocratic stock, such as we may regard Eriboia, could be touched properly

Apām Napāt defeats in the Avestan account *Yast* 19. The comparison is fascinating, yet I am not sure whether the notion of tyrant in *Ode* 17 and *Yast* 19 coincides. For the likely date of *Yast* 19 in the Achaemenid age, see Bremmer (2002) 48.

³⁵ Gagarin (1986) 20, n. 5; McGlew (1993) 81-3.

³⁶ The definitions of *mounarkhiē* and *tyrannis* clearly overlap to indicate the general concept of autocracy; see, Dewald (2003) 50-51, n. 8.

only in the context of marriage.³⁷ Thus, in line with the autocratic template in Herodotos, Minos is at once guilty of attempting rape and breaking a well-established social code.

Other aspects of Otanes' criticism of autocracy, namely the autocrat's *hubris*, unaccountability and *phthonos*, also find a place in the *Ode*. The poem focuses on Minos' hubristic behavior, for which Theseus openly rebukes the king (40-1: "the *hubris* that causes much grief"). Moreover, the sailors' surprised reaction following Theseus' speech (48-50) makes clear that under normal circumstances nobody would dare to confront Minos, let alone threaten him with possible consequences for his behavior, as Theseus does (45-6). Minos' angry reaction to Theseus' words confirms that the king is accustomed to being *aneuthunos*. Finally, the theme of Minos' *phthonos* runs, albeit implicitly, throughout the poem. Theseus presents himself as a peer of Minos by boasting divine parentage. Otanes specifies in the constitutional debate that the tyrant is envious of the success and even the existence of *aristoi*, the most remarkable among men (Hdt iii.80.4): Theseus might be considered one such person because he claimed for himself a semi-divine status similar to that of Minos. Minos, then, in trying to end the hero's life with an unfair challenge may be acting under the stimulus of *phthonos*, which makes the autocrat resent the existence of *aristoi*, as Otanes puts it.

The correspondences between the Herodotean debate and Bakkhylides' portrayal of Minos suggest that the audience of *Ode* 17 was prompted to recognize in Minos an example of autocratic behavior. Furthermore, the autocratic template shaped in the

³⁷ Clark (2004) 129-39. The author investigates examples of proper and improper touching in archaic lyric poetry that demonstrate forcefully the gravity of Minos' advances to Eriboia in *Ode* 17. Her analysis confirms Segal's intuition ([1979] 25) that the accident was not a trivial matter intended to characterize Theseus' reaction as overblown and the whole conflict between Theseus and Minos as humorous.

constitutional debate as well as in other passages of Herodotos' *Histories*³⁸ has been shown to fit specifically patterns and behaviors characterizing eastern rulers, such as Cyrus or Dareios, whose downfall depended on underestimating their adversaries, the Massagetai and the Greeks respectively.³⁹ The *Ode* presents a similar theme by stressing at its end Minos' failure to assess correctly Theseus' chances of survival. A *gnome* introduces Minos' misjudgment; men of sound *phrenes*, unlike the Cretan king, realize that nothing the gods ordain is beyond belief (117-8). The return of Theseus from the sea catches the king by surprise, as he prematurely rejoiced in his own success (119-21: "ah, in what thoughts [Theseus] checked [Minos,] the Cnossian warlord!").

Further, Bakkhylides insists twice on the eastern origins of Minos; his maternal grandfather is Phoinix (xvii.31-2) and his mother Europa is a Phoenician woman (53-4). The emphasis on these ethnic markers,⁴⁰ along with the character acting in the mode of an eastern despot who lacks judgment, is meant to foster the liminality of an orientalized Minos.⁴¹ Bakkhylides' insistence on Minos' Phoenician origins, then, is yet one more

³⁸ The story of the Mede Deïokes (Hdt i.96-100) and Socles' speech (Hdt v.92).

³⁹ Dewald (2003) 47-9; 34-5.

⁴⁰ Hall (2001) 137-8 maintains that the expression 'daughter of an individual named Phoinix' does not necessarily qualify Europa as Phoenician. However, *Ode* 17 leaves little doubt about her ethnicity: she is indeed a Phoenician woman (53-4: *Phoenissa nympha*). Moreover, in the mythical abductions opening Herodotos' *Histories*, Greeks snatch Europa from Tyre in Phoenicia (Hdt i.2.1).

⁴¹ Irwin (2007) 199-200. In the *Ode*, Bakkhylides presents Minos as a Cretan since he leads the Cnossians (39) in his capacity as general from Knossos (120-1). Minos' Cretan identity, however, does not necessarily imply that his audience was meant to perceive him as one of their own fellow-Greeks: see, e. g., Mills (1997) 224-5 who argues for a literary image of Crete as a 'pseudo-barbaric' land, an "un-Greek" world in fifth-century literature. I would add that especially in the aftermath of the Persian wars a Cretan pedigree would not have identified Minos as Greek; the Cretans notoriously refused to participate in the conflict (Hdt. vii.169-70), thus excluding themselves from a moment pivotal for the rise of a pan-Hellenic identity amongst the Greeks. The account of Ktesias of Knidus, who claims that Cretan archers partook in the battle of Salamis (*FGrHist* 688 F13.30) is not reliable as Ktesias is notorious for his historical blunders; see Bigwood (1978) 34-36.

strategy designed to characterize the king as an outsider, a stranger with ties to the East both by maternal line and in terms of despotic behavior.⁴²

From this perspective, *Ode* 17 relates the story of an eastern despot imposing tribute on Athens, an Ionian city forced to surrender its youths (xvii.3: “the sons of the Ionians”). The mythical subject matter thus achieves contemporary relevance. The audience was meant to recognize in the tribute of Athens to Minos a mythical precedent for the tribute exacted from the Greek cities by the Persian king. Fundamental to this piece of propaganda disguised as myth is the construction of Minos as an eastern king;⁴³ the references to his eastern origins and the depiction of a behavior conforming to that of oriental despots make the analogy credible.⁴⁴

⁴² By disassociating him from Crete, later authors suggest that Minos’ Greekness could have been questioned already in the fifth century BCE. Strabo knows of a version wherein Minos was considered a *xenos* to Crete (x.4.8); along the same lines, Plato speaks of Minos as a judge from Asia (*Gorgias* 523e).

⁴³ Morris (1992) 353 has also recognized the allegory of Minos for the Persian king, whom she identifies with Xerxes. Her conclusion, however, is based on the flimsy argument that Minos’ gesture of throwing the golden ring into the sea would resemble that of Xerxes, as the Persian king plunged a golden *phialē* (and a Persian dagger) in the waters before crossing the Hellespont (Hdt. vii.54). Although both gestures are made in the context of a prayer ritual, of Minos to Zeus and of Xerxes to the Sun, the objects are clearly employed for different purposes: Minos used the ring as a disposable tool to challenge Theseus; Xerxes instead offered up the items to guarantee a safe passage for himself and his troops. A different connection of Minos with the Persian world has been suggested by Barron (1980) 4, who suggests that Minos personified Persia’s Phoenician fleet, hence the references to Minos’ Phoenician roots.

⁴⁴ Bakkhylides’ portrayal of Minos may contain specific allusions to Dareios and the image he promoted of himself through inscriptions, such as the ones found at Behistun and Nasqš-i Rostam. Dareios promoted his exclusive relationship with Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity of the Iranian pantheon, thanks to whose favor he rose to the throne of Persia (*DB* i. section 5), and his competence as warrior, but also as commander-in-chief (*DNb* section 8g; see Briant [2002] 212-3, 227-8). Bakkhylides’ construction of the Minos figure approximates the ideological campaign of Dareios: even though Minos can further the claim of a father-son relationship with Zeus that Dareios did not boast, both identify the respective pantheon’s chief god as the ultimate source of their *status* and power. Moreover, the descriptions of Minos as leader of hosts (*Bacchyl.* 39; 120-1) and warrior (73) also correspond with Dareios’ propaganda. Bakkhylides’ allusions to Dareios were meant to resonate with the Ionians: Greek translations of Dareios’ inscriptions possibly circulated among Ionians and occasions for cultural interchange between Ionians and Persians certainly were not lacking, if not before, then soon after the Ionian revolt in 499 BCE, when Persian governors were put in charge of East Greek cities; see Miller (1997) 121-2, 104. That in the aftermath of the victory at Salamis when the *Ode* was composed the Ionians still had a vivid recollection of Dareios

Parallel to the orientalization of Minos, Bakkhylides also configures an alternative possible identity for the king as Greek tyrant. The references to Minos as military commander (*polemarchos Knōssiōn* at 39; *stratagetas* at 120-1) and warrior (*meneptolemos hērōs* at 73) may stem from the notion of the tyrant as skillful warrior endorsed by Archilochos' poetry, wherein the poet linked military conquest with the right to establish tyranny.⁴⁵ Similarly, Minos is represented in the *Ode* as the successful general, who having defeated Athens is now collecting in person the tribute in young lives that the Athenians owe him: Minos' military victory over the Athenians is thus presupposed by his triumphant return to Crete. Coupled with the general characterization of Minos' behavior as autocratic, Bakkhylides' insistence on the Cretan's successful leadership in war solidifies the identification of the king with Greek tyrants.

In the figure of Minos are thus conflated at once allusions to eastern autocrats and Greek tyrants, along with echoes of the character's destructive-mindedness from epic. In spite of these negative representations, the poet still manages to include positive qualifications for Minos: his martial prowess is recalled throughout the poem, as is his close relationship with Zeus. The *Ode*'s insistence on these specific traits of Minos is

rather than Xerxes, should not be surprising: it was Dareios who mercilessly crushed the Ionian revolt of 499-494 with the destruction of Miletus.

⁴⁵ Archil. Fr. 24 West 17-21: "πόλιν δὲ ταύτην [...] [...] ἐπιστρέ[φεα]ι ἢ οὐ τοι ποτ' ἄνδρες ἐξε[πόρθη]σαν, σὺ δ' ἐ[ν] ν[ύ]ν εἶλες αἰχμῇ καὶ μέγ' ἐ[ξήρ]ω) κ[λ]έος. ἢ κείνης ἄνασσε καὶ τ[υραν]νίην ἔχε· ἢ π[ο]λ[λοῖ]σ[ι] θ[η]ν[ζ]ηλωτὸς ἀ[νθρ]ώπων ἔσεαι" ("This city ... you move against... men never razed, but now you have conquered by spear and have obtained great fame. Lord over it and hold a tyranny; you will be envied by many men."). Sixth-century tyrants also had a similar reputation as valiant military commanders in the fifth century. Peisistratos was renowned in Athens for his generalship in the campaign against Megara, a fame that he exploited to obtain bodyguards, wherewith he imposed his first tyrannical rule in Athens (Hdt. i.59). Polykrates of Samos was the talk of the whole of Greece, because he succeeded in every military enterprise he attempted (Hdt. iii.39.3). Minos is also constructed by Herodotos as a successful general (Hdt. i.171.3: εὐτυχέοντος τῷ πολέμῳ). See pp. 150-1.

closely reminiscent of the portrayal of the king in Bakkhylides' first epinician *Ode*,⁴⁶ where Minos was celebrated for fathering the earliest king of Keos, Euxantios, himself ancestor of Argeios,⁴⁷ the athlete to whom the epinician was dedicated between 460 and 452.⁴⁸ The fragmentary epinician describes the arrival of Minos to Keos with fifty ships; in accordance with the will of Zeus, Minos seduces the virgin Dexithea, distributes the land on the island to half of his Cretan warriors, whom then he leaves there when he sails back to Knossos. Nine months later, Dexithea gives birth to Euxantios.

While the epinician postdates the *Ode*, it is safe to assume that the tradition about Minos' paternity of Euxantios, the first Kean king, had already been developed prior to Bakkhylides' dithyramb in the mid-470's.⁴⁹ The Keans must have claimed a connection with Crete before the Persian wars, when the Cretans notoriously refused their help to the Greeks (Hdt. vii.169-70); after that conflict, any claim of relationship with the Cretans, who declined to espouse the Greek cause, would have been undesirable for the Keans.

⁴⁶ Gieskam (1976) 247-8; van Oeveren (1999) 40. Less convincingly, other scholars maintained that Minos' positive traits were designed merely to enhance the ultimate triumph of Theseus over the Cretan king: Maniet (1941) 54; Pieper (1972) 397. In other words, the more remarkable the characterization of Minos, the more astonishing the feat of the Athenian champion.

⁴⁷ Bacchyl. *Ep.* i.112-27; 141-3: τριτάτᾳ μετ[□—] [ἀμ]έρῳ Μίνως ἀρ[ῆ]ος | [ῆ]λυθεν αἰολοπρύμνοις | ναυσὶ πεντήκοντα σὺν Κρητῶν ὁμίλῳ· | Διὸς Εὐκλείου δὲ ἔκατι βαθύζωνον κόρην | Δεξιθέαν δάμασεν· [κα]ί [ο]ί λίπεν ἥμισυ λαῶν, | [ἄ]νδρας ἀρηϊφίλους, [το]ῖσιν πολύκρημον χθόνα | νείμας ἀποπλέων ῥ[χε]τ' ἐς | Κνωσὸν ἱμερτὰν [πό]λιν | [β]ασιλεὺς Εὐρωπιά[δας]· | δεκάτῳ δ' Εὐξ[άντι]ον | [μ]ηνὶ τέκ' εὐπλόκαμος νύμφα φερεκυδέϊ [νάσῳ] [...] ἐκ τοῦ μὲν γένος ἔπλετο καρτερόχειρ Ἀργεῖος [□—□] λέοντος [θυμὸν ἔχων]. "On the third day Minos the warrior came [to Keos] with 50 ships with gleaming sterns along with a Cretan host; by the aid of well-famed Zeus he seduced the deep-girded virgin Dexithea; he left there half of his followers, men familiar with Ares, among whom he divided the land of many cliffs; the king, son of Europa, returned to Knossos; after nine months, the beautiful-tressed young girl gave birth to Euxantios on the glorious island [...] from this stock was born strong-handed Argeios, with a lion's heart."

⁴⁸ Argeios won the boxing competition in his age class at the Isthmian games: Irigoin (1993) 77-8.

⁴⁹ The only other piece of evidence for Euxantios comes from fr. 52 of Pindar's Paean iv, wherein the Kean king refuses to share in one seventh of the cities on Crete: since the paean is undated, a chronology for the traditions about Euxantios and his connections with Crete cannot be securely established.

The representation of Minos and his genealogical ties with Euxantios in the epinician, then, must be traced back prior to *ca.* 480.

In an epinician geared to please the Keans' national pride, Minos is dubbed *arēios* and his Cretan retinue *arēiphiloi*.⁵⁰ Moreover, his seduction of Dexithea is accomplished with Zeus' help (*Dios hekati*). Minos is able to turn his intercourse with a virgin, a potentially ruinous action as in the case of Eriboia, into a deed that brought him and the Keans good fame (hence, Zeus is termed *Eukleios*). Expertise in war and a close association with Zeus hark back to Minos' defining traits in *Ode* 17, which we can then regard as elements endorsed by Kean propaganda, as they certainly are later in the epinician; they were recognizable to the Kean audience and appropriate for a Kean chorus to sing. A complete vilification of Minos would not have befitted a chorus of Keans, whose compatriots regarded the Cretan king as their own ancestor; nor would it have been acceptable for Bakkhylides, a poet who proudly declared his Kean origins and was often hired by Kean victors to sing their praises.⁵¹

In addition to representing a Kean Minos, Bakkhylides in the *Ode* constructs an *apologia* of the king whose errant behavior is caused by Aphrodite's sway over him. This defense of Minos hinges on Bakkhylides' allusion to the Iliadic catalogue of Zeus' escapades (*Il.* xiv.315-7, 321-2):

οὐ γάρ πώ ποτέ μ' ὥδε θεᾶς ἔρως οὐδὲ γυναικὸς
θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περιπροχυθεὶς ἐδάμασσεν,

⁵⁰ Minos' expertise in things military appears also in Bakkhylides' fragmentary *Ode* 26, where he is called the general of the Cnossians and the one who subdues with the bow (12-13: *stratagetas* and *toxodamas*).

⁵¹ Kean origins: Bacchyl. iii.97-8; v.10-2; xix.11. Kean victors: Bacchyl. i, ii, vi, and vii. See Gieseckam (1976) 237, 248; Van Oeveren (1999) 40.

οὐδ' ὅπ' ἡρασάμην Ἰξιονίης ἀλόχοιο [...]
οὐδ' ὅτε Φοῖνικος κούρης τηλεκλειτοῖο,
ἢ τέκε μοι Μίνων τε καὶ ἀντίθεον Ῥαδάμανθυν.

“Never once did such desire for a goddess or a woman
seduce me, poured all around the *thumos* within my chest,
surely not when I got enamored with Ixion’s wife...
nor when I fell in love with the daughter of vastly-famed Phoinix [Europa],
who bore me Minos and god-like Rhadamanthys.”

Inflamed by desire for Hera, Zeus entices his wife into sexual intercourse by cataloguing his many affairs and recounting the notable offspring he begot with his lovers. The semi-divine origins of Minos, son of Europa, are detailed.

Twice in the *Ode* the Kean poet has his characters recall the birth of Minos from Zeus and Europa: Theseus does not question that the daughter of Phoinix bore Minos to Zeus;⁵² Minos himself requests that his prayer to Zeus be fulfilled since he was born from the god and the Phoenician woman.⁵³ Bakkhylides’ insistence on the birth of Minos from Zeus and Europa, which probably underlies the poet’s framing of the entire *Ode* as a genealogical contest,⁵⁴ can be interpreted as a conscious reference to the Homeric catalogue, where the origins of Minos are in fact first recounted.

Three further considerations support this interpretation. First, Europa, in the Iliadic catalogue as in *Ode* 17, is left unnamed and figures simply as the daughter of

⁵² Bacchyl. xvii.29-33: Εἰ καὶ σε κεδνὰ τέκεν | λέχει Διὸς ὑπὸ κρόταφον Ἰδᾶς | μυγεῖσα Φοῖνικος ἐρατῶνυμος κόρα βροτῶν | φέρτατον ([Theseus to Minos]: “If, as is true, the wise daughter of Phoinix [Europa], after having intercourse with Zeus, bore you, peerless among men, beneath the brow of Ida”).

⁵³ Bacchyl. xvii.53-4: “Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἄκουσον· εἰ πέρ με νύμ[φα] | Φοῖνισσα λευκώλενος σοὶ τέκεν ([Minos to Zeus]: “Zeus, father, listen; if indeed the white-armed Phoenician maiden [Europa] bore me to you”).

⁵⁴ The genealogical contest may well be Bakkhylides’ original invention, as Wüst (1968) argued; the poet possibly conflated his innovative creation with the earlier story of Theseus’ visit in the undersea world attested in the Attic *krater* from Cerveteri (mentioned on p. 84, n. 28).

Phoinix (31-2), or the Phoenician maiden (53-4), in spite of the possibility to accommodate the three long syllables of her name within the metrical pattern of the poem.⁵⁵ Second, Zeus' listing of erotic adventures is part of the broader story of Hera borrowing a magic girdle from Aphrodite in order to seduce Zeus and avert his attention from the battlefield.⁵⁶ Aphrodite's gift to Hera is instrumental in having Zeus experience an unparalleled libido, thus ensuring the success of the goddess' seduction. In *Ode* 17 Bakkhylides describes Aphrodite as the goddess with the desire-filled headband (xvii.9: *himerampux*), whose awe-inspiring gifts bit Minos hard, making him lose control and lust after Eriboia.⁵⁷ Although the accoutrements worn by Aphrodite in the *Ode* and in the catalogue are different, a headband and a girdle respectively, both are meant to arouse *himeros*, sexual desire. In the *Ode* as in the catalogue these objects signify the irresistible allure that Aphrodite exercises over males. Aphrodite's headband in the *Ode* is, then, the functional equivalent of the girdle, her other *himeros*-inducing garment that accomplished the seduction of Zeus in the *Iliad* (*Il.* xiv.216). Minos' helplessness in the

⁵⁵ The metrical scheme would have allowed Bakkhylides to use the three long syllables in Europa on verses 3, 5, 13, and 19.

⁵⁶ *Il.* xiv.214-7: Ἡ, καὶ ἀπὸ στήθεσφιν ἐλύσατο κεστόν ἱμάντα | ποικίλον, ἔνθα δέ οἱ θελκτήρια πάντα τέτυκτο· | ἔνθ' ἔνι μὲν φιλότης, ἐν δ' ἔμερος, ἐν δ' ὀαριστὺς | πάρφασις, ἥ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων ([Aphrodite] spoke [to Hera], and loosened down from her bosom the embroidered girdle of many colors, where all her charms were placed; therein was love, therein desire (*himeros*), therein intercourse, allurement, which are bound to steal away the mind of even the wisest).

⁵⁷ Bacchyl. xvii. 8-13: κνίσεν τε Μίνω κέαρ | ἱμεράμπυκος θεᾶς | Κύπριδος [ἀ]γνὰ δῶ|ρα· χεῖρα δ' οὐ[κέτι] παρθενικᾶς | ἄτερθ' ἐράτυεν, | θίγεν δὲ λευκὰν παρη|ΐδων. "The awe-inspiring gifts of [Aphrodite,] the Cyprian goddess with the desire-filled headband, stung Minos in his heart; no longer could he keep his hand away from [Eriboia,] the maiden, and touched her white cheeks." Some discussion has arisen as to whether the manuscript reads *agna* (Gerber [1965] 212-3; Brown [1991] 329) or *aina* (Gieskam [1976] 243) for Aphrodite's gifts. The controversy is trivial, though, because all scholars concur that either adjective expresses the idea of reverential fear in face of the goddess' power. More problematic is the question of what the gifts of Aphrodite refer to; physical beauty is one interpretation (Pieper [1972] 399; Zimmerman [1989] 34-6); perhaps, more generally, the capacity of arousing sexual excitement in others (Brown [1991] 331-2). For our purposes, regardless of what the gifts of Aphrodite may be, it is sufficient to note that Minos is unable to withstand the force of Aphrodite.

face of Aphrodite's gifts replicates that of his father; even if Minos seems to try and resist Aphrodite (11-2: *no longer* can Minos keep his hands off of Eriboia), he too fails. The third element supporting a connection between the catalogue and the *Ode* rests with Theseus' rebuke of Minos for touching Eriboia inappropriately: "no longer can you properly govern your *thumos* within your *phrenes*, " (Bacchyl. xvii.21-3). The awe-inspiring gifts of Aphrodite, the goddess with the desire-filled headband, have caused Minos to lose control over his *thumos*. The effects of Aphrodite upon Minos can be compared with Zeus' state in the *Iliad*, as the god described his unprecedented experience of *eros* hindering his *thumos* within the chest: "Never once did such desire for a goddess or a woman seduce me, poured all around the *thumos* within my chest." At a first glance, the imagery in the two passages is different. However, both denote the incapacity of persons struck by Aphrodite's spell to steer their *thumos* as unencumbered as they normally would have. Zeus' *thumos* is hindered by *eros*, poured all around and in the front of it (*periprochutheis*); likewise, the gifts of Aphrodite make it impossible for Minos to steer (*kybernaō*) his *thumos* freely.

Further, the Iliadic story of Zeus' affairs aimed at demonstrating in its broader context how the charms of Aphrodite "can steal away (*kryptō*) the mind of even the wisest" (*Il.* xiv.217: *puka phroneontes*), including none less than the king of the gods, Zeus himself. Bakkhylides subtly appropriates the point of the Homeric story. Toward the closing of the *Ode*, the poet blames Minos' final defeat on his failure to grasp the unpredictability of the gods' actions; unlike Minos, *phrenoarai brotoi*, men of sound

phrenes, would have been aware of that.⁵⁸ The *phrenoarai brotoi* in the *Ode* resonate with the *puka phroneontes* in Homer, who are liable, like any other, to fall for the deceptions of Aphrodite (*kryptō*). In the preceding verse of the *Ode* Aphrodite has surprisingly been mentioned in her deceptive aspect (*dolios*) in a context where it is not warranted.⁵⁹ By juxtaposing this *epiclesis* with the statement about the wisdom of sensible men, Bakkhylides evokes here the Homeric *gnome*: Aphrodite is capable of taking away (*dolios* with *kryptō*), deviously, the wits of otherwise sound-minded individuals. Minos had been criticized by Theseus for losing his ability to guide his own *thumos* within his *phrenes*. But the Cretan king certainly was able to do so, until Aphrodite's gifts caused him to lose control (*ouketi*, says the narrative at 11 and so does Theseus at 21). Minos did not stand a chance in resisting the gifts of Aphrodite, the deceitful goddess, in the same way as his father, Zeus, surrendered to her charms in Iliad xiv, the episode to which Bakkhylides repeatedly alludes in the *Ode*. Moreover, the detrimental effects of Aphrodite's gifts on Minos seem to persist beyond his sexual harassment of Eriboia. His judgment remains clouded throughout the dithyramb; not even in the end is he able to regain soundness of mind, as the final *gnome* in the *Ode* points out. Through an ambiguous depiction of Aphrodite, bearer of awe-inspiring gifts and deceitful, Bakkhylides, then, constructs an apology for Minos' conduct. The episode of

⁵⁸ Bacchyl. xvii.117-8: Ἄπιστον ὃ τι δαίμονες | θέλωσιν οὐδὲν φρενοάραις βροτοῖς (To men of sound *phrenes* nothing that the gods will is beyond belief).

⁵⁹ Bacchyl. xvii.112-6: ἄ νιν ἀμφέβαλεν αἶονα πορφυρέαν, | κόμαισί τ' ἐπέθηκεν οὐ|λαις ἀμεμφέα πλόκον, | τόν ποτέ οἱ ἐν γάμῳ | δῶκε δόλιος Ἀφροδίτα ῥόδοις ([Amphitrite] dressed [Theseus] in a gleaming purple [cloak], and placed on his thick hair a perfectly shaped wreath, dark with roses, which once deceitful Aphrodite had given her at her wedding). The context, namely Amphitrite's wedding to Poseidon, hardly necessitates Aphrodite's epithet as the deceitful one.

Eriboia, and even the whole *Ode*, illustrate Minos' susceptibility to the irresistible powers of the Cyprian goddess; his vulnerability as well as his lack of judgment are excusable, to the extent that even his father Zeus fell prey to Aphrodite's seductive charms.

The three portrayals of Minos outlined so far, namely the destructive-minded individual, the eastern/Greek autocrat and the son of Zeus susceptible to Aphrodite, yet excusable and valiant in war, hinge on elements that are multivalent. For instance, the references to Europa, while serving to connect Minos with the East, hence to bolster his identification with autocratic power, simultaneously ought to remind the audience of the Iliadic episode about Zeus' surrender to Aphrodite's power, hence they somewhat mitigate the criticism of Minos. The same holds true of the episode of Minos' lust for the virgin Eriboia: it attributed to Minos the sexual perversions and the lawlessness typical of a tyrannical/autocratic figure, but also presented Minos as a helpless victim of Aphrodite's power. Minos' expertise in things military approximates his figure to the successful generalship of Greek tyrants, but is also part of the Kean tradition concerning the origins of their monarchy. Finally, Minos' error in assessing Theseus' chances of success is presented as the eastern autocrat's failure to appraise the value of his enemy, but also as the inevitable loss of rationality that Aphrodite induces.

My interpretation of Bakkhylides' mastery of *polysemia* in the *Ode* is compatible with the hypothesis of a composite audience made of Athenians, Ionians and Keans, who would have isolated traits compatible with their notions of Minos, while overlooking or devaluing the others. Athenians and Ionians would have appreciated Bakkhylides' re-elaboration of Minos' epic destructive-mindedness against Theseus, a notion familiar to

them from the *Odyssey*. With its representation of Minos in the vein of an oriental/Greek autocrat, the poem would have also taken on a more contemporary significance. Finally, in the midst of a negative representation of their founding hero Minos, the Keans could have still identified traits such as the king's military expertise and his special relationship with Zeus, and would have been able to appreciate the *apologia* Bakkhylides constructed.

In its pursuit of a compromise satisfying all parties involved, Bakkhylides' *Ode* turned out to be a success. For all its negative representation of Minos, the performance did not compel the Keans to disavow the Cretan king, who was instead celebrated in Bakkhylides' epinician in the 450's. The *Ode* was also well received by the Athenians: Mikon's painting on the walls of the Theseion refurbished in the late 470's featured the quarrel of Minos and Theseus on the ship as its central episode (Paus. i.17.2-6), likely inspired by the performance of the *Ode*.⁶⁰ What we witness in Athens in the years after the performance of the *Ode* is a resurgence of interest in the figure of Minos in art: the character had disappeared from Attic vase painting since the middle of the sixth century. From the 470's until the 450's we witness again the inclusion of Minos in scenes portraying the fight between Theseus and the Minotaur:⁶¹ eight Attic vases show the king holding the scepter and either standing imperturbable, or stretching out his right arm as if threatening Theseus or entreating him to stop the slaughter of his bull-headed son. I would be, however, hesitant to credit Bakkhylides' *Ode* with this revitalization of the Minos figure on vase paintings. The vase depictions do not reproduce the Bacchylidean

⁶⁰ Young (1972) 167.

⁶¹ *LIMC* VI, "Minos I," no.s 18-25.

dispute on the ship, so it is clear that their subject does not derive, at least directly, from the poem. Unlike Mikon's painting in the Theseion, the representations on vases still cling to the more traditional sixth-century theme of the slaying of the Minotaur.

Minos and Athenian Drama

The character of Minos frequently trod the Athenian stage in the fifth century. He was among the *dramatis personae* of several works by the three tragedians. Of this production, only a handful of titles and snippets of the poems themselves survive. Aischylos wrote *Κρήσσαι* and *Κἄρες ἢ Εὐρώπη*, Sophokles *Θήσευς*, *Μάντεις ἢ Πολύιδος*, *Δαίδαλος*, *Κάμικοι* (or *Καμίκιοι*), *Μίνως* (if not the same as *Kamikoi*), and Euripides *Θήσευς*.⁶² More substantial fragments come from Euripides' *Κρήτες*.⁶³ To this fragmentary evidence, we may add Aischylos' brief mention of Minos in the *Libation Bearers* (*Choeph.* 616).

The dearth of the extant evidence presents a serious hurdle to our understanding of tragic Minos, and so does the lack of secure dates for these Cretan tragedies. Dated between 470 and 450 BCE, Attic vases with Minos looking on the fight between Theseus and the Minotaur may well be a reflection of theatrical productions in Athens; if so,

⁶² TGrF FF 116-120 (*Krēssai*), 99-101 (*Kares ē Europē*), 158-64a (*Daidalos*), 246 (Sophokles' *Theseus*), 323-7 (*Kamikoi*), 389a-400 (*Manteis ē Polyidos*), 407 (*Minos*), 381-90 (Euripides' *Theseus*).

⁶³ FF 78-82 Austin.

Aischylos' two Cretan tragedies may go back as far as the 470's.⁶⁴ Euripides' *Cretans* is the only tragedy for which a tentative date in the 430's has been proposed based on meter (cf. *infra*).

In spite of these uncertainties in terms of the Cretan tragedies' contents and dates, however, we do get a general sense of the dramatic treatment of Minos from three later sources. In the pseudo-platonic dialogue *Minos*, Sokrates questions his interlocutor's assertion that Minos was a savage, harsh and unjust individual (ἄγριος, χαλεπός, ἄδικος), an unfair portrayal widespread in Athens that the philosopher ascribes to the fiction of Attic tragedians (Ἀττικὸς μῦθος καὶ τραγικός).⁶⁵ In line with this testimony, Strabo reports that the *archaioi*, surely the tragedians,⁶⁶ depicted Minos as tyrannical, violent and an exactor of tribute (τυραννικός, βίαιος, δασμολόγος).⁶⁷ Finally, Plutarch remarks that, despite Homer and Hesiod's flattering image of Minos, the tragedians tarnished the king's reputation misrepresenting him as harsh and violent (ὥς χαλεπὸς καὶ βίαιος).⁶⁸

In so far as we are able to reconstruct the essential storyline of the lost tragedies, the portrayal of Minos agrees with the one that these later authors delineated. Leaving aside Sophokles' and Euripides' *Theseus*, whose plot, or even characters cannot be determined,⁶⁹ Sophokles' *Μάντεις ἢ Πολύιδος*, along with Aischylos' *Κρήσσαι*,⁷⁰ dealt with Minos' search for his missing son Glaucos, and his eventual discovery and

⁶⁴ Aeschylos started producing tragedies at least in 485, to which year the *Marmor Parium* assigns the poet's first victory (*FGrHist* 239 A 65-7), but reasonably earlier than that.

⁶⁵ [Pl.] *Minos* 318d.

⁶⁶ See Perlman (2005) 330, n.71.

⁶⁷ Strabo: x.4.8.

⁶⁸ Plut. *Thes.* 16.3.

⁶⁹ For difficulties in reconstructing the plot, see Mills (1997) 245-55.

⁷⁰ *Krēssai* should cover the same *argumentum* as *Manteis*. See *TGrF* F 116.

resuscitation by the seer Polyidos. The story, if similar to the one summarized in Apollodoros (*Bibl.* iii.3), rather than drawing sympathy to a father for having lost his son, insisted on the cruelty of Minos, who first had Polyidos shut inside a vat with the corpse of Glaucos and then, even after the seer miraculously resurrected Glaucos, kept him confined in Crete until he taught Glaucos the art of divination.

Along the same lines, Sophokles' production (*Δαίδαλος, Κάμικοι, Μίνως*) shows that the playwright did not hesitate to bring out on stage the least dignified details of Minos' "biography," especially his inglorious and quite violent demise in Kamikos (near Akragas, Sicily) noted by Herodotos without details (vii.170.1: simply, a βίαιος θάνατος). As evinced from later accounts, the story had it that, while in pursuit of Daidalos who had fled to Sicily, Minos was scalded to death in a bathtub by Kokalos, king of Kamikos (hence the title of Sophokles' *Kamikoi*), or his daughters.⁷¹ An elaboration on the causes of Minos' death, the story is clearly designed to fill in the gap that epic left about the circumstances of the king's demise. While its origins are debated,⁷² the tale certainly achieved popularity in Athens, where even Old Comedy took

⁷¹ Diod. iv.79.1-2; Apollod. *Bibl.* Ep.14-15. In the latter version, Minos offered a conspicuous reward for the man who would be able to pass a thread through a conch shell, a ruse meant to track down Daidalos' hideout. Even though Kokalos claimed to have himself run the thread through the shell with an ant attached to it, Minos figured out that it was Daidalos who devised the stratagem and demanded his surrender. A conch shell is mentioned in Sophokles' *Kamikoi*, F 324 Radt, thus corroborating the conjecture that the play might have told a story similar to that reported by Apollodoros. It is also worth pointing out that, while listing Greek centers in Sicily, Kallimakhos marks Minoa as the "Cretan" city where the daughters of Kokalos murdered Minos (*Aitia* ii.fr. 43, 48-9 Pfeiffer: Μινώη[ν] καὶ Κοῦσ[σ]αν, ἵνα ζείοντα λοετ[ρὰ] ἢ χεῦαν ἐ[π'] Εὐρώπης υἱεῖ Κ[ωκαλί]δες; and Cretan Minoa, where the daughters of Kokalos poured boiling water upon the son of Europa in the bath). Kallimakhos' version does not conflict with this story: the site of Kamikos should not have been located far from Minoa where Minos put in (Diod. iv.79.1: see Dunbabin [1948] 8).

⁷² Gantz (1993) 275 thinks of lost sources that served to 'inspire' the Athenians. For a complete discussion of the story, see pp. 125-8.

it as the subject matter of two lost plays (Aristophanes' Κώκαλος and Δαίδαλος) and certainly was a staple element of the campaign of vilification targeting Minos.

In addition, as Strabo points out, the construction of tragic Minos approximated that of a tyrant (τυραννικός). This representation of Minos, already implied by his cruel behavior toward Polyidos, appears as well in Aischylos' *Choeph.* 616. The chorus briefly hints at Minos' bribe to an unnamed maiden, securely identified in other sources as Skylla, daughter of Nisos, king of Megara.⁷³ Minos offers the girl a necklace made of gold in order to convince her to pluck Nisos' hair on which his life depended⁷⁴ and thus conquer Megara that until then resisted the Cretan siege. Lured by the gift, Skylla will in fact act upon Minos' request and in essence hand over Megara to the Cretans, a betrayal that earns her a place among the loathsome women whom the chorus of libation-bearers bewails. The concise reference to this story, a *hapax* in Greek literature (and art), encapsulates aspects that identify Minos as a tyrant. First, it alludes to a successful campaign led by a shrewd military leader who subdues a territory, a common motif associated with tyrants that Bakkhylides had already used for Minos (see *supra*, p. 92). The choice of Megara as Minos' conquered city is significant in that the king's war against Megara may well parallel the historical conquest of Megara by Peisistratos (565

⁷³ Aeschyl. *Choeph.* 613-22: ἄλλαν δ' ἦν τιν' ἐν λόγοις στυγεῖν, | φοινίαν κόραν, | ἅτ' ἐχθρῶν ὕπερ φῶτ' ἀπώλεσεν φύλον, Κρητικοῖς | χρυσεοκμήτοισιν ὄρλοις πιθήσασα, δώροισι Μίνω, | Νίσον ἀθανάτα τριχὸς | νοσφίσασ' ἀποβούλῳ | πνέονθ' ἅ κυνόφρων ὕπνῳ· | κίχχανει δέ νιν Ἑρμῆς. (it was possible to loathe another woman in legends, a murderous maiden [Skylla], since she killed a beloved man for the enemy, persuaded by necklaces wrought in gold, gifts of Minos, having deprived Nisos of his immortal lock as he was breathing in unsuspecting sleep, she with a dog's heart; and Hermes overtook him). That Megara is the city in question is clarified by Apollod. iii.15.8, Paus. i.19.15 and Ov. *Met.* viii.10 who differ only in minor details, but all agree on the location.

⁷⁴ So Apollodorus and Pausanias. Ovid, instead, holds that pulling out the purple hair would terminate Nisos' reign, not his life.

BCE); it was precisely this military success that helped Peisistratos gain his first tyranny in Athens.⁷⁵ In both mythical and historical instances, Megara offered an example of how the tyrant's wit and guile could expedite the capture of a city: from a functional standpoint, Minos' bribe to Skylla corresponds with Peisistratos' stratagem of dressing the Athenians as Megarians, boarding them on Megarian ships and having them kidnap the city's most prominent citizens from the harbor.⁷⁶ Second, Aischylos' reference focuses on Minos' possession of gold items. Whether *chryseokmētoi* or *chryseodmētoi*, in both cases 'wrought in gold,'⁷⁷ the necklace (*hormoi*) is pluralized to signify the abundance of the precious material that the king possessed; just like *polychrysos* Gyges, the first man to be labeled a tyrant,⁷⁸ Minos here is represented to possess gold in large quantities.

Another unflattering portrayal of Minos, in part allusive of his status as tyrant, as we shall see, also emerges from the more substantial fragments of Euripides' *Cretans*, dated to the late 430's.⁷⁹ The fragments include a dialogue between Minos and a nurse (F 2a Cantarella), from whom the king learns of the birth of his bull-headed son, a choral *Ode* sung by mystics initiated into the cult of Idaean Zeus (F 3 Cantarella), and a speech of Pasiphaë, Minos' wife and mother of the new-born Minoatur, who rejects her husband's accusations that she is depraved for mating with a bull (F 4 Cantarella).

⁷⁵ Hdt. i.59. It was on the basis of his victory against Megara that the Athenians granted Peisistratos' request to surround himself with bodyguards whom he then used to gain control of Athens and establish his first tyrannical rule.

⁷⁶ Aen. Tact. iv.10. Herodotos' narrative (i.59) is silent about how Peisistratos overtook Megara.

⁷⁷ Tucker (1901) 142. Less likely for *chryseodmētos*, 'golden and subduing': Verrall (1893) 87-8.

⁷⁸ Archil. F 1 West, 1.

⁷⁹ See Cantarella (1963) 103-7. The arguments for the date are based both on the regularity of trimeters in the *Cretans* as opposed to later productions - which sets the *Hippolytos* (428) as *terminus ante quem*- and on the thematic affinities with *Hippolytos*, the *Cretans* being likely conceived around the same time.

Attempts to reconstruct the play's plot are largely conjectured.⁸⁰ Although the sense of the play as a whole is impossible to grasp, the fragments still shed important light on the representation of Minos, F 4 Cantarella in particular. Here, in her rebuttal of Minos' likely charges of debauchery,⁸¹ Pasiphaë resorts to a (sophistic) argument from probability: it would have made little sense for her to fall in love with a beast, unless a divinity drove her mad.⁸² Her passion for the bull, she maintains, is in fact a divine punishment inflicted by Poseidon on Minos because the king failed to sacrifice the animal to the god, thus breaking the oath he had sworn.⁸³

One of the striking points of Pasiphaë's argument is that she disclaims all responsibility for her lust for the animal, blaming instead Poseidon. The Athenians surely were familiar with a different tradition preserved in Bakkhylides' fragmentary Dithyramb 6 (*Ode* 26), performed for the enjoyment of an Athenian audience some forty years prior

⁸⁰ Cantarella (1963) 111-20; Webster (1967) 87-92. Page (1970) 71-3 is less cautious, especially when advocating for a conversion of Minos at the end of the tragedy from despot to wise legislator and ruler; see Cantarella (1963) 119 for some healthy criticism of this position.

⁸¹ The Chorus' statement at the beginning of the fragment may summarize the preceding lost speech by Minos where he ranted against his wife: F 4 Cantarella, 1: [Χο.] οὐ γάρ τιν' ἄλλην φημὶ τολμήσαι τάδε (for I say that no other woman dared this deed).

⁸² F 4 Cantarella, 9 and 11-15: ΠΑ. ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς ἐμηνάμην (...) ἔχει γὰρ οὐδὲν εἰκός· ἐς τί γὰρ βοὸς ἢ βλέψας· ἐδήχθην θυμὸν αἰσχίστη νόσῳ; ἢ ὥς εὐπρεπὴς μὲν ἐν πέπλοισιν ἦν ἰδεῖν, ἢ πυρσῆς δὲ χαίτης καὶ παρ' ὀμμάτων σέλας ἢ οἰνωπὸν ἐξέλαμπε περ[καί]νων γένυν; (for I have been maddened by a god's onslaught... it makes no sense; looking at what in a bull was I bitten in my heart by the most shameful illness? How pretty it was to see in its clothes? The wine-red sparkle that beamed from his fire-like mane and eyes? His chin dark with beard?).

⁸³ F 4 Cantarella, 22-6: ΠΑ. μάλιστα δ' οὗτος οἷσ[τα]ι ψόγον βροτ[ῶν]· ἰατρὸν γὰρ οὐκ ἔσφαξ[εν] ὃν γ' ἐπηύξατο ἑλθόντα θύσειν φάσμα [πο]ντίω[ι θε]ῶι. ἢ ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐτοίμ' ὑπὲρ λ[ο]ύ[σ]ατο ἢ δίκην Ποσειδῶν, ἐς δ' ἔμ' ἔσκηψ[εν] νόσος. (Pasiphaë: For this man here [addressing the chorus and pointing at Minos] will earn the mortals' contempt above all; for he did not slaughter the bull that he vowed to sacrifice in honor of the sea god when it came as an apparition. For this reason, [now speaking to Minos] Poseidon sought you out and took revenge, but the illness fell upon me).

to the *Cretans*.⁸⁴ Notwithstanding the poor state of preservation, the dithyramb seems to condense a storyline akin to Euripides' Cretan tragedy in a few verses:⁸⁵ unbeknownst to her husband Minos, Pasiphaë asks Daidalos to build a contraption that would allow her to have sexual intercourse with a bull, likely the infamous wooden cow;⁸⁶ once privy to the fact, Minos is filled with concern, and at this point the text breaks off. In spite of the lacunae, there is little doubt that the dithyramb placed the blame of Pasiphaë's sexual desire (*pothos*) on Aphrodite, possibly because of the woman's slight to the goddess' cult.⁸⁷ This version resembles the apologetic strategy of Bakkhylides' *Ode* 17 in that it exempts Minos from fault⁸⁸ while blaming Aphrodite in bringing about the downfall of the king and his family: the goddess is a more likely candidate than Poseidon to have had a hand in this kind of unnatural love. In the *Cretans*, the replacement of the goddess with Poseidon may be interpreted as an Athenian invention designed to transfer the guilt from

⁸⁴ Irigoin (1993) 66 points out that Dithyramb 6 was probably produced for an Athenian audience since here Daidalos appears as the son of Eupalamos, a descendant of the mythical king of Athens Cecrops. Cantarella (1963) 163 also claimed that the dithyramb belonged to Bakkhylides' Athenian period (487-76). Consequently, some forty years before Euripides' *Cretans* the Athenians were exposed to the dithyramb's version of the story featuring Minos, Pasiphaë and the bull.

⁸⁵ Bacchyl. 26, 1-14: Πασι[φ]ά[α] | ἐν Κύπ[ρις] | πόθον [] | Εὐπαλά[μοι] νίε[ι] | τεκτόν[ω]ν σοφ[ά]τ[ω]ν | φράσε Δαιδάλ[ω]ν ἄ[] | νόσον ὄρνια π[ι]σ[τ] | [τ]ε τεύχειν κέλευ[σε] | μείξειε ταυρεί[ω] σ[] | κρύπτουσα σύννο[μον] | Μίνωα [τ]οξοδάμαν[τα] | Κνωσσί[ων] στρατα[γέ]ταν· | ὁ δ' ἐπεὶ μάθε μῦθ[ο]ν | σχέτο φροντίδι δε[] | ἄλ[ο]γ[ο]ν [] (Pasiphaë... Cypris... desire... she explained to Daidalos her disease... reliable oaths... she bade that he build ... so that she could have sex with a bull, keeping that secret from her legitimate husband Minos, the one that conquers with his bow, the general of the Cnossians; but when he came to know the story, he was concerned... spouse).

⁸⁶ Pasiphaë apparently positioned herself within the fake cow to have sex with the animal: Diod. iv.77.1-4; Apollod. iii.1.3-4. Euripides' Pasiphaë hints at the episode, but refers to more comfortable hides she slipped on (Il.17-8).

⁸⁷ See the later version of Hyg. *Fab.* 40 where Pasiphaë is punished for failing to tend to the rites of Aphrodite.

⁸⁸ Notable are the references to Minos' skill in war (the one who conquers with the bow) and military rank (*strategos*), traits fleshed out in *Ode* 17 as well, and to his blameless status as Pasiphaë's husband.

Pasiphaë onto Minos in line with the hostility of Attic drama toward the king.⁸⁹ In earlier literature or art, there is no trace of Poseidon's role in the story.⁹⁰ In late fifth century art, only one Attic *crater* recognizes a connection between Minos, Pasiphaë, Poseidon and the bull by including them all together, but its date set thirty years after the *Cretans* suggests its dependence on Euripides' play.⁹¹ Overall, the evidence points to an invention of Euripides. Nor is it the case that Pasiphaë's argument about Minos' slight to Poseidon, although at variance with Bakkhylides' version and phrased in terms typical of sophistry, was set up to sound preposterous.⁹² Often a moral compass in Euripides' plays in that they represent the audience's perspective, the chorus made up of mystics accept her point by urging Minos not to make rash decisions as he finally resolves to put his wife to death.⁹³ the chorus clearly sympathizes with the predicament of Pasiphaë whose verbal attack on Minos they take seriously as did the audience.

Beside the oath-breaking habits imputed to Minos as the motivation for Poseidon's punishment of the Cretan king and her own aberrant lust, Pasiphaë launches one more pointed accusation at her husband: being such a consummate expert in murderous actions, she prompts him to go ahead and kill her himself, even encouraging

⁸⁹ In addition, the version with the sea god conveniently works to add a further rationale for Poseidon's favor of Theseus, besides lineage that is, in the genealogical challenge of Bakkhylides' *Ode* 17.

⁹⁰ The poorly preserved F 141 M-W from the *Catalogue of Women* deals with Pasiphaë and the same subject matter as the *Cretans*. There is mention of a bull, somebody falling in love at first sight (but the participle indicates a male! Is it the bull smitten by Pasiphaë, with a reversal of the traditional roles?) and the birth of the Minotaur. Neither Aphrodite nor Poseidon seem to be mentioned in what survives.

⁹¹ Leningrad, Hermitage b2680 (=LIMC VI, "Minos I," no 32). The 400-BCE *crater* represents the popular theme of Herakles' struggle with the same bull that made Pasiphaë pregnant; for the identification of the characters, see Volkammer (1987) 147-55. The presence of Poseidon assures that the painting refers to the tradition found in Euripides' *Cretans*.

⁹² So, Pohlenz (1954) 249-51.

⁹³ F 4 Cantarella, 50-1: [XO. ἄ]ναξ, ἐπίσχ[ες· φρον]τί[δος] γὰρ ἄξιον | τὸ περ[ᾶ]μα (Chorus: my lord, hold on; for the matter requires further consideration).

him to feast on her raw flesh.⁹⁴ Pasiphaë's reference to Minos' cannibalistic practices, far from being hyperbolic, carries threefold significance. First, it sets Minos in direct opposition to the lifestyle of the mystics comprising the chorus, who, while performing ritual omophagy within the cult of Zagreus, otherwise claim to abide by a strictly vegetarian diet;⁹⁵ these mystics are not only priests of Zagreus, but also initiates of Idaean Zeus, Minos' own father.⁹⁶ Pasiphaë's insinuation about Minos' carnivorous dietary habits thus implies a divide between the meatless way of life that the mystics feel is appropriate as followers of the cult of Zeus and the deviant behavior of the Cretan king, who is said to be capable of performing the most despicable practice involving raw meat, namely, consumption of human flesh. As a result, while Minos is still recognized as the son of Zeus, through the words of Pasiphaë, Euripides undermines the Homeric and Bacchylidean notion of a harmonious relationship between the god and the king, turning Minos into a wayward son whose conduct sharply diverges from the lifestyle that the

⁹⁴ F 4 Cantarella, 35-39: ΠΑ. πρὸς τὰδ' εἴτε ποντίαν | κτείνειν δοκεῖ σοι, κτε[ι]ν'· ἐπίστασαι δέ τοι | μαιφόν' ἔργα καὶ σφαγὰς ἀνδροκτόνους· | εἴτ' ὠμοσίτου τῆς ἐμῆς ἐρᾶς φαγεῖν | σαρκός, πάρεστι· | μὴ λίπτης θοινώμενος (Pasiphaë: if you then deem it appropriate to kill me at sea, just do it; you certainly are an expert in bloody deeds and manslaughter; if you are fond of eating my raw flesh, you can; do not neglect having your banquet).

⁹⁵ F 3 Cantarella, 9-15: ἀγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνων ἐξ οὗ | Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμεν, | καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζαγρέως βιοτὰς | τοὺς ὠμοφάγους daίτας τελέσας | μητρὶ τ' ὀρεῖφ δᾶδας ἀνασχὼν | καὶ κουρήτων | βάκχος ἐκλήθην ὀσιωθεῖς. | πάλλευκα δ' ἔχων εἵματα φεύγω | γένεσιν τε βροτῶν καὶ νεκροθήκης | οὐ χρομπτόμενος τήν τ' ἐμψύχων | βρώσιν ἐδεστών πεφύλαγμαι (I have been leading a pure life since becoming an initiate of Idaean Zeus, performing as a priest the rites of nocturnal Zagreus with consumption of raw meat, holding up the torches for the Mountain Mother and I even was called a sanctified bacchant of the Couretes. I avoid procreation of mortals, dressed in white robes and keeping away from tombs, and I refrain from consuming food from living creatures).

⁹⁶ The mystics address Minos as son of Zeus in F 3 Cantarella ll.1-3: Φοινικογενοῦς [παῖ τῆς Τυρίας] τέκνον Εὐρώπης | καὶ τοῦ μεγάλου Ζηνός, ἀνάσσων | Κρήτης ἑκατομπολιέθρου (Son of the Phoenician woman from Tyre, Europa, and of great Zeus, you lord of one-hundred citted Crete).

god's initiates adopt. We are as removed as possible from epic Minos, the confidant of Zeus.

Pasiphaë's description of Minos as cannibal has a further purpose, namely to cast him as tyrant. The representation of tyrants as devourers of cities and their populace go as far back as archaic poetry. For instance, Alkaios envisaged Pittakos feasting on the city⁹⁷ and Theognis explicitly talks about the tyrant who eats up the *dēmos*.⁹⁸ In the *Cretans*, Minos' cannibalism should carry the same political stigma characterizing him as tyrant; yet, his appetite does not fall metaphorically upon a collective political entity, a *polis* or a *dēmos*, but on an all too real individual, his own wife.

The third and final implication of Pasiphaë's remonstrance to Minos concerns the theme of justice. The practice of eating the flesh of someone from one's own species was tantamount to the negation of justice; Hesiod had denied the existence of *dikē* among animals because they practice allelophagy.⁹⁹ We find a similar comment in Herodotos as the author remarks that cannibals are ignorant of both *dikē* and *nomos*.¹⁰⁰ In the *Cretans*, Pasiphaë's charge of cannibalism against Minos may be understood as a denunciation of

⁹⁷ Alc. 70 (l. 7: let [Pittakos] make a banquet with the city) and 129 (l.23: the tyrant makes a banquet of the city).

⁹⁸ Theogn. 1179-1182 (δημοφάγος τύραννος). Plato, too, compares the tyrannical mind and cannibalism in the *Republic* (*Resp.* ix.571c-d; x.619b-c).

⁹⁹ Hes. *WD* 276-80: τόνδε γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων, ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηρσὶ καὶ οἰωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς ἴσθαι ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶ μετ' αὐτοῖς· ἰανθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην, ἣ πολλὸν ἀρίστη ἴνεται (the son of Kronos laid down the following law among men, that fish, animals and winged birds eat one another, since they have no share in *dikē*; but he gave humans *dikē* which is by far the best).

¹⁰⁰ Herodotos iv.106: ἀνδροφάγοι δὲ ἀγριώτατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσι ἥθεα, οὔτε δίκην νομίζοντες οὔτε νόμῳ οὐδενὶ χρεώμενοι (cannibals have the most savage customs of all men, failing to observe *dikē* and to resort to any laws). One can also add that Sokrates' observation that the tragedians depicted Minos as *agrioi* ([Pl.] *Minos* 318d) might precisely refer to Euripides' Cretans in that the adjective evokes the *agriōtata* customs of folks practicing cannibalism.

his lawlessness, of his relinquishment of *dikē*. In fact the fragment addresses the problem of who is actually dealing *dikē*. According to Pasiphaë, *dikē* is what Poseidon has exacted from the Cretan king for neglecting to sacrifice the bull he promised the god (F 3 Cantarella, 26). Minos instead defines the death sentence he imposed upon his wife as *dikē*. Finally, the Chorus concludes that the king's resolution amounts to a hasty, ill-advised decision:¹⁰¹ in their opinion -which guides that of the audience-, the king is incapable of delivering a fair settlement. The fragment thus undermines the Homeric tradition that portrayed Minos as a judge in charge of dispensing appropriate *dikai*.

The fragment also outlines the reason for Minos' failure at judging this case, namely, his disregard for the involuntary crime as attenuating circumstance. It is around this very tenet that Pasiphaë constructs her defense; in her speech, Minos' wife appeals to the fact that her mating with the bull constituted *ouk hekousion kakon*, an involuntary crime willed by a god.¹⁰² That this is the core of Pasiphaë's defense is confirmed by the Chorus' remarks as they recapitulate the point immediately after her speech: Minos should hold back his anger since the supposed crime is clearly either the result of divine interference (θεήλατον) or involuntary (ἐκούσιον) according to what we supplement in the lacuna.¹⁰³ Even if we accept the former reading, Poseidon's meddling with her sexual

¹⁰¹ F 4 Cantarella, 51-2: XO. [νηλ]ῆς δ' ο[ὔ]τις εὔβουλος βροτῶν. | [MI.] κ[αὶ] δὲ δ[έ]δοκται μὴ ἀναβάλλεσθαι δίκην (Chorus: no ruthless mortal arrives at sound decisions; Minos: regardless, I have decided that *dikē* should not be postponed).

¹⁰² F 4 Cantarella, 9-10: ΠΑ. νῦν δ', ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς ἐμηνάμην, | ἀλγῶ μὲν, ἐστὶ δ' οὐχ ἐκο[ύσι]ον κακόν (now I'm in pain, for I have been maddened by a god's onslaught, but it is an involuntary crime).

¹⁰³ F 4 Cantarella, 42-3: [XO.] πολλοῖσι δῆλον [ὡς θεήλατον] κακὸν | τόδ' ἐστίν· ὀργῇ [μὴ λίαν εἵξη]ς, ἄναξ (Chorus: it is clear to many that this is a god-inspired crime; do not yield to anger too much,

appetites has been Pasiphaë's way to corroborate the principle that her crime is *ouk hekousion*.

The expression clearly borrows from Athenian law,¹⁰⁴ where a distinction was drawn between intentional and unintentional homicide with more lenient penalties assigned for the latter.¹⁰⁵ Transferred into the realm of tragic mythology, the legal definition of involuntary crime is made to fit not a case of murder, but Pasiphaë's marital infidelity: this is just a mark of Euripides' poetic liberty as he incorporates a concept of current salience into the fabric of the mythological material. The mention of involuntary crime in the *Cretans* is disjoined from its real-life application in cases of homicide;¹⁰⁶ however, this is not decisive proof that Euripides did not intend for his audience to reflect upon the nature of the Athenian legal system. Regardless of its range of application in proper trials, that is homicide cases, it is a general *principle* that Pasiphaë invokes here to strengthen her defense and land a more moderate penalty, a principle that surely strikes a cord with the Chorus of mystics, who advise Minos to consider his wife's point more attentively if he wishes to avoid poor judgment.¹⁰⁷ Nor is it the case that *ouk hekousion kakon* is used here as a generic expression, although Euripides is accustomed to frame

lord). While Wilamowitz's supplement ὥς θεήλατον is generally accepted, the required metrical pattern (~~~~) also allows for ὥς ἐκούσιον.

¹⁰⁴ Pohlenz (1954) 249-51.

¹⁰⁵ I assume that when Euripides wrote the *Cretans* the distinction between intentional and unintentional murder in Athens had already resulted in a more lenient penalty for the latter, namely exile as opposed to death, although this is attested only later in Demosth. xxi.43. In Athens, the legal distinction existed at least since the legislation of Drakon, but he possibly prescribed the same penalty, exile, for either. By the time of the orators, Drakon's original laws likely underwent substantial overhauling so as to prescribe different penalties for each type of homicide. For this interpretation of the epigraphical and literary evidence, see Gagarin (1981) *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ Rivier (1975) 57.

¹⁰⁷ F 4 Cantarella, 50-1: 50-1: [XO. φρο]ντί[δος] γὰρ ἄξιον | τὸ περ[ἀγ]μα· [νηλ.]ῆς δ' ο[ὔ]τις εὐβουλος βροτῶν.

agones between characters as judicial debates; after all, Pasiphaë's interlocutor is here the traditional judge figure of old, hence her reference must carry a specifically legal valence in the context.

Her speech brings out an ideological contrast that pits the Athenian sensibility for the distinction between voluntary and involuntary crime in terms of penalty against the rigid stance of Minos, who utterly disregards such distinction. After the Chorus support Pasiphaë's argument that her crime is involuntary, Minos retorts that he is fed up with Pasiphaë's talk and she should be taken to jail and die there.¹⁰⁸ The Chorus imply that his punishment exceeds any measure of fairness by suggesting that Minos has delivered a downright cruel verdict instead of giving the matter further consideration. Minos has thus failed to understand that Pasiphaë's line of defense required a more lenient verdict than the one he rendered. His unresponsiveness to her defense reveals the incapability of his *dikē* to apportion commensurate penalties. As a result, the fragment exposes the incompatibility of Minos' administration of justice and the Athenian judicial system.

The final snippet of evidence for the treatment of Minos in Attic drama is found in Aischylos' *Κῶρες ἢ Εὐρώπη*. In what is likely the prologue to the play or the first episode, Europa narrates her sexual encounter with Zeus and takes pride in having given birth to three sons from the god, Minos, Radamanthys,¹⁰⁹ and Sarpedon for whose life she

¹⁰⁸ F 4 Cantarella, 44-9: ΜΙΝ[ΩΣ] ἄρ' ἐστόμωται; μ[ἄ]σσον ἢ ταύρος] βοᾷ. | χωρεῖτε, λόγῃ[ι δ' ἢδ' ἴτω φρουρο]υμένη· | λάξυσθε τὴν πανο[ύργον, ὡ]ς καλῶς θάνη[ι,] | καὶ τὴν ξυνεργὸν [τῇ]νδε, δ]ωμάτων δ' ἔσω | [ἄ]γο]ντες αὐτὰς ἔρ[ξα]τ' ἐς κρυπ[τ]ήριον, | [ὡ]ς μ[η]κέτ' εἰσίδ[ω]σιν ἡλίου κ]ύκλον (Minos: has she spat it off her chest? She screams louder than a bull. Come here, let the woman be escorted under arms; grab her, the wretched, so that she may die nobly, and her accomplice here, too, and taking them into the palace, lock them in jail, that they may never see the circle of the sun again).

¹⁰⁹ *TGrF* F 99, 7-15: [EYP.] καὶ τρεῖς γοναῖσι τοὺς γυναικείους πόνο[υ]ς | ἐκαρτέρησ'· ἄρουραν κοῦκ

fears as he is fighting in Troy.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, lines 11 and 12 which certainly added some qualification about Minos are lost on the damaged papyrus. Nonetheless, the gist of the passage appears quite clear. Europa is indeed singing the praise of her three sons, all three of them having lived up to the nobility of their divine father; she even qualifies Minos as the greatest of her offspring. This raises the question of whether we have here a dissenting view to the otherwise overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Minos in tragedy. This does not seem to be the case. First, the praise of Minos represents the perspective of a mother speaking about her son; since we have no chorus to help us establish some objectivity, it is an impossible task to assess how Europa's view was received. Second, even in tragedies where the criticism of Minos is substantial such as Euripides' *Cretans*, the king's birth and his outstanding status are always recognized (F 3 Cantarella 1.3, where the Chorus salutes the king as son of Zeus and ruler of one-hundred cities Crete). Recognition of Minos' remarkable position does not necessarily entail an overall positive treatment. Third, even though a line and a half is missing, the content can be deduced from the context. Europa states that she is anxious about Sarpedon's fate at Troy; the reason for her anxiety must be that she lost two of her sons, Sarpedon being the only son alive, which heightens Europa's tragic predicament as she naturally shows utmost concern for Sarpedon. In fact, of the other two sons she says that Rhadamanthys, though

ἐμέμψατο ἰ τοῦ μὴ ἐξενεγκεῖν σπέρμα γενναῖον πατρός. ἰ ἐκ τῶν μεγίστων δ' ἠρξάμην φυτευμάτων ἰ Μίνω τεκοῦσα ... ἰ... ἰ Ῥαδάμανθυν, ὅσπερ ἄφθιτος παίδων ἐμῶν. ἰ ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν αὐγαῖς ταῖς ἐμαῖς ζόῃ σφ' ἔχει. ἰ τὸ μὴ παρὸν δὲ τέρψιν οὐκ ἔχει φίλοις (Europa: and thrice by giving birth did I endure the womanly labors; there was no criticism that my womb did not produce noble seed from their father; I began with the greatest of my offspring, bearing Minos... Rhadamanthys, who among my children is immortal, but does not live under the same sun as mine; the fact that he is not here does not bring joy to people who love him).

¹¹⁰ *TGrF* F 99, 16-23.

immortal, does not live any longer on earth. The reference to Rhadamanthys' immortality implies by contrast that the missing bit hinted at Minos' death; with one son dead, another painfully removed from her, Europa underscores her preoccupation for the only son she has left. If this interpretation is correct, the mention of Minos' demise would remind the audience of his inglorious end, thus undermining the compliments his mother paid him.

Overall, the fragments of the lost tragedies confirm a decidedly unfavorable treatment of the Cretan king, as indicated by the author of the *Minos* and Plutarch. Some of the fragments support also Strabo's statement that Minos was portrayed as a tyrant. The fragments from Euripides' *Cretans* suggest that one further focus of the tragic portrait was Minos' incapacity to adjudicate fairly according to sensibilities current in fifth-century Athens.

Conclusions

The epic portrayal of Minos as judge and as destructive-minded king seems to have informed the vase painters of the Archaic Period. A Khalkidian and an Athenian artist visually elaborated the epic description of Minos as destructive-minded. While no satisfactory explanation can be found for a Khalkidian interest in bringing out the darker side of Minos, an Athenian negative portrayal of Minos in the sixth century BCE was to be expected: in this century, numerous Attic vases show an interest in promoting

Theseus, whose destructive-minded antagonist since epic was Minos. Striking is the treatment of Minos in a sixth-century *hydria* where the king's conventional function as adjudicator are supplanted by a personification, *Dēmodikē*, the Law of the (Athenian) *dēmos*. The denial of Minos' status as judge may indicate that the Athenians perceived the inadequacy of monarchs in adjudication.

In the fifth century, Bakkhylides' treatment of Minos in *Ode* 17 stands out for the poet's ability to deliver a complex and multi-layered picture of the Cretan king wherein single elements are concurrently employed to construct three different images: a destructive-minded individual, a tyrant of both eastern and Greek type, and a skillful commander led astray by Aphrodite. My 'polysemic' reading suggests that Bakkhylides achieved a magisterial balance in accommodating the expectations of his diverse audience, Athenian and Ionians on the one hand, Keans on the other, and its ability both to keep faithful to Homeric tradition and to innovate.

Bakkhylides' representation of Minos as tyrant will become a standard treatment in Attic drama, so far as we are able to determine from the surviving fragments. This is not to say that the *Ode* influenced the ways in which the tragic production would represent Minos: Aischylos' Cretan tragedies may well have preceded Bakkhylides' poetry. Rather, tragedies were believed to derive from dithyrambs (Arist. *Poet.* iv.1449a10), meaning that the two genres shared many conventions and themes, among which, we can speculate, a harsh treatment of Minos, a character who had incurred Athenian antipathy in the sixth century as attested by two Attic vase paintings.

The more extensive fragments of the tragedies concerning Minos seem to contain an overt criticism of Minos' inability to deliver verdicts according to the Athenian categories of intentional/unintentional crime. This confirms and supports the hypothesis that the figure of Minos met with resistance in Athens due to his conventional epic role as king-judge. The Athenian vilification of Minos, then, does not reflect a passive acceptance of the traditional antagonism between Minos and Theseus, once Athenian propaganda sides with the latter, rather ultimately it stems from an acknowledgment of the incompatibility between the Athenian conception of justice and the system of old represented by the king-judge Minos.

Now that the tyrannical portrayal of Minos has been outlined, I would finally like to suggest that the tale of Deiokeas, as reported in Herodotos (i.96-101), provides a fitting example for us to understand Minos' trajectory from judge to tyrant. The *logos* follows the ascension to power of Deiokeas, the first king of the Medes, a man labeled "a lover of tyranny" from the outset (96.2). Taking advantage of the state of *anomia* in Media, Deiokeas made himself available as judge first in his village, then, once his reputation for delivering fair sentences spread, throughout the whole country. When the entire Median community eventually turned to him for adjudication of their disputes, Deiokeas refused to serve as a judge until the Medes, realizing the necessity of being governed by a *basileus*, elected him as their king. During his rule, called a *tyrannis* by Herodotos, he resumed his service as a judge, but his verdicts became harsh (100.1). Regardless of its historical accuracy, the story illustrates the advantages, but also the drawbacks to bestowing judicial powers on one individual. On the one hand, resorting to a single judge relieves

Media from a general condition of lawlessness and fosters its unity under a king; on the other, the concentration of judicial competence offers Deioke a springboard for attaining sovereignty that then degenerates into a tyranny. The story certainly stimulated Herodotos' Greek readers to ponder on the trajectory correlating administration of justice with the establishment of tyranny; the figure of the judge overlaps with that of the tyrant. The tale also served to trace a process of deterioration in the ways in which Deioke delivers justice: from his fair verdicts as popular judge, the Mede in his capacity as king adopts instead a harsh interpretation of the law. On the whole, the Deioke story serves as a warning against the figure of the king-judge, whose rule is equated with that of a tyrant and whose judgments may be enforced with excessive strictness. The Deioke tale traces the king-judge's transition to tyrant, the same narrative we have outlined for Minos in fifth-century literature.¹¹¹ Since Herodotos addresses Athenians as well as non-Athenians¹¹² and the tradition probably predates its inclusion in the historian's work, the Deioke story speaks to how easily receptive the Ionians might have been with regard to the Bacchylidean representation of Minos as tyrant, even though they previously knew him as the king-judge from the epic tradition. By the same token, the notion of justice used as a springboard for tyranny made all the more unproblematic the Athenians' choice of carrying on a tyrannical portrayal of Minos in their tragedies.

¹¹¹ The connection between Deioke and Minos is also supported by Herodotos' description of how the litigants voluntarily submitted their quarrels to Deioke for a verdict; this is the same procedure described in the *Odyssey* as the dead of their own volition ask Minos for rulings: see passage #4 and Gagarin (1986) 33. Moreover, the accusation of excessive harshness in judging cases leveled at the tyrant Deioke corresponds with the Chorus' criticism of Minos' cruelty in sentencing Pasiphaë: F 4 Cantarella, 51.

¹¹² Herodotos' audience did comprise Greeks other than the Athenians; see vii.139, where the historian is aware that his opinion about the pivotal role of the Athenians in the victory against the Persians might meet with objections (evidently, of other Greeks!).

CHAPTER 3

MINOS MARITIMUS: FROM SEA POWER TO THALASSOCRACY

The fifth-century historians Herodotos and Thukydides record a tradition that ascribed to the Cretan king Minos the earliest known thalassocracy on the Aegean Sea.¹ The scholarly debate has long focused on discussing whether these authors' testimonies preserve the memory of a historical Minoan dominion on the sea in place during the LM I A period (1600-1480 BCE).² Archaeological evidence from the Aegean islands, in particular the Kyklades, has been either mustered to support its existence³ or dismissed. In the latter case, the Greek historians' report has been labeled as mere fifth-century Athenian fabrication.⁴

The present chapter does not concern itself with determining whether or not a kernel of historical truth lies behind the accounts of the Greek historians, nor, if historical, what type of control that thalassocracy entailed, whether it was strictly military and naval,⁵ or based upon the tools of diplomacy, colonization and perhaps even religion.⁶ This chapter instead focuses on the construction and functions of Minos' thalassocracy in Greek thought rather than on what the Greek historical traditions suggest about Cretan history of the Bronze Age.

¹ Thuc. i.4 and 8; Hdt. iii.122.2 and i.171.2.

² See Mountjoy-Ponting (2000) 141-84.

³ See the contributions in Hägg-Marinatos (1984).

⁴ Starr (1954-55) 282-91; Baurain (1991) 255-66.

⁵ Hiller (1984) 27-31; Hood (1984) 33-7.

⁶ Respectively, Poursat (1984) 85-7; Platon (1984) 65-9; Marinatos (1984) 167-78.

The first section traces the origins of the notion of Minos' sea power into the Archaic Age, thus questioning the modern view that the connection of Minos with a dominion over the sea was a fifth-century Athenian invention *ex nihilo*. The remaining three sections are dedicated to the fifth-century Athenian construct of Minos' thalassocracy and are organized according to the following foci: Thukydides' construction of Minos as a thalassocrat, Herodotos' portrayal of the character as a tyrannical thalassocrat, and the relevance of Minos' thalassocracy as a model for the Athenian *archē*. An appendix to the chapter (pp.168-73) considers a non-Athenian perspective of Minos' sea power, namely the tradition about the king's expedition to Sicily and its exploitation in the Sicilian context.

Minos' Sea Power: Archaic and Non-Athenian Views

Modern scholars have long assumed that Minos' thalassocracy is a fifth-century Athenian invention endorsed by the historians Herodotos and Thukydides:⁷ the implication would be that Minos was never imagined as a thalassocrat either outside of Athens or in earlier literature⁸ or tradition. This view, however, is belied by Thukydides' effort to ground in existing traditions his association of the Minos figure with an early thalassocracy over the Aegean sea.

⁷ Starr (1954-55) 282-91; Baurain (1991) 255-66. According to both, Minos was transformed into a thalassocrat only in fifth-century Athens.

⁸ Morris (1992) 174-5 rejects the notion that epic poetry ever connected Minos with sea power.

In Thukydides' survey of past naval powers, Minos earns a place of utmost importance:

Μίνως γὰρ παλαιάτατος ὢν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν ναυτικὸν ἐκτίσασθαι καὶ τῆς νῦν Ἑλληνικῆς θαλάσσης ἐπὶ πλείστον ἐκράτησε καὶ τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ἡρξέ τε καὶ οἰκιστὴς πρῶτος τῶν πλείστων ἐγένετο, Κάρως ἐξελάσας καὶ τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ παῖδας ἡγεμόνας ἐγκαταστήσας· τό τε ληστικόν, ὡς εἰκός, καθήρει ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἐφ' ὅσον ἐδύνατο, τοῦ τὰς προσόδους μᾶλλον ἰέναι αὐτῷ.

For Minos was the earliest among those of whom we know from tradition to obtain a fleet, rule over most of what now is the Hellenic sea and dominate the Kykladic islands; he was also the first *oikistēs* of most of them, since he drove out the Karians and established his own sons as leaders there; to the extent possible, Minos freed the sea of piracy, as is probable, so that more revenues would flow to himself. (Thuc. i.4)

Minos was the earliest of the ancients to have acquired a fleet and gained what we may term for now 'thalassocracy' (θαλάσσης ἐκράτησε) over most of the Aegean sea and the Kykladic islands. Minos' 'thalassocracy' hinged upon possession of a fleet (παλαιάτατος ναυτικὸν ἐκτίσασθαι) and his rule over the Kyklades (τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ἡρξε), the latter secured by his colonization of the islands themselves (οἰκιστὴς πρῶτος) through the banishment of the Karians and the placement of his children in positions of command. In order to support his reconstruction of Minos' 'thalassocracy', the historian relies on the authority of *akoē*, an elusive term that we may loosely equate with oral tradition.⁹

Herodotos seems more skeptical than Thukydides about the primacy of Minos in things naval:

Πολυκράτης γὰρ ἐστὶ πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν Ἑλλήνων ὃς θαλασσοκρατέειν ἐπενοήθη, πάρεξ Μίνω τε τοῦ Κνωσίου καὶ εἰ δὴ τις ἄλλος πρότερος τούτου ἡρξε τῆς θαλάσσης· τῆς δὲ ἀνθρωπίνης λεγομένης γενεῆς Πολυκράτης πρῶτος, ἐλπίδας πολλὰς ἔχων Ἰωνίης τε καὶ νήσων ἄρξαι.

For Polykrates is the first of the Greeks of whom we know, to have contrived to establish a thalassocracy, except for Minos of Knossos and anyone else who ruled the sea prior to him; but Polykrates was the first of the so-called human race, he who had great hopes of being able to rule Ionia and the islands. (Hdt. iii.122.2)

⁹ For a further qualification of *akoē* and especially the different attitudes of Thukydides and Herodotos toward it, see Wille (2001); Raaflaub (2003) 88, n. 44; Irwin (2007) 212, nn. 67-8.

Herodotos prefers to regard Polykrates of Samos as the first *human* to have pursued a ‘thalassocracy’ (θαλασσοκρατέειν); in the historian’s opinion, Minos, son of Zeus and thus removed from the human realm, does not qualify as the earliest thalassocrat. Herodotos’ choice of discounting Minos in favor of Polykrates, however, shows that the author was still grappling with a tradition that promoted the antiquity of Minos’ ‘thalassocracy’, a tradition arguably similar to the one that Thukydides is more prone to accept. Elsewhere Herodotos himself mentions an *akoē* about Minos, which he scrutinizes with due caution (ὅσον καὶ ἐγὼ δυνατός εἰμι <ἐπὶ> μακρότατον ἔξικέσθαι ἀκοῇ; “in as much as I am able to reach back into tradition over the longest period of time”) in order to buttress his claim that the Cretan king did not exact a tribute from his Karian subjects, then islanders, but rather employed them to man his fleet.¹⁰

Thus, through the testimonies of the two historians we are informed that oral traditions labeled as *akoē* connecting Minos with ‘thalassocracy’ were circulating and spread so widely as to demand that Herodotos and Thukydides both take them into account, whether to reject, embrace, or scrutinize them. The oral lore referred to as *akoē* had longstanding origins, as Herodotos clarifies, surviving into the fifth-century and providing Herodotos and Thukydides with an authoritative basis for discussing Minos in relation to thalassocracy.

The professed antiquity of *akoē* and the historians’ references to it speaks against the modern view that reduces Minos’ thalassocracy to an Athenian invention *ex nihilo*.

¹⁰ Hdt. i.171.2.

However, we must also consider that the expressions for (and concept of) thalassocracy that Herodotos and Thukydides apply to Minos (θαλάσσης ἐκράτησε/θαλασσοκρατέειν) are likely a fifth-century construct: similar expressions containing the idea of *kratos* and *thalassa* are not found anywhere in earlier literature.¹¹ The historians naturally equated Minos' 'dealings with the sea', whose memory *akoē* passed down, with thalassocracies current in their own times: for instance, it is clear that Thukydides' phrase Μίνως θαλάσσης ἐκράτησε parallels the expression he uses in reference to the Athenian thalassocracy, θαλάσσης ἐκράτουν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι.¹² The antiquity of *akoē* lent credibility to the historians' statements about Minos. But, since fluidity characterized oral tradition, either the historians or some other fifth-century source was responsible for casting Minos' sea power in more contemporary terms. Either way, Minos' thalassocracy is likely a 'modern,' e.g. fifth-century BCE, reading of what oral traditions described. Obviously, we cannot determine what term(s) *akoē* had initially employed for Minos' 'thalassocracy', nor is it a crucial point; I will henceforth name his a 'sea power' and keep it distinct from his 'thalassocracy', a markedly fifth-century Athenian notion. 'Sea power', thus, will apply to both archaic and non-Athenian notions of Minos' rule of the sea: it is sea power to which this section is devoted.

While unhelpful in terms of definitions, Thukydides does provide us with three strands of information that enable us to pin down the contents of *akoē* and of what Minos' sea power may have comprised: Minos achieved primacy in owning a fleet and in

¹¹ Momigliano (1944) 57 attributes to Herodotos the development of a 'clear-cut idea' of thalassocracy. The noun *thalassocratia* is not found until Strabo i.3.2: see Gardiner (1969) for the use of thalassocracy-related terms in Thukydides.

¹² Thuc. vii.57.7. See also Thuc. viii.76.4 (τὸ Ἀθηναίων κράτος τῆς θαλάσσης).

ruling and colonizing islands (the Kyklades). Herodotos' statement that, as far back as *akoē* may go, Minos' sea power seems to have required its subjected Karian islanders to man the king's ships belongs to the rule of the islands, the second element of Minos' sea power according to Thukydides' *akoē*. The three points of *akoē* can all be found in either archaic or non-Athenian sources, proving that the association of Minos with sea power had both long been in the making before Athens could have 'invented' Minos' thalassocracy and had formed independently of Athenian influence. In my opinion, these sources that come down to us in a written form captured the various aspects of *akoē* that Thukydides and Herodotos mention.

We shall start with the notion of Minos' precedence underlying Thukydides' report of *akoē* and tellingly repeated twice in but a few lines (παλαιάτατος, πρώτος). Minos' temporal primacy is clearly delineated in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The two poems provide a firm chronological anchor to date Minos' activity two generations prior to the heroes of the Trojan expedition: both Idomeneus and Odysseus in fact call on Minos as their grandfather and take care to specify that he was the offspring of Zeus.¹³ Minos is thus imagined to belong to an older generation of semi-divine heroes, located in a past more remote than the Trojan war. It must be noted that Homeric epic, while testifying to Minos' antiquity, is apparently silent about Minos' sea power. We shall return to this issue later. At this stage, it is sufficient to observe that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* offer consistent chronological coordinates to justify Minos' precedence so keenly insisted upon by *akoē*.

¹³ *Il.* xiii.448-53; *Od.* xix.178-84. Both are consistent with Zeus' account of Minos' birth: : *Il.* xiv. 321-2.

Minos' possession of a navy (ναυτικὸν ἐκτίσατο), knowledge of which Thukydides ascribed to *akoē*, is implied by two stories, namely his expeditions against Athens and Sicily. Minos' campaign against the Athenians was occasioned by the murder of the king's son Androgeos in Attica. This war obviously implicated the deployment of Minos' fleet.¹⁴ Although the sources for the story do not go further back than Philochoros, the name Androgeos was known to archaic epic, which supports the hypothesis that the myth was of some antiquity (see pp. 33-6). Further, let us consider that some versions of the story (Pausanias, Plutarch and Apollodoros) aim to exempt the Athenians from any responsibility in the assassination of Androgeos: these seem to constitute a response to stories that instead placed the blame on Athens (Diodoros and Apollodoros), probably the original core of the legend, which might have developed in a non-Athenian environment during the archaic age (see p. 36, n. 54).

Minos' expedition against Sicily offers more solid clues as to its origins. The story had it that Minos at the peak of his sea power launched an expedition to Sicily in order to pursue Daidalos, because of the assistance he had provided to Theseus and Ariadne; this enterprise concluded with the tragic death of Minos whom Kokalos, king of Kamikos and of the Sikanians, (or his daughters) murdered.¹⁵ Sophokles's *Kamikoi* staged the story, but its origins are not to be traced to fifth-century Athens. An entry in the Lindian Chronicle suggests that Minos' misadventure in Sicily was already known in

¹⁴ Philoc. *FGrHist* 328 F17; [Pl.] *Minos* 321a; Diod. Sic. iv.60.4; Apollod. iii.15.7-8; Paus. i.27.10; Plut. *Thes.* 16.1.

¹⁵ Hdt. vii.170.1; Soph. *Kamikoi*; Diod. Sic. iv.79.1-2; Apollod. *Bibl.* Ep.14-15.

the early sixth century.¹⁶ The Chronicle records a bronze crater that Phalaris, the sixth-century tyrant of Akragas, dedicated to Athena; on its rim was inscribed: “Daidalos offered me as a hospitality gift to Kokalos.”¹⁷ Even though Minos is not specifically recalled, Phalaris’ offering alludes to the story of the Cretan king’s expedition in Sicily, evidence that it was already circulating at the time of his tyranny (570-555 BCE).¹⁸ That the tale of Minos’ death was current in sixth-century Sicily seems also confirmed by artistic evidence. A miniature terracotta relief, believed to be from Sicily and dated 575-550 BCE, depicts a man atop a lebes-tripod with his right arm grasped by a female standing on the left with a pitcher, ready to pour its contents onto the man; on the right, a cloaked figure looks on. The scene has been convincingly interpreted as the murder of Minos, bathed by a daughter of Kokalos on the left and Kokalos himself on the right.¹⁹

Surely non-Athenian, the story of Minos’ death in Sicily might not have originated in an indigenous, Sikanian environment, as has been claimed on the basis that it seems to celebrate Minos’ inglorious defeat at the hands of the Sikanian king Kokalos.²⁰ Herodotos, our earliest literary evidence, presents a story tinged with anti-

¹⁶ Dunbabin (1948) 5; Bianchetti (1987) 42; Perlman (2002) 192. Gantz (1993) 275 also locates the myth in sixth or fifth-century Sicily. For Pugliese Carratelli (1956) 100, the tradition about Kokalos and Minos would have a basis in the memory of the contacts between Mycenaean Cretans and Sicily: in the scholar’s opinion, the core of the story may have originated in Mycenaean Crete long before the eighth-seventh century Greek colonization of the island.

¹⁷ *FGrHist* 532 F27.

¹⁸ See Bianchetti (1987) for the years of Phalaris’ tyranny.

¹⁹ For date and interpretation, see van Keuren (1989) 114-6. Also, Gantz (1993) 275. A damaged metope from the temple of Hera at Foce del Sele near Paestum presents a scene similar to the Sicilian relief. The metope’s extant right side has a man in a lebes-tripod and was thought to depict the death of Minos: Pugliese Carratelli (1956) 103, n. 35. The area around Paestum, however, failed to yield any other record of the Minos myth, and that cautions against identifying the character with Minos. Jason rejuvenated by Medea or Agamemnon killed by Clytemnestra are perhaps other possible candidates: see Schmidt (1977) 265-75; van Keuren (1989) 110-23.

²⁰ Lavagnini (1942) 681; Manni (1962) 8-9; Rizzo (1967) 120; Leighton (1999) 184-6.

Sikanian sentiments as he charges the Sikanians with *biē*.²¹ The story is more likely, then, to be Cretan; its development can be traced back to the early seventh century BCE when Cretans joined forces with Rhodian colonists to found Gela,²² metropolis of the neighboring Akragas, where the Minos story is first attested about a century later on the dedication of Phalaris.²³ Known at the time of Phalaris' tyranny over Akragas, the story reasonably traveled with the Geloans who founded Akragas in 580 BCE,²⁴ we can assume among the colonists of Akragas the presence of descendants of the Cretan settlers of Gela. The Cretan elements among the colonists might have used the myth of Minos' death in Sicily as a 'precedent of presence':²⁵ the king's mythical war against Kamikos,

²¹ Herodotos calls Minos' death *biaios* (Hdt. vii.170.1). The anti-Sikanian undercurrent is evident in Diod. iv.79.2: ὁ δὲ Κώκαλος εἰς σύλλογον προκαλεσάμενος καὶ πάντα ποιήσειν ἐπαγγειλάμενος ἐπὶ τὰ ξένια παρέλαβε τὸν Μίνω (having summoned Minos and communicated that he would do everything for him, Kokalos, welcomed Minos to a guest-friend's treatment). Diodoros implies that the Sikanian king breached the guest-hospitality offered to Minos as he killed the Cretan king by keeping him in the bath's hot water for too long.

²² Pareti (1959) 26-7. For the foundation of Gela, see Thuc. vi.4.3. The participation of Cretan colonists in the foundation of Gela is problematic: the material record as well as several testimonies (e.g. Herodotos vii.153-154.1: the settlers of Gela are only Rhodians from Lindos) do not seem to support a Cretan presence in Gela. The overshadowing of the Cretan colonial contribution, however, may well be the result of a competition between the Rhodian and the Cretan components, with the former prevailing over the latter: Perlman (2002) 177-90. That Cretan colonists participated in the settlement of Gela is also suggested by the discovery of several possibly Cretan names inscribed on lead tablets found near the temple of Athena at Camarina: the tablets are thought to belong to the period of Gela's resettlement of Camarina, originally a Syracusan colony, in 466-1 BCE. The names indicate that still in the middle of the fifth century there were Geloans of Cretan descent who resettled Camarina. See Perlman (2002) 200-2 with bibliography.

²³ I am not interested in tracing the origins of the story of Minos in Sicily further back than the historical period of Greek colonization. Let it suffice to say that scholars have claimed for the tale a genesis already in the Bronze Age, holding that it would preserve the memory of a historical defeat of Mycenaean Cretans on the island, since archaeologists have unearthed a conspicuous amount of Mycenaean material in Sicily – and nothing Minoan: Dunbabin (1948) 5; Pugliese Carratelli (1956) 100; Bianchetti (1987) 43. It must be noted that claiming a possible use of the story in the seventh century as I do here does not exclude that it might have dated back to the Bronze Age. The two hypotheses actually may complement one another: Musti (1988-9) 224.

²⁴ Thuc. vi.4.4. For the issue of the participation of Geloan Cretans in the foundation of Akragas, see Perlman (2002) 191 with n. 52. That Phalaris of Akragas referred to the Minos myth is our strongest evidence that there was a Cretan component in the population of the newly founded colony of Gela.

²⁵ The expression is coined by Malkin (1994) 47.

his presence in the area, both prompted the Rhodian-Cretan colonial enterprise in a Sikanian territory and legitimized the foundation of Gela, perhaps presented as a compensation for Minos' unfair death.

Considerations that Cretans would have never endorsed a myth reporting the defeat and death of their mythical king Minos²⁶ do not convince. Herodotos indicates that the Cretans accepted and even exploited the death of Minos to justify their refusal to participate in the Persian war. When envoys went to consult the Delphic oracle on whether the Cretans should participate in the Persian war alongside the other Greeks, the Pythia reminded them of the sufferings Minos caused the Cretans for failing to avenge his death in Sicily and yet participating in the Trojan war (Hdt. vii.169.1-170.1). In the story, the priestess constitutes an authoritative voice that forcefully exempts the Cretans from partaking in the current war: in other words, the story of Minos' death becomes the rationale for the Cretans to avoid the Persian war. Moreover, the negative depiction of Minos, dead and yet bearer of pain, should not be understood as evidence that the sources for the story are not Cretan: Cretan informants from Praisos in fact specify that Minos brought about famine and disease across Crete and eventually the island's second depopulation.²⁷ Overall the testimonies, thus, point to a Cretan provenance of the tale of Minos' death in Sicily.

In conclusion, Minos' two expeditions to Athens and Sicily imply that he was thought to own a navy sufficiently developed to afford him long-distance ventures. His

²⁶ Manni (1962) 8-9; Rizzo (1967) 120.

²⁷ Hdt. vii.171.2: τὸ δεύτερον ἐρημωθείσης Κρήτης (Crete was deserted for the second time).

campaigns are reminiscent of the more famous expedition of Agamemnon against Troy, with which those of Minos share the motive: Agamemnon attacked Troy in response to a violation against his *oikos*, namely the Trojan prince Paris' abduction of Helen, his brother's wife. Similarly, Minos' campaigns are caused by slights to his *oikos*: the Cretan king retaliated against Athens for the murder of Androgeos, for which he deemed the Athenians responsible, and sailed to Sicily to punish Daidalos for lending help to Ariadne and facilitating her abduction by Theseus.

If we may press further the comparison between Agamemnon and Minos, the latter ruled islands, in particular the Kyklades, according to the second point of Thukydides' *akoē* (τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ἡρξέ). In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon is said to have enjoyed not just the rule of Argos, but of many islands (*Il.* ii.108: πολλῇσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν). In my view, Minos' control of islands was already hinted at in archaic epic. The fragment from the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* lends itself to such interpretation:

[Μίνως] ὃς βασιλεύτατος †γένετο θνητῶν βασιλῆων
καὶ πλείστων ἦνασσε περικτιόνων ἀνθρώπων
Ζηνὸς ἔχων σκῆπτρον· τῷ καὶ πολέων βασίλευεν.

[Minos] who was the most kingly among mortal kings,
in that he lorded over very many neighbors,
holding the scepter of Zeus: therewith he also used to rule cities as a king.
([Hesiod] Fr. 144 M-W=[Pl.], *Minos* 320d)

The hexameters state that Minos reigned over a great number of neighbors (*periktiones anthrōpoi*), held the scepter of Zeus, and ruled cities. The passage is reminiscent of *Il.* ii.100-8, where Agamemnon, besides Argos, ruled over many islands with the scepter he

inherited from Zeus. In epic, holding the scepter of Zeus seems to afford its owner the authority to rule far and wide, in Agamemnon's case, even lordship over islands. Is this, then, true of Minos as well? Are we to read Minos' neighbors in the *Catalogue* as islanders?

Homeric epic with *Od.* xix.178-79, where Minos' realm is located in Knossos (τῆσι δ' ἐνὶ Κνωσός, μεγάλη πόλις, ἔνθα τε Μίνως ἰ ἐννέωρος βασίλευε) and *Il.* xiii.450 (Μίνωα Κρήτη ἐπίουρον), where Minos oversees Crete as a guardian, does not exclude or deny the possibility of a sea power, but rather shows the stability of Minos' kingdom in Crete. The information gleaned from the latter passage is compatible with Minos' rule over his neighbors averred in the *Catalogue*. Crete was in fact envisaged as a multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic island (*Od.* xix.173-7): the *Catalogue* as well as the *Iliad* testify that Minos unified Crete as a whole under his power. Thus, *periktiones anthrōpoi* are doubtless Minos' neighbors within Crete; but does the expression also mean that Minos' kingdom was limited to Crete as some have assumed in the belief that *periktiones anthrōpoi* are neighbors by land rather than sea?²⁸ A study of the epic usage of *periktiones*, when it appears in clear-cut contexts,²⁹ reveals that the term also entailed proximity by sea.

In the *Iliad*, the glare of flames engulfing a city on a far-off island surrounded by enemies is visible to neighbors, who may bring aid with their ships;³⁰ with the island

²⁸ E.g. Morris (1992) 174-5.

²⁹ In all cases other than those considered below in the body of the text, the term is used too vaguely to draw any conclusions about its precise meaning: *Il.* xviii.212; xix.104, 109; *Od.* xi.288 (here, in the variant *periktitali*).

³⁰ *Il.* xviii.207-8, 211-3: ὥς δ' ὅτε καπνὸς ἰὼν ἐξ ἄστεος αἰθέρ' ἵκηται ἰ τηλόθεν ἐκ νήσου, τὴν δῆϊοι

being fully encircled, the neighbors cannot but be coming from nearby islands. Also, in the *Odyssey*, Telemachus urges the Ithakans to have regard for the neighbors who live nearby (*periktiones anthrōpoi*),³¹ i.e. on the neighboring isles. Finally, in the *Iliad* again, Hektor addresses his allies calling them *periktiones*;³² a list of the Trojan allies is given in book two (*Il.* ii.816-77) and, alongside land neighbors, are included off-shore people such as the inhabitants of Sestos (836), Pelasgians of Larissa (840-1), Thrakians from across the Hellespont (844-5), Kikonian spearmen (846-7), and Paionian archers (848). Hektor, then, applies *periktiones* to neighbors by sea, who do not necessarily live nearby Troy. The term *periktiones* thus knew in epic a broader application than simply land neighbors, encompassing islands as well as mainlanders connected to one another by the sea. Accordingly, the fragment of the *Catalogue of Women* may be understood to record Minos' rule over many islands. The Pan-Hellenic character of the *Catalogue* warrants that such belief was widespread, and may well have been the basis for Thukydides' statement drawn from *akoē* that Minos controlled the Kyklades.

Rule of islands may thus well have been an element that archaic traditions recognized for both Agamemnon and Minos, perhaps because their expeditions to far-off lands presupposed it. From a practical standpoint, a long journey such as that of Agamemnon to Troy requires safety on the sea in order to allow a safe crossing and to

ἀμφιμάχωνται... ὑψόσε δ' αὐγὴ | γίγνεται αἰόσουσα περικτιόνεσσιν ιδέσθαι, | αἶ κέν πως σὺν νηυσὶν ἄρεω ἀλκτῆρες ἴκωνται (just as when smoke rising from a city reaches the sky from a far-away island, around which enemies are fighting... rising up above goes the glare for neighbors to see, in case they ever come with their ships to avert war).

³¹ *Od.* ii.64-5: ἄλλους τ' αἰδέσθητε περικτίονας ἀνθρώπους, οἳ περὶ ναιετάουσι ([Telemachus speaking to the Ithakans] "be ashamed in front of the other neighbors, who live around you").

³² *Il.* xvii.220: κέκλυτε μυρία φῦλα περικτιόνων ἐπικούρων ([Hektor speaking] listen, you numberless hordes of neighbors living nearby).

prevent the possibility of an attack against the king's hometown during his absence: in a word, acquiescence of the islands enabled Agamemnon to sail to Troy. By analogy with Agamemnon's Trojan expedition, Minos' campaign against Athens implies that the king could both count on a safe passage across the sea guaranteed by his control over the islands on his way to the city and afford to leave Crete unguarded; his travel to Sicily suggests only the latter possibility.

The *Catalogue of Women* suggests further that sea power attained through dominion of islands was part of the definition of kingship that archaic epic formulated. According to the *Catalogue*, Minos earned the distinction of most kingly, *basileutatos*, among mortal sovereigns Minos, because he ruled as an *anax* (ἡνασσε) over a great number of *periktiones anthrōpoi*, a label that might have included islands. Similarly, Agamemnon was qualified as *basileutatos* in the *Iliad* (*Il.* ix.69) and controlled many islands (ἀνάσσειν; ii.108). In epic, sea power seems to contribute to the achievement of supreme royalty: since the latter hinged on the number of folks under one's rule (see pp. 67-8), sea power obviously helped to increase that number, thus allowing its holder to enjoy the title *basileutatos*.

The third and final part of *akoē* as reported in Thukydides specifies the means by which Minos secured his dominion over the islands: the Kyklades were subjected to a colonial policy planned by the king, who became their οἰκιστὴς πρῶτος. Clearly, the foundation of colonies on islands ruled by members of his own family ought to have been viewed as a shrewd undertaking, since it ensured Minos a firm control of the Aegean sea, dotted as it was by many outposts personally responding to him. A few non-Athenian

traditions were likely in place to support the king's colonial endeavors: the foundation of Minoas in the Kyklades, the Kean myth of origins, and a Cretan tradition about the Karians and the Kyklades.

Later sources testify that cities named Minoa were founded in the Kyklades. We hear of a Minoa in Amorgos and of one in Siphnos.³³ Also, in ancient times Paros was apparently called Minoa,³⁴ probably because it was regarded as another conquest of Minos.³⁵ We cannot prove that these traditions concerning settlements called Minoa were part of the *akoē* developing in the Archaic and Classical periods given that our sources are significantly later. However, we do know that Thukydides mentions Minoa,³⁶ an island in front of Nisaea, the harbor of Megara, and that it was a colony founded, so the myth goes, at the time when Minos attacked the king of the city, Nisos.³⁷ If Thukydides knew of a Minoa and if the name Minoa was thought to be connected with Minos' colonizing campaign,³⁸ we may entertain the idea that the tradition of Minoas in the Kyklades circulated at least in the fifth century. The source for the traditions of these Minoas is presumably local to these settlements. Discussing the historicity of these Minoas is a moot point since these foundations do not go further back than the Archaic

³³ Steph. Byz. s.v. *Minoa, Amorgos*.

³⁴ Steph. Byz. s.v. *Minoa, Paros*.

³⁵ Apollodoros claimed that Minos sacrificed to the Graces in Paros when he received news of the death of his son Androgeos: Apollod. iii.2.10.

³⁶ Thuc. iii.51.3; iv.67.1.

³⁷ Paus. i.44.3; Steph. Byz. s.v. *Minoa*. The myth of Minos' attack on Megara appears, albeit elliptically, already in Aischylos (*Choeph.* 613-22).

³⁸ Cassola (1957) 348. Inferring that Minoas were Minos' colonies must have been common practice: see Diod. v.84.1-2. The Minoa in Sicily is an excellent example of this.

age.³⁹ Regardless of their ‘late’ origins, however, the name of these archaic settlements should have easily suggested in the fifth-century that Minos undertook a campaign of colonization in the Kyklades meant to secure more effectively his sea power.

Beside the various Minoas, the national tradition of Keos, one of the Kyklades, as expressed in Bakkhylides’ first epinician ode, ought to have contributed to the *akoē* regarding Minos’ colonization of the islands.⁴⁰ According to the epinician, Minos put in to Keos with fifty vessels, apportioned the land on the isle to half of his Cretan warriors whom he left behind there when he sailed back to Knossos (Bacchyl. *Ep.* i.112-25). The myth, whose origins are to be traced to Keos before the Persian wars (see pp.94-5), recalls Thukydides’ description of Minos as *oikistēs*: Minos in fact settles Keos by distributing land among the Cretan colonists before returning to Cnossus; the men left behind on Keos play the same role as Minos’ children according to *akoē*, in that they guarantee the king a continued dominion over the island. Tellingly, Minos is addressed as *basileus* (Bacchyl. *Ep.* i.124): as in archaic epic where Minos achieved supreme royalty (*basileutatos*) due to his ruling over islands, the fifth-century Kean tradition recognized a connection between sea power and kingship. Along with the existence of Minoas, alleged foundations by Minos, the Kean foundation legend may have contributed to the tradition concerning Minos’ colonizing activity in the Kyklades.

According to the *akoē*, the process of colonization undertaken by Minos brought as a consequence the deracination of the Karians from the Kyklades (Κάριας ἐξέλασας):

³⁹ Baurain (1991) 263. The urban center of Minoa in Amorgos had been walled in the late Geometric period: see Hansen-Nielsen (2004) 735.

⁴⁰ The text is on p. 94, n. 47.

the Karians had to be expelled because they were practicing piracy, as the historian later reveals (Thuc. i.8.1). Herodotos, too, recounts two traditions that dealt with the relationship between the Karians and the Kyklades. The historian first reports a Cretan source stating that the Karians, dwelling on islands (to be identified as the Kyklades, if we follow Thukydides) and known as Leleges, were Minos' subjects, never paid him tribute, but provided men for his navy, as far as the historian was able to verify by looking back into *akoē*;⁴¹ much later, the Cretan source continues, the Karians were compelled by Ionians and Dorians to move to the continent.⁴² Herodotos next pits against this Cretan tradition a Karian source, which claimed that the Karians were mainlanders from time immemorial and had never changed their name.⁴³

The two historians present three different narratives concerning the Karians and the Kyklades. First, Herodotos' Cretan version, which had to be ancient since the historian of Halikarnassos verified *akoē* as far back into the past as possible, insists on the

⁴¹ Hdt. i.171.2: Εἰσὶ δὲ τούτων Κάρες μὲν ἀπιγμένοι ἐς τὴν ἥπειρον ἐκ τῶν νήσων· τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν ἔδοντες Μίνω κατήκοοι καὶ καλεόμενοι Λέλεγες εἶχον τὰς νήσους, φόρον μὲν οὐδένα ὑποτελέοντες, ὅσον καὶ ἐγὼ δυνατός εἰμι <ἐπὶ> μακρότατον ἐξικέσθαι ἀκοῇ, οἱ δὲ, ὅπως Μίνως δέοιτο, ἐπλήρουν οἱ τὰς νέας (Among these are the Karians who moved from the islands to the continent; for, in ancient times, they were Minos' subjects, were called Leleges, dwelled on the islands, without paying any tribute, in as much as I am able to reach back into tradition over the longest period of time; instead, they manned Minos' ships whenever he would so request). Although Herodotos fails to mention explicitly his source here, its Cretan origins can be deduced from the fact that the Karian version rejects the Cretan tradition in two respects: the Karians were autochthonous to the continent and never changed their name (i.171.5). These two points are precisely what i.171.2 claims for the Karians, hence this has to be Herodotos' Cretan source.

⁴² Hdt. i.171.5: Μετὰ δὲ τοὺς Κάρας χρόνῳ ὕστερον πολλῷ Δωριεῖς τε καὶ Ἴωνες ἐξανέστησαν ἐκ τῶν νήσων, καὶ οὕτως ἐς τὴν ἥπειρον ἀπίκοντο (Long afterwards, Dorians and Ionians dislodged the Karians from the islands).

⁴³ Hdt. i.171.5: Κατὰ μὲν δὴ Κάρας οὕτω Κρήτες λέγουσι γενέσθαι οὐ μέντοι αὐτοὶ γε ὁμολογέουσι τούτοις οἱ Κάρες, ἀλλὰ νομίζουσι αὐτοὶ ἐωυτοὺς εἶναι αὐτόχθονας ἡπειρώτας καὶ τῷ οὐνόματι τῷ αὐτῷ αἰεὶ διαχρεωμένους τῷ περ νῦν (The Cretans say that this is what befell the Karians; however, the Karians themselves do not agree with them, and claim that they are autochthonous to the continent and they have always enjoyed the same name as nowadays).

Karians' subservience to Minos. Second, Herodotos' Karian tradition, likely a response to the former, denied that the Karians ever lived on the Kyklades or were ever called Leleges. Finally, Thukydides' *akoē* that agrees with the Cretan version in that the Karians are said to have originally inhabited the Kyklades, and to have submitted to Minos. While in substantial agreement, Thukydides' *akoē* and Herodotos' Cretan tradition differ in the method of submission: the former held that Minos was responsible for the Karians' forceful and immediate relocation,⁴⁴ whereas the latter talked about a tribute in men that the Karians/Leleges owed the king until Ionians or Dorians much later pushed them away from the islands. Both termed *akoai*, Herodotos' Cretan tradition and that of Thukydides are not identical. At odds with both, Herodotos' Karian source claimed that the Karians never dwelled on the Kyklades. This attempt to deny any Karian involvement with the Kyklades is telling evidence that Minos' control of the islands was a strongly established story: admitting that they lived in the Kyklades would have been tantamount for the Karians to acknowledge their servitude to Minos.

To conclude this section, we have examined Minos' sea power by scrutinizing traditions that are either archaic or non-Athenian in order to correct the modern view that Minos' connection with the sea had developed in fifth-century Athens. The three elements characterizing Minos' sea power according to Thukydides' *akoē*, namely ownership of a navy, rule of islands, and their colonization, are all found in earlier sources. Minos' expedition against Athens, attributable to a non-Athenian archaic

⁴⁴ For the irreconcilable differences between Herodotos and Thukydides as to the Karians, see Giuffrida (1976) 136.

tradition, and his campaign in Sicily, deriving from a Cretan tradition going back to at least the sixth century, implied that the king both possessed a navy and secured control of islands; similarly to Agamemnon's war against Troy, the king organized these expeditions in retaliation for slights to his *oikos*. That Minos' rule extended to the neighboring islands around Crete is also suggested already in the *Catalogue of Women*, which also implies that epic sea power may have had a bearing on the definition of kingship: rule of neighbors at sea conferred upon its holder supreme monarchy, as it did in the case of Agamemnon, the other epic ruler called *basileutatos*. The tradition regarding Minos' colonization of the Kyklades is found early in the fifth century: the Kean myth of origins (prior to 480 BCE) attests to Minos' colonization of Keos and qualifies his enterprise as one of a *basileus*. Sea power and monarchy thus are linked as epic poetry already attested. It is also likely that in the fifth century some archaic communities in the Kyklades (and the entire island of Paros, perhaps) were called Minoa, thus claiming for themselves a fictive foundation by Minos as Keos did: these traditions ought to be local to the communities interested in establishing a connection with the Cretan king. Finally, a Cretan tradition reported by Herodotos, reasonably ancient if the historian looked for verification as far into the past as he could, attests to the submission of the Kyklades and their Karian dwellers to Minos' rule: the islanders were obliged to man the king's ships.

Each tradition develops one of the three aspects of Minos' sea power that Thukydides ascribed to *akoē* and implies some or all of the others. For instance, the tale of Minos' expedition to Athens requires possession of a fleet and suggests security on the

sea ensured by his control of the islands. The *Catalogue of Women* suggests Minos' rule over the islands, which in turn requires possession of a navy, if not necessarily colonization. The Kean myth of origins develops the notion of Minos *oikistēs*, implying that he both possessed a navy and conquered the island. We may infer that prior to Thukydides' systematization there existed three elements, any one of which was understood to assume Minos' sea power.

Minos' Thalassocracy: Thukydides' Systematization

In the previous section, we have considered how Thukydides gathered information from *akoē* concerning what we have defined as Minos' sea power: ownership of a fleet, rule of the islands and their colonization are all elements present in archaic traditions as well as in fifth-century traditions foreign to Athens. By the same token, we cannot exclude that also Athenian or Athenian-biased sources contributed to the same pieces of information that Thukydides ascribes to *akoē*: the stories of Minos' war against Megara and the king's journey homeward from Athens may be interpreted thus.

In later sources (see p. 105, n. 73), the king's war against Megara, elliptically hinted at in Aischylos' *Choephoroi* 613-22, appears to have occurred shortly before Minos' attack on Athens. Minos' voyage home from his expedition against Athens is described in Bakchylides' *Ode* 17. Required for these two enterprises was Minos' possession of a navy; the probable implication is that he could count on a safe trip to the

destinations and back home, hence that the islands on the way to and from Athens were secured under his rule. The episode on the ship that Bakkhylides narrated had acquired considerable renown in Athens: Mikon painted the scene on the walls of the *Theseion* around the mid-fifth century. Both stories could be regarded as part of *akoē*, but, unlike previous sources, they ought to reflect an Athenian-biased construct of Minos: within all archaic and classical literature (and art), the war against Megara occurs only in Aischylos and, as we have seen, Bakkhylides composed his ode with an eye to pleasing the Athenians (see pp. 84-6). We shall explore the details of this construct in the next section. For now, let it suffice to note that the two stories credit Minos with a navy, but only imply control of the islands from Crete to Greece. These two authors' construction of Minos in the second quarter of the fifth-century hark back to the same elements, explicit and implicit, that characterized Minos' sea power in non-Athenian and archaic sources.

In addition to these two stories, we should mention that *akoē*'s focus on Minos' primacy (παλαίτατος, πρῶτος) has led scholars to believe that a list of thalassocrats might have constituted the backbone of Thukydides' survey of past naval powers in his *Archaeology*.⁴⁵ This hypothesis relies on the fact that the historian surveys thalassocracies in chronological order and that a list of thalassocrats, complete with the years during which they were active, has come down to us from Diodoros. The assumption is that an early form of such a list could have circulated in the fifth century.

⁴⁵ Myres (1906) 85-89; Forrest (1969) 95-110. Eusebius' *Chronica* preserves the list of thalassocracies drawn up in the seventh book of Diodoros' *Bibliotheca Historica* (vii. Fr 11 Vogel).

Admittedly, the second half of the fifth century seems an appropriate context for the list's origin and circulation: the rise of the Athenian *archē* likely generated interest in the exploration of previous maritime powers; moreover, lists of archons, Olympic victors, and of priests, a type of chronographic tool akin to a list of thalassocracies, underlie the compilation of the works of the earliest Attidographers.⁴⁶ Even so, a direct link with Thukydides cannot be ultimately proven.⁴⁷ We should note that the list, as preserved in Diodoros, commences *after* the Trojan war, thus leaving Minos outside its scope: the exclusion of the Cretan thalassocracy is hardly compatible with Thukydides' treatment of Minos. Moreover, Thukydides does not detail the duration of the past thalassocracies, which instead Diodoros' list makes a point of establishing. Overall, it is hard to envisage Thukydides drawing from such a list, unless we assume that it appeared in the fifth century in a form altogether different than Diodoros' version of it. As argued before (see p. 125), Homeric epic was already sufficient to establish Minos' chronological precedence: we need not think that thalassocracy lists were necessary for Thukydides to confirm the information about Minos.

Thukydides' account of Minos' thalassocracy does not rely solely on the authority of *akoē*, which might include Athenian and non-Athenian sources alike as we have seen. Thukydides' final assertion about Minos is instead based on an argument from probability (ὥς εἰκότως): it was likely that Minos undertook a campaign against piracy because piratical activities jeopardized fruition of the resources that thalassocracy granted

⁴⁶ Hellanikos of Lesbos: see Lazova (1988) 17-22.

⁴⁷ Momigliano (1944) 58. Similarly skeptical, Luraghi (2000) 234-5, with n.16 maintains that Thukydides worked independently of these lists and drew upon Herodotos for the post-Trojan War thalassocracies.

him. The reconstruction of Minos' thalassocracy thus combines *akoē* and the historian's own interpretation rooted in the principle of likelihood: both tradition and deduction inform Thukydides' presentation of Minos. The historian's account, therefore, constitutes also a reinterpretation of the traditional material concerning Minos' sea power, a reinterpretation to which we now turn.

While Thukydides' construction of Minos' thalassocracy was based on the same three traditional elements connected with sea power (navy, rule of islands and their colonization), the historian established an unprecedented hierarchy and causal connection between these components. This is evident as the historian casts colonization of the Kyklades as a way to rule the islands: Minos' colonization served the purpose of leaving the most trustworthy men in control of the islands, his very children, in order to maintain his hegemony over them (Thuc. i.4). Colonization of islands is, then, presented as a subcategory of control of the islands, which emerges as the more important trait along with possession of a fleet. The historian mentions first the *condicio sine qua non* for the establishment of a thalassocracy: ownership of a navy (ναυτικὸν ἐκτίσαστο). But this alone is not proof of a thalassocracy to the historian, as becomes clear from Thukydides' subsequent treatment of Agamemnon's maritime power. Even if several cities contribute a remarkable number of ships to the Trojan expedition in the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* ii. 474-785),⁴⁸ Thukydides credits Agamemnon alone with a full-fledged thalassocracy. As he scrutinizes *Iliad* ii.100-6, Thukydides utilizes the passage as evidence to infer that

⁴⁸ A recent study has defended the *Catalogue of Ships* as an integral part of the *Iliad*: see Visser (1997) 742-50.

Agamemnon, besides Argos, ruled over many islands with the scepter he inherited from Zeus. Although critical of his source, Thukydides nonetheless deduces that Agamemnon's dominion must have extended well beyond the few islands close to Argos, which could not have been otherwise labeled as 'many' by Homer; hence, Agamemnon must have had in his possession a fleet in order to maintain control of faraway islands.⁴⁹ According to Thukydides, Agamemnon's rule over a remarkable number of islands presupposes possession of a navy and, we may think, is an equally determinant factor in the historian's definition of thalassocracy for epic kings. Similarly, the historian may be thought to rationalize the concept of Minos' sea power by introducing a hierarchical and causal relationship among the three components, whereas formerly any of the three would have qualified Minos as holder of a sea power. Navy and rule over islands (τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ἡρξέ) are both required for a thalassocracy to exist; control of the islands presupposed possession of a navy and was implemented through colonization (οἰκιστής) in the case of Minos.

As pointed out, an important part of Thukydides' strategy in reconstructing Minos' thalassocracy consists of grounding it in tradition, hence his appeal to *akoē*. Beside oral tradition, which he claims as his source, I suspect that Thukydides also had in mind testimonies from archaic epic, even though this is generally believed to be silent

⁴⁹ Thuc. i.9.4: φαίνεται γὰρ ναυσὶ τε πλείσταις αὐτὸς ἀφικόμενος καὶ Ἀρκάσι προσπαρασχών, ὥς Ὅμηρος τοῦτο δεδήλωκεν, εἴ τῳ ἱκανὸς τεκμηριώσαι. καὶ ἐν τοῦ σκήπτρου ἅμα τῇ παραδόσει εἰρηκεν αὐτὸν πολλῇσι νήσοισι καὶ Ἀργεῖ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν· οὐκ ἂν οὖν νήσων ἔξω τῶν περιοικίδων (αὐταὶ δὲ οὐκ ἂν πολλαὶ εἶεν) ἡπειρώτης ὢν ἐκράτει, εἰ μὴ τι καὶ ναυτικὸν εἶχεν (It appears that [Agamemnon] came with the greatest number of ships and supplied ships for the Arcadians, as Homer has shown, if he is an appropriate source of evidence for anything. In addition, in the passage about the passing down of the scepter, he said that Agamemnon was ruling over many islands and all of Argos; given that his base was on the mainland, he could not have ruled islands except the ones close by -but those would not be many-, unless he also had a fleet).

about Minos' thalassocracy. I have argued that the *periktiones anthrōpoi* of the *Catalogue of Women*, over whom Minos exercised his lordship, might have indicated also islands close to Crete (see pp. 130-2). To Thukydides, the *Catalogue* ought to have signaled that the Cretan king, in order to rule over many islands, possessed a fleet, and thus exercised a thalassocracy: this same line of reasoning Thukydides applied to Agamemnon. The historian, in particular, ought to have understood the *Catalogue's* *periktiones* as islands because he himself applied the adjective *periktiōn* to islanders.⁵⁰

The *Odyssey* as well may have offered Thukydides subtle clues supporting his claim that Minos held a thalassocracy. Thukydides' treatment of Corinth's sea power in the *Archeology* (i.13) offers an example of the historian's use of epic. There the historian adduces the *Iliad* to identify the *preconditions* that led to the development of Corinth's sea dominion. He observes that Corinth's location in the middle of the Isthmus enabled the city to become an *emporion* that was indispensable for trade between the Peloponnesus and mainland Greece, first by land, then by sea. The city's privileged position contributed to the Corinthians' accumulation of riches. Thukydides finds supporting evidence for their wealth in the epic epithet attached to Corinth, *aphneios*, affluent (*Il.* ii.570). The Corinthians used their wealth to acquire a fleet, with which they tried to eliminate piracy (τὸ ληστικὸν καθήρουν) and doubled their income with revenues from both land and sea.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Thuc. iii.104.3: ἦν δέ ποτε καὶ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλη ξύνοδος ἐς τὴν Δῆλον τῶν Ἰώνων τε καὶ περικτιόνων νησιωτῶν (Once in antiquity a great assembly of Ionians and neighboring islanders took place in Delos).

⁵¹ Thuc. i.13.5: οἰκοῦντες γὰρ τὴν πόλιν οἱ Κορίνθιοι ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰσθμοῦ αἰεὶ δὴ ποτε ἐμπόριον εἶχον, τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὸ πάλαι κατὰ γῆν τὰ πλείω ἢ κατὰ θάλασσαν, τῶν τε ἐντὸς

According to Thukydides, location and wealth determined the rise of the Corinthian naval power. Similarly, epic offered Thukydides a firm basis to maintain that Minos' Crete both occupied a location suitable for sea power and accumulated enough resources to organize a fleet. First, just as Corinth on land, Crete enjoyed a central position in the middle of the Aegean, as remarked in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* xix.172):⁵² its location should have predisposed the Cretans for sea ventures as it will the Corinthians. Second, if Corinth is defined as *aphneios* in the *Iliad*, Crete is called *pieira*, rich, in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* xix.173). According to the historian's line of reasoning, the epic attribute *pieira* would prove that the Cretans acquired wealth that derived in this case from the richness of their soil rather than from trade by land, as in the Corinthian instance. Such wealth, however, regardless of its origin, ought to have been employed to assemble a fleet, which at the time of the expedition against Troy still survived, ranking second in number of vessels (*Il.* ii.645-52). Crete's location and wealth, thus, are *lingering conditions* and proof that a sea power, though unmentioned in Homeric epic, could well have been in place at the time of Minos. Significantly, the epic depiction of Crete as a rich land in the middle of the sea is closely followed by the mention of Minos' rule over

Πελοποννήσου καὶ τῶν ἔξω, διὰ τῆς ἐκείνων παρ' ἀλλήλους ἐπιμισγόντων, χρήμασί τε δυνατοὶ ἦσαν, ὥς καὶ τοῖς παλαιοῖς ποιηταῖς δεδήλωται· ἀφνειὸν γὰρ ἐπωνόμασαν τὸ χωρίον. ἐπειδὴ τε οἱ Ἕλληνες μᾶλλον ἐπλῆζον, τὰς ναῦς κτησάμενοι τὸ ληστικὸν καθήρουν, καὶ ἐμπόριον παρέχοντες ἀμφοτέρω δυνατὴν ἔσχον χρημάτων προσόδῳ τὴν πόλιν (Inhabiting a city on the Isthmus, the Corinthians always held a trading center, since the Greeks mingled with one another through their city, in antiquity more by land than by sea, and were powerful in resources, as the ancient poets also show; for these called the place affluent. Once the Greeks started navigating more, having acquired a fleet, the Corinthians tried to eradicate piracy, and, by providing a trading center, kept their city powerful thanks to the income of wealth from both land and sea).

⁵² *Od.* xix.172-3: Κρήτη τις γαί' ἔστι, μέσῳ ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ | καλὴ καὶ πείρα, περίρρυτος (There is a land, Crete, in the middle of the sea that shines like wine, beautiful and rich, surrounded by water). By allowing the island to entertain communications with the Peloponnesus, Asia Minor and Rhodes, Crete's geographical position facilitated Minos' thalassocracy: see Arist. *Pol.* ii.1271b.

Knossos (*Od.* xix.178-9). In just a few verses, epic furnished the historian with clues to support the existence of a Cretan naval potentate associated with the name of Minos.

That in reconstructing Minos' thalassocracy Thukydides might have applied the same methodology as he did in the case of the Corinthians, namely search for evidence nestled in Homeric epic, can be inferred from the further analogies that the historian draws between the two. Both Minos and Corinth took upon themselves the task of struggling against piracy.⁵³ In addition, as a result of quelling piracy, Minos boosted his revenue as the Corinthians will do. The two naval powers thus follow an almost identical trajectory: both assembled a fleet due to their position and the accumulation of wealth, both undertook campaigns against the pirates, finally both managed to optimize their revenue.⁵⁴

To conclude this section, in his construction of Minos' thalassocracy Thukydides recasts the relationship among the traditional elements that *akoē* attributed to the king. Possession of a navy and rule of islands become now the defining traits of thalassocracy, with colonization functioning as a tool to achieve the latter. The previous notion of sea power instead was formulated by different traditions, each of which ascribed one of the three characteristics to Minos and *implied* the rest. Thukydides established their causal relationship and so constructed from them a narrative. Thalassocracy was thus a systematization of what we have termed Minos' sea power. Moreover, the historian's use

⁵³ Interestingly, the historian casts the anti-piratical campaign of Corinth as plain fact, but resorts to a reasonable conjecture for Minos. It is plausible that Thukydides credited Minos with a policy of curbing piracy on the basis of his more reliable information about the Corinthians.

⁵⁴ The striking similarities suggest that Thukydides' reconstruction of Minos' thalassocracy might in fact have been based on the analogy with the Corinthian one.

of evidence drawn from epic in his treatment of Corinth's sea dominion suggests that epic, while not explicitly addressing Minos' sea power, might have confirmed for Thukydides that the king had exercised a thalassocracy.

Minos' Tyrannical Thalassocracy

Thukydides' recasting of Minos' sea power as a thalassocracy (Thuc. i.4 θαλάσσης ἐκράτησε) was not unique to the fifth century, nor was it the earliest. Herodotos also claimed a thalassocracy (Hdt. iii.122.2: θαλασσοκρατέειν) for the king. The historian from Halikarnassos evokes Minos' thalassocracy in the context of a comparison between the mythic king and the tyrant of Samos, Polykrates. Such a comparison illustrates that for Herodotos Minos' thalassocracy coincided with rule over islands. Polykrates' plans in fact aimed at gaining control of islands (ἐλπίδας πολλὰς ἔχων [...] νήσων ἄρξαιν), which entails, for the comparison to work, that Minos was thought to have achieved that control. Rule of islands, of course, implied possession of a navy, which Herodotos in fact recognized for Minos (Hdt. i.171.2).

Herodotos' definition of Minos' θαλασσοκρατέειν is thus very close to Thukydides' formulation of the king's thalassocracy. For a thalassocracy to exist required two of the traditional elements comprising sea power. Herodotos, however, does not acknowledge that colonization was the tool whereby Minos ruled the islands as Thukydides will do. In drawing a comparison between Minos and Polykrates, Herodotos

introduces an element absent in Thukydides' description, namely, the identification of thalassocracy with tyranny. This association was an innovation to the epic representation of Minos in the *Catalogue of Women*, which seems to have portrayed the holder of a sea power qua ruler of many islanders (*periktiones anthrōpoi*) as a quintessential king (*basileutatos*). The epic equation of thalassocracy with ultimate kingship gave way to the new identification of thalassocracy with tyranny indicated by Herodotos' comparison of Minos with Polykrates. I shall term this notion of thalassocracy as tyrannical. Before Herodotos, we find antecedents of such tyrannical thalassocracy in the works of Bakkhylides and Aischylos; *Ode 17* and *Choephoroi* develop the traditional notion of Minos' sea power while simultaneously presenting Minos as a tyrant.

Performed in the 470's, Bakkhylides' *Ode 17* presented Minos as holder of a sea power. The choice of the poem's setting alone is revealing; Minos is journeying aboard a ship en route to Crete after leaving Athens. In mythological time, Minos' return voyage follows his expedition against the city in response to the murder of his son. His attack on Athens presupposes that the islands along the route be tamed in order to guarantee the king safe passage, and so does his return to Crete. The sea on which the ship sails is in fact called *Krētikon* (Bacchyl. xvii.4), the sea between the Peloponnese and Crete conquered at this time by Minos and thus labeled Cretan. With the sea (and the islands) subjugated to the Cretan king, Bakkhylides thus sets the dithyramb's episode in the

context of a sea power held by Minos; subservience of islands and possession of a fleet are both inevitable implications.⁵⁵

Significantly, unlike epic which seems to have presented Minos' as the most royal of kings qua possessor of a sea power, Bakkhylides strips Minos of even the basic royal titles: *anax*, *basileus*, or cognate verbs do not figure anywhere in his poem. For all his military qualifications of *polemarchos* (Bacchyl. 17.39), *menepolemos hērōs* (73), and *stratagetes* of the Cnossians (120-1), never once is Minos addressed as the king we have come to know from epic. Such odd denial of his status as king responds to one of the poem's aims; while characterized as a holder of sea power, Minos concomitantly embodies the prototype of the tyrant (see pp. 88-90). The omission of Minos' royal stature enables Bakkhylides to juxtapose seamlessly the figure of the sea holder with that of the tyrant in his portrayal of Minos. At this stage in the third decade of the fifth century, sea power is no longer conducive to supreme kingship, as seemed to be the case in epic; sea power leads instead to tyranny.

It must also be noted that Minos' sea power shows signs of collapse in the *Ode*. Minos relies on the sea to eliminate Theseus; the Cretan tyrant predicts that his rival would drown in his attempt to fetch the golden ring. In essence, Minos resorts to the sea as an instrument to get rid of his rival. The Κρητικὸν πέλαγος is just an extension of

⁵⁵ Moreover, Minos does not return empty-handed: he is carrying on board the fourteen youths, likely bound to end up sacrificed to the Minotaur. While this could be understood as a compensation along the lines of epic *poinē*, –and surely many epic elements are intertwined in the *Ode* with fifth-century innovations (see pp. 87-8) -- a tribute is also what a thalassocratic rule requires of its subjects: Herodotos mentions *phoros* and manning of ships as two possible instruments of subjugation (Hdt. i.171.2, only to choose the latter in the case of the Karians). This encourages us to interpret the fourteen Athenian youths and maidens as a form of tribute, thus further confirming that Bakkhylides' *Ode* is constructing Minos' thalassocracy.

Minos' territory, over which he holds control, or so he thinks until the patron deity of the sea, Poseidon, undermines both his expectations and confidence by allowing his son Theseus to resurface from the depths. Even Minos' plan of carrying the ship onward and leaving Theseus in the middle of the sea is to no avail. Minos, son of Zeus though he may be, has no sway over the sea superior to that of his antagonist Theseus, offspring of Poseidon and thus perhaps inevitably favored by the sea.

Interpreting the story as the transfer of naval supremacy from Minos to Theseus is correct.⁵⁶ Since Theseus here represents Athens, the episode claims an Athenian facility with things maritime and legitimizes the city's role at the head of the newly born Delian league. In this regard, Minos' tyrannical thalassocracy yields to a more tolerable maritime power. This is represented in the *Ode* by the fate of Minos' ring; aptly interpreted as the symbol of thalassocracy,⁵⁷ it will never resurface from the depths of the sea, meaning that Minos' sea power is doomed.⁵⁸ In lieu of the ring, emblem of a tyrannical thalassocracy, Theseus brings back an innocuous cloak and wreath, gifts meant to reassure Bakkhylides' Ionian audience that Athenian sea power is as distant from Minos' as possible. Bakkhylides' *Ode*, thus, emphasizes the difference between the Athenian and Minos' maritime power.

In his brief mention of Minos (*Choeph.* 616) Aischylos as well cast the king as a tyrannical possessor of sea power. The context is the expedition against Megara, which

⁵⁶ Irwin (2007) 199-200.

⁵⁷ Kurke (1999) 107-8 with n. 19. *Contra*, Labarbe (1984) 19-26 interprets Minos' toss of the ring as his relinquishment of monarchic power; this view is unlikely in that the *Ode* does not focus on kingship at all, rather on thalassocracy and tyranny, and their connection.

⁵⁸ Casting iron objects into the sea was a common practice to signify that an oath would stand valid until the object should resurface, that is to say, forever: see Sheffield (1983).

entails that Minos possessed a navy, hence that he held sea power. As we have seen, Megara also offered an example of how a tyrant could subdue a territory: historically, Peisistratos conquered the city by means of a stratagem, which corresponds to Minos' bribe to Skylla on the mythical plane. Further, Minos' possession of gold is designed to approximate his portrayal to that of tyrants like Gyges (see p. 106).

Herodotos draws a connection between thalassocracy and tyranny at iii.122.2 (text on p. 122), where the historian compares Minos to Polykrates qua thalassocrat, but also qua tyrant; to the historian, Polykrates embodies one of the foremost examples of Greek *tyrannos*.⁵⁹ The comparison implies that the two characters share all traits, the only difference being in terms of their historicity –and we shall come back to this later (pp.155-8). Like Polykrates, Herodotos envisages Minos as both thalassocrat and tyrant, thus echoing Bakkhylides' portrayal of the Cretan king as a tyrannical thalassocrat.

The connection established between the two characters goes further: Herodotos constructs their 'biographies' so as to be exactly parallel to one another. Both holders of thalassocracies⁶⁰ based on islands, they emerged triumphant from *stasis* within their family. Minos fought against his brother Sarpedon for the Cretan *basileia*, eventually banishing him from Crete;⁶¹ Polykrates exploited his two brothers' help to conquer

⁵⁹ Hdt. iii.125.2: ὅτι γὰρ μὴ οἱ Συρηκοσίων γενόμενοι τύραννοι οὐδὲ εἰς τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλληνικῶν τυράννων ἄξιος ἐστὶ Πολυκράτει μεγαλοπρεπεῖην συμβληθῆναι (For, with the exception of the Syracusan tyrants, none of the other Greek tyrants is worthy of comparison with Polykrates in terms of magnificence).

⁶⁰ Polykrates, like Thukydides' Minos, gathered a navy and subdued numerous islands. See Hdt. iii.39.3-4: Ἐκτητο δὲ πεντηκοντέρους τε ἑκατὸν καὶ χιλίους τοξότας... Συχνὰς μὲν δὴ τῶν νήσων ἀραιρήκεε, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τῆς ἡπείρου ἄστεα ([Polykrates] acquired a fleet of a hundred penteconters and a thousand archers... he conquered many of the islands, and many cities on the mainland).

⁶¹ Hdt. i.173.2: Διενειχθέντων δὲ ἐν Κρήτῃ περὶ τῆς βασιλείης τῶν Εὐρώπης παίδων Σαρπηδόνοσ τε καὶ Μίνω, ὥς ἐπεκράτησε τῇ στάσι Μίνωσ, ἐξήλασε αὐτόν τε Σαρπηδόνα καὶ τοὺς στασιώτας

Samos, shared it with them for a while, but then put to death the older and exiled the younger to secure the island for himself.⁶² After overcoming their struggles with their brothers, both met with success, *eutychia*, in war: Minos conquered far and wide (εὐτυχέοντος τῷ πολέμῳ),⁶³ and so did Polykrates (οἱ ἐχώρεε εὐτυχέως), the linguistic echoes only reinforcing the parallelism.⁶⁴ Finally, they both experienced an inglorious demise abroad: Minos was scalded in a bathtub by the daughter of the Sikanian king Kokalos; Polykrates' death is not worth mentioning, Herodotos thinks, so that we know only that his corpse was crucified in Magnesia on the Menander at the hands of Oretes.⁶⁵ Further, one wonders if Polykrates' toss of the ring was inspired by Minos' similar gesture in Bakkhylides' *Ode*, although the gesture had different outcomes: Minos lost his in Bakkhylides' dithyramb; Polykrates unwillingly retrieved his own.⁶⁶

Both Minos and Polykrates struggle to rise above rival brothers, enjoy outstanding military fortune, have their undoing foretold by a ring cast into the sea, and suffer a

αὐτοῦ· οἱ δὲ ἀπωσθέντες ἀπίκοντο τῆς Ἀσίας ἐς γῆν τὴν Μιλυάδα (When the sons of Europa, Minos and Sarpedon, fought for the kingdom in Crete, as Minos prevailed with his faction, he banished Sarpedon himself and his party: driven out, they reached the territory of Milyas in Asia).

⁶² Hdt. iii.39.2: Καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα τριχῇ δασάμενος τὴν πόλιν τοῖσι ἀδελφεοῖσι Πανταγνώτῳ καὶ Συλοσῶντι διένειμε, μετὰ δὲ τὸν μὲν αὐτῶν ἀποκτείνας, τὸν δὲ νεώτερον Συλοσῶντα ἐξελάσας ἔσχε πᾶσαν Σάμον (after conquering the city at first [Polykrates] divided it in three sections for his brothers Pantagnotos and Syloson, but then had Samos all to himself killing the older and exiling the younger Syloson).

⁶³ Hdt. i.171.3: Ἄτε δὲ Μίνω τε κατεστραμμένου γῆν πολλὴν καὶ εὐτυχέοντος τῷ πολέμῳ (As Minos subdued a lot of territories and was successful at war...).

⁶⁴ Hdt. iii.39.3: Ἐν χρόνῳ δὲ ὀλίγῳ αὐτίκα τοῦ Πολυκράτεος τὰ πρήγματα ἤϋξετο καὶ ἦν βεβωμένα ἀνά τε τὴν Ἰωνίην καὶ τὴν ἄλλην Ἑλλάδα· ὅκου γὰρ ἰθύσειε στρατεύεσθαι, πάντα οἱ ἐχώρεε εὐτυχέως (In a short time, soon Polykrates' fortune blossomed and there was talk about it all over Ionia and the rest of Greece; for wherever he waged war, everything turned out successful for him).

⁶⁵ Hdt. vii.170.1 and other sources mentioned on p. 126, n. 15. For Polykrates' death, iii.125.1 and 3: Ἀπικόμενος δὲ ἐς τὴν Μαγνησίην ὁ Πολυκράτης διεφθάρη κακῶς, οὔτε ἑωυτοῦ ἀξίως οὔτε τῶν ἑωυτοῦ φρονημάτων... ἀποκτείνας δὲ μιν οὐκ ἀξίως ἀπηγήσιος Ὀροίτης ἀνεσταύρωσε (Once he arrived in Magnesia, Polykrates died ingloriously, in a way not worthy of his own stature or his ambitions...after killing him in a way undeserving of mention, Oretes crucified him).

⁶⁶ Hdt. iii.40-3.

miserable death. For the comparison's sake in iii.122.2, Herodotos even identifies Minos as Greek, as Polykrates certainly was; Minos' ethnic liminality gave some free scope to Herodotos, who elsewhere seems to accept Minos' barbarianism.⁶⁷ Minos is thus inextricably linked to Polykrates and, like Polykrates, may be thought to exemplify the notion that thalassocracy and tyranny go hand in hand.

The association of thalassocracy with tyranny embodied by Minos and Polykrates is a notion particularly significant during the second half of the fifth century, as Athens used its leadership to transform the Delian League into a maritime empire. Athens' *archē* over its former allies was in fact explicitly equated to a tyranny.⁶⁸ Consequently, we may infer that the fifth-century notion of thalassocracy entails a perceived constitutional shift of its holder toward tyranny. Minos was not an exception; qua thalassocrat, he is clearly presented in Herodotos as a tyrant. Tellingly, the historian does not qualify him *directly* as a king, in the same way that Bakkhylides avoided royal titulature to focus on delivering the portrait of a tyrant; Herodotos' Minos is simply referred to as the famous individual from Knossos (Hdt. iii.122.2: *Minos Knossios*). In my opinion, Herodotos

⁶⁷ Herodotos identifies Minos as one of the children of Europa (i.173.2), whom the historian reported was abducted by Cretans from Tyre in Phoenicia (i.2.1). The historian, then, was well aware that Minos was half Phoenician. Generally, scholars do not seem to appreciate Minos' ethnic ambiguity and its pliability, maintaining that Herodotos consistently understood Minos as a non-Greek: Giuffrida (1976) 135-6; Musti (1988) 31; Cassola (1957) 351; Bianchetti (1993-4) 182-3; Musti (1988-9) 224-5. *Contra*, Pugliese Carratelli (1956) 90-1.

⁶⁸ In his last speech, Pericles compares the Athenian *archē* with tyranny (Thuc. ii.63.2); see also Cleon's less nuanced statement that the Athenian empire *is* a tyranny (Thuc. iii.37.2). This view should have been quite common if Isokrates felt the need of defending the empire against accusations of tyranny in the *Panegyricus* (Isocr. iv.100) and then claimed in *De Pace* that the Athenian empire destroyed democracy (Isocr. viii.64). The fifth-century *Constitution of the Athenians* seems instead to offer a corrective to the ideology mentioned above, since the anonymous author focuses on the nexus between thalassocracy and democracy ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* i.2). However, the connection the author draws between thalassocracy and democracy is not one of necessity, that is the former did not per se require the latter: see Ceccarelli (1993) 468-70.

assumed that his audience was familiar with the archaic portrayal of Minos as the epic king; he trusted the readers to make the desired inference from his silence that the formerly epic king had turned into a tyrant. However, while constructing Minos' *tyrannos bios*, Herodotos *indirectly* reminds his readership of Minos' royal status: Minos vied with his brother Sarpedon for the *basileia* of Crete (Hdt. i.173.2). Thus, Herodotos implicitly develops Minos' trajectory as that of a king, an epic *basileus*, whose biographic narrative resembled that of a tyrant like Polykrates. Herodotos used Minos to offer Athens a mythical illustration of the risks inherent in the possession of a thalassocracy, a negative paradigm for the city to consider: Minos showed an Athens at the peak of its democracy and maritime empire the dangerous trajectory of a thalassocrat degenerating from king to a tyrant, a similar process of deterioration that Athenian democracy was recognized to have undergone. Polykrates instead did not provide for Athens as fitting a paradigm as Minos: his remained a tyranny from inception to conclusion. Minos, instead, offered Athens a dynamic model illustrating the consequences of holding a thalassocracy, namely a devolution from an original form of government, *basileia* in his case, to tyranny. Minos' tyrannical thalassocracy, initially contrasted with the Athenian maritime power at the helm of the Delian League in Bakkhylides' dithyramb, became dangerously similar to the Athenian *archē* during the second half of the fifth century.

Minos: A Problematic First Thalassocrat

For all of Minos' relevance to the trajectory of the Athenian empire, Herodotos denies the character primacy in things naval on the grounds that only Polykrates can be regarded as human, whereas Minos' birth from Zeus, we may infer, has him eliminated from the scope of *historiē*. Herodotos' dismissal of Minos has generated scholarly debate, in that the historian from Halikarnassos is thought to display a healthy dose of critical acumen that Thukydides is instead surprisingly lacking: in this instance, Herodotos would surpass Thukydides as a critical historian in relegating mythical Minos to *spatium mythicum* and reserving *spatium historicum* for Polykrates alone.⁶⁹ This position has been rightly criticized for assessing the two historians' conception of history and their value as historians on the basis of modern sensibilities.⁷⁰

In my view too, the different approaches to Minos' historicity are not an appropriate tool for evaluating the two historians. The inclusion or exclusion of the character from the realm of history simply serves the different agendas of the two historians. Thukydides' point in the *Archaeology* is to survey *all possible* precedents to the Athenian maritime *archē* and demonstrate that not a single past naval power was comparable, thus making Athenian *archē* unparalleled in its strength and proving the significance of the Peloponnesian war, the historian's subject of choice. His objectives required the highest degree of thoroughness; hence Thukydides had to include Minos in

⁶⁹ See Irwin (2007) 190-1 with bibliography in notes 5, and 7 through 9.

⁷⁰ Irwin (2007) 190-3.

order for his demonstration to be most effective, since oral tradition had long associated Minos' name with sea power. As a result, the inclusion of Minos among thalassocracies does not reveal whether Thukydides did or did not believe in Minos' historicity,⁷¹ only that he needed to reckon with the tradition about the character in order to demonstrate full coverage of sea dominions.

By contrast with the comprehensiveness necessary to Thukydides' point in the *Archaeology*, Herodotos narrowed his *historiē* to a well-defined "100-year or three-generation history" between Kroisos' generation (570's) and the battle of Micalē (479).⁷² Polykrates is the first Greek thalassocrat within the range of Herodotos' research. The preference accorded to Polykrates over Minos reflects also the principle expressed in the prologue, wherein Herodotos focuses his inquiry on Kroisos of Lydia, discarding (rationalizations of) abduction myths (Hdt. i.1-5). Significantly, the rape of Europa, Minos' mother, forcibly transported from Tyre to Crete, was among the stories that Herodotos dismissed from his search for the causes of the conflict between Persians and Greeks: this approach dovetails with the exclusion of Minos in iii.122.2. In conclusion, the focus of Herodotos' project and, vice versa, the breadth required by Thukydides' *Archaeology* determine each historian's treatment of Minos.

⁷¹ In an excess of sophistication, Luraghi (2000) 233-4 posits that Thukydides would take on the role of somebody who does believe in Minos' historicity, implying that he does not. In this case, I do not think we can make a convincing case for Thukydides' personal beliefs.

⁷² Musti (1979) and introduction to Vannicelli (1993). Herodotos would give full account only of events falling between Croesus' generation (570's) and the battle of Micalē (479), being more selective with episodes outside of the two temporal thresholds. According to both authors, three-generations would constitute a period for which Herodotos would be capable of verifying information.

Herodotos' dismissive attitude toward Minos in iii.122.2, accentuated by the implication that there may be even some more ancient (mythical) thalassocrats (καὶ εἰ δὴ τις ἄλλος πρότερος τούτου ἦρξε τῆς θαλάσσης), echoes the prologue's programmatic statement about what is and what is not the object of his *historiē* (Hdt i.5.3). Why, then, does Herodotos even bother mentioning Minos if he had already opted for Polykrates in choosing his subject matter? Evidently, the historian's sweeping statement about the precedence of Polykrates' thalassocracy required further qualification, since it clashed with a widespread tradition advocating Minos' primacy. Moreover, we would expect no room for other mentions of Minos, excluded as he should be from historical inquiry, but as we have seen, Minos appears several times where the historian does not appear nearly as critical of his scrutability as an object of inquiry as he does in iii.122.2. In one instance, Herodotos does not shy away from handling *akoē*, although with all due caution, in his research concerning the Karians and their subjugation to Minos (Hdt. i.171.2). The historian was clearly trying to ascertain the existence of a historical tribute, not a mythical one. Thus, Herodotos' much-acclaimed relegation of Minos to *spatium mythicum* in iii.122.2 is not consistent throughout.

We might conclude that his treatment of Minos is inconsistent at best and more problematic than previously thought. After all, in the prologue, Herodotos provides the readers with a story that could potentially undermine his explanation of Minos' semi-divine status: the historian reports that Europa was carried off to Crete by a band of Cretans (Hdt. i.2.1). The traditional myth, which has Zeus in the form of a bull take Europa on a ride to Crete, has clearly undergone a rationalization that replaces Zeus with

Cretan abductors. Granted that Herodotos ultimately shows no interest in verifying whether the abduction happened in this or another way (i.5.3), even so he offers the readers a rationalizing story where Zeus has no role, presumably not even in the subsequent birth of Minos,⁷³ one that could be used to counter his argument at iii.122.2 that Minos, the son of Zeus, was not a human, and so not the first thalassocrat proper.

Now, to turn to Thukydides' construction of Minos as a model, the Cretan king unquestionably spearheads the historian's account of the origins and development of thalassocracy that culminates in its current and most powerful incarnation to date, the Athenian *archē*.⁷⁴ A compelling first exemplar, Minos' naval power has been construed as a prototype for the Athenian thalassocracy. For instance, conquest, colonization and increment in revenues are characteristics that Minos' rule over the Aegean and the Athenian expedition to Sicily share.⁷⁵ Other parallels have been noted in claiming the exemplarity of the Minos model for Athens: symbolically, the Athenian removal of bones of Karian pirates from Delos would reiterate Minos' banishment of the Karian pirates from the Cycades.⁷⁶ The similarities pointed out between the two thalassocracies certainly find an explanation in the ever-repeating nature of human behavior, in which Thukydides believes (Thuc. i.22.3), and demonstrate that the first and the current instantiations of thalassocracy share common traits. Even from the standpoint of

⁷³ And in fact Minos is just one of Europa's children, with –oddly– no mention of his illustrious divine father: Hdt. i.173.2.

⁷⁴ At the time of the Peloponnesian war, Athens with the allied fleets adjoined to her surpassed the power of all forces combined together when she was at the helm of the Delian league (Thuc. i.19.1). The greatest naval powers of the past did not measure up to the Athenian maritime empire, even if they afforded their owners increase in wealth and rule over islanders (i.15.1).

⁷⁵ Kallet (2001) 25-6, 198-99.

⁷⁶ Irwin (2007) 198-99: Athens is also colonizer of Ionia (i.2.6; i.12.4) as Minos was of the Kyklades.

terminology, they identify with one another: Μίνως θαλάσσης ἐκράτησε (Thuc. i.4) as much as θαλάσσης ἐκράτουν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι (Thuc. viii.76.4). Further, it is reasonable to assume, Thukydides understood Minos' sea power on the basis of his experience of current naval empires: the commonalities with the Athenian *archē* show that Thukydides' construction of the past relies, at least in part, on his view of the present.⁷⁷

However, we also ought to consider Thukydides' purpose in drawing a list of naval potentates in the *Archaeology*, namely the belittling of previous sea powers to prove that Athens' current empire was the greatest of all. As much as Minos represents a model close to the Athenian *archē* conceptually, the difference in scale presupposed by the *Archaeology* problematizes the comparison, and so do colonization and the suppression of piracy, integral parts of Minos' thalassocratic program, yet not practiced on a regular basis by the Athenian sea power.⁷⁸ Thukydides offers thus a very ambiguous case with Minos, an exemplar liable to be construed as more or less relevant according to the readers' perspectives. Should they ignore the gap in scale between Minos and Athens established by the *Archaeology* and accept that naval powers operate in like manner, then Minos could be vested in their eyes with salience for the Athenian maritime empire. Other readers, instead, might have understood that the *Archaeology* undermines Minos' function as *exemplum*, since the survey aims to expose how earlier thalassocratic models ultimately fall short in comparison to Athenian thalassocracy.

⁷⁷ Kallet-Marx (1993) 26-7. We may add that, beside his experience of the present, Thukydides uses information gleaned from the more recent past: Corinthian sea power and its struggle against piracy might have well encouraged Thukydides to attribute that policy to Minos as well.

⁷⁸ Cassola (1957) 345. By far, colonization is a more systematic approach in the case of Minos' sea power than Athens', which colonized to a lesser degree, e.g. Skyros (Thuc. i.98) and Melos (v.116).

An exemplar of ambiguous relevance, Minos' thalassocracy is also presented more ambivalently than scholarship has usually recognized; his sea dominion has been hailed as marking a milestone in the Greek history of progress.⁷⁹ To be sure, in chapter 8 of book 1, Thukydides mentions an epochal change in the lifestyle of the Greeks, a change that Minos started:

καταστάντος δὲ τοῦ Μίνω ναυτικοῦ πλωιμώτερα ἐγένετο παρ' ἀλλήλους (οἱ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν νήσων κακοῦργοι ἀνέστησαν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτεπερ καὶ τὰς πολλὰς αὐτῶν κατῴκιζε), καὶ οἱ παρὰ θάλασσαν ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον ἤδη τὴν κτήσιν τῶν χρημάτων ποιούμενοι βεβαιότερον ὄκουν, καὶ τινες καὶ τείχη περιεβάλλοντο ὥς πλουσιώτεροι ἑαυτῶν γιγνόμενοι· ἐφιέμενοι γὰρ τῶν κερδῶν οἱ τε ἥσους ὑπέμενον τὴν τῶν κρεισσόνων δουλείαν, οἱ τε δυνατώτεροι περιουσίας ἔχοντες προσεποιούντο ὑπηκόους τὰς ἐλάσσους πόλεις. καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ μᾶλλον ἤδη ὄντες ὕστερον χρόνῳ ἐπὶ Τροίαν ἐστράτευσαν.

Once Minos had established a navy, folks started seafaring (for the wretched pirates abandoned the islands because of him, at the time when he colonized most of them), and people by the shore, now earning for themselves more wealth, were living more safely, and some even surrounded themselves with walls, since they were richer than ever before; due to their yearning for profits, the weaker were tolerating submission to the stronger, while the more powerful who had a surplus of wealth were able to subdue weaker cities. And later the Greeks were still in such conditions when they made the expedition against Troy (Thuc. i.8.2-4)

The historian makes a point of emphasizing that since Minos established his fleet and eliminated piracy, the Greeks began seafaring on a more regular basis, grew richer,⁸⁰ and lived more safely. Furthermore, the weaker were now amenable to being subjugated, so long as they could share in the profits of the stronger; conversely, the more powerful had the financial means to force the submission of weaker cities. In essence, all these advantages, both tangible and intangible, stemmed from Minos' elimination of piracy,

⁷⁹ Irwin (2007) 195-6. It is not clear what parts of Thukydides' readership would have appreciated a positive construction of Minos' thalassocracy, when the character was by large and far portrayed negatively in fifth-century Athens.

⁸⁰ The theme emerges already at Thuc. i.7.1, where the increased seafaring brought about a surplus of wealth for the newly founded cities. The time indication "when there was more seafaring" (ἤδη πλωιμωτέρων ὄντων) has to refer to Minos' thalassocracy.

which brought about security at sea. However epochal a moment Minos' thalassocracy marked, Thukydides, we must note, deflates any merit the king could have had in facilitating far-reaching achievements: in the historian's view, the attack on piracy that Minos pursued aimed at a very concrete, limited result, the maximization of his own income, to which the pirates represented a threat.⁸¹ Minos' policy comes across as rather myopic and narrow-minded with its focus on a short-term objective, especially if contrasted with the long-term effects that his policy brings about, ones that go far beyond his shortsighted plans to enhance his own revenues.

Beside acknowledging the importance of Minos' thalassocracy for Greek progress, Thukydides' portrayal of Minos reveals a strong, negative undercurrent in his presentation of the king's thalassocracy. Minos' short-sighted policy of enhancing his income is an indication that the historian may be possibly yielding to a contemporary trend found in the Athenian theater, where the character was consistently abused and represented as a tyrant: Thukydides' emphasis on Minos' accumulation of wealth, while part of a lucid demonstration of how affluence is conducive to power,⁸² is also reminiscent of the riches that tyrants like Gyges and Polycrates were famous for amassing. A masterpiece of ambiguity in terms of both the model's relevance for Athens and its valence, Thukydides' investigation of Minos explores the positive effects determined by the Cretan thalassocracy, but also confirms in their opinion a readership familiar with the Minos who walked the tragic stage.

⁸¹ Kallet-Marx (1993) 25, n.14.

⁸² Kallet-Marx (1993) 26-7.

Conclusions

Minos' sea power, certainly not an invention created *ex nihilo* by fifth-century Athenians, developed in archaic and non-Athenian traditions and was characterized by any of the following: possession of a fleet, control of islands, or their colonization. Sea power seems also linked to kingship and to have conferred upon its holder the status of most kingly, *basileutatos*, as Minos is called.

Minos' thalassocracy was instead an Athenian fifth-century construct. Thukydides formulates it by combining tradition with innovation: sea power's three traditional elements are now prioritized, with possession of a navy and rule of islands becoming the defining traits of a thalassocrat, and colonization of islands the tool to keep their control. Likely, Thukydides also read archaic epic with an eye to corroborating the existence of Minos' thalassocracy.

Minos' thalassocracy in the course of the fifth century also comes to be inextricably connected with tyranny. Antecedents of his tyrannical thalassocracy were Bakkhylides' *Ode 17* and Aischylos' *Choephoroi*, works that still hark back to the notion of sea power, but connect it with tyranny. Herodotos' comparison of Minos with Polykrates, the Samian tyrant, establishes the nexus between thalassocracy, which required possession of a fleet and control of islands, and tyranny. The Cretan king's trajectory represents a dangerously close precedent for the Athenian *archē*, itself accused of degenerating into a tyranny. A compelling yet ominous model for Athens and her maritime empire, Minos' thalassocracy is denied primacy by Herodotos; however, the

removal of Minos from historical inquiry does not affect Minos' paradigmatic relevance for Athens, especially since the treatment of the character's historicity is inconsistent throughout Herodotos' work.

Thukydides, while conceding to Minos' thalassocratic precedence for the sake of his argument that imposes upon him a comprehensive survey of past naval power, does not present Minos as a straightforward model either. Inferior to Athens in terms of scale, greedy for money, and unaware facilitator of important changes in the history of Greek progress, Thukydides' Minos seems implicitly constructed to fit his dramatic alter-ego. Even so, we note the historian's appreciation for the positive consequences Minos' Cretan thalassocracy brought to the Greek world: increase of seafaring, economic amelioration, safer living conditions, not to mention the compliance of weaker states to accept a thalassocratic dominion so long as profits are shared. Minos' thalassocracy, thus, showed the advantages of submission to a naval power and paved the way for the acceptance of all other thalassocracies to follow.

CONCLUSIONS

The figure of Minos, the legendary king of Crete, has been shown to function in Greek literature of the Archaic and Classical ages as a mythical conduit illuminating notions of kingship, tyranny, and thalassocracy. Following the evolution of the Minos myth allowed us to reconstruct Greek reflections about such notions.

The Homeric portrayal of Minos, which highlights the king's destructive-mindedness on the one hand, and his roles as judge of the dead, confidant of Zeus and protector of Crete on the other, responds to the epic notion of monarchy. Sovereigns such as Agamemnon and Zeus, appear as both dangerous individuals and grantors of prosperity through their administration of justice. The duality of monarchy that Minos embodied fulfills the endeavor of the epic kings to perpetuate their status: fear of their destructive aspect ensured the people's subjugation, whereas the promise of prosperity offered a form of compensation necessary for their acceptance of monarchy. Furthermore, with its oscillation between destructive intentions and fair judgments Minos' kingship is molded by Odysseus into a precedent for his own behavior, as he chooses a violent retaliation against the suitors instead of a bloodless settlement through adjudication. As Minos took vengeance in his hands for the abduction of Ariadne and/or the murder of Androgeos, so does Odysseus in response to an affront to his *oikos*.

The earliest extant rendering of Minos as a tyrant is found in Bakkhylides' *Ode* 17; Minos' portrayal here closely resembles that of the stereotypical autocrat outlined in Herodotos' consitutional debate. In his attempt to rape a maiden of aristocratic stock, a

sexually deviant Minos breaks a social code, exhibits *hybris* against the woman, displays *phthonos* for Theseus, and may be thought to behave as if no consequences will attend his actions (*aneuthunos*). The portrayal of Minos as a tyrant is, however, only a part of the multi-faceted picture that Bakkhylides draws. A masterful example of *polysemia*, the *Ode* also evokes memory of the destructive-minded individual of epic and even builds a defense for Minos' behavior. The contrasting pictures were likely intended to satisfy the different expectations of a composite audience.

The few surviving fragments from the Attic tragedies confirm that Minos was reviled and probably represented as a harsh tyrant in fifth-century Athens as well. The Athenian antipathy for the character might in part have risen as a consequence of his epic destructive-mindedness against Theseus, the Attic hero. However, evidence from a sixth-century *hydria* as well as Euripides' *Cretans* shows that the Athenians perceived and kept perceiving Minos' epic role of king-judge to be incompatible with their own administration of justice; on the vase, the character appears subordinated to *Dēmodikē*, the Law of the (Athenian) *dēmos*; in the fragments from the play, Minos seems incapable of recognizing the distinction between intentional and unintentional crime. The epic image of king-judge might have elicited the representation of Minos as a tyrant. The story of the Median Deiokeas, who turned adjudication into a launch pad for tyranny, speaks to how Minos might have easily been metamorphosed into a tyrant.

Minos' sea power was a notion already developed in several archaic and non-Athenian traditions, which ascribed to the king possession of a fleet, control of islands, or their colonization. Any one of the three components might have indicated the king's sea

power, but they were not organized in a coherent definition. Sea power was an important element in the definition of monarchy since it seems to have conferred upon its holder the status of most kingly, *basileutatos*, as Minos is called.

In the fifth century, Minos' sea power yields to the new concept of thalassocracy, which the historians formulate. Both Herodotos and Thukydides interpret a thalassocrat as the owner of a navy and ruler of islands, but it is the latter who clearly systematizes all the traditional elements of Minos' sea power into a definition, in which colonization of islands becomes the instrument for Minos to keep control over them.

Herodotos, on his part, connects the notions of thalassocracy and tyranny in comparing Minos with Polykrates, the Samian tyrant. Further, the historian constructs Minos' and Polykrates' lives so as to be parallel to one another, thus reinforcing the identification between the two and the link of thalassocracy with tyranny. By hinting at Minos' rise to *basileia* in the context of his *tyrannos bios*, Herodotos shows the trajectory of an epic king and thalassocrat, who devolves into a tyrant and loses his life in the course of an expedition in Sicily. Minos, thus, is viewed as a compelling model for Athens' maritime empire, itself considered a tyranny, despite Herodotos' choice of denying Minos' thalassocratic primacy. The historian's treatment of Minos' historicity is in fact noticeably inconsistent throughout his work.

Thukydides grants Minos first place in his list of past thalassocracies, but only to demonstrate his inferiority to the current maritime empire of Athens. The historian, however, underlines the positive effects stemming from Minos' Cretan thalassocracy. Beside material advantages, Minos' thalassocracy brought about the willingness of

weaker states to accept a thalassocratic dominion in the name of the sharing of profits. Showing the advantages of submission to a naval power, Minos' thalassocracy, thus, facilitated the acceptance of all subsequent thalassocracies.

The embodiment of an archaic conception of justice and holder of the earliest sea power, in the fifth century the figure of Minos underwent a reassessment, as do the notions he had formerly represented. His trajectory from most kingly of kings to tyrant highlights how in fifth-century Greek thought Minos became a nodal point for the exploration into, and reflection upon the risks underlying a single-handed administration of justice as well as possession of a maritime empire, a mythical precedent current and relevant at a time when jury courts dispensed justice in Athens and the city's naval power was peaking.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3. Again On Minos in Sicily

The expedition of Minos in Sicily and his tragic death in Kamikos may be easily considered the last venture of the king's maritime ambitions. Intending to capture Daidalos, the Cretan sovereign rallies a substantial army against the island and, unbeknownst to him, sails to his own demise: Kokalos, the local Sikanian king (or his daughters) will scald him to death in a bathtub. As we have speculated (see pp. 128-9), the story may well have provided a 'precedent of presence' for the seventh-century Rhodian-Cretan colonists of Gela who exploited it in order to legitimize their foundation in a Sikanian territory. The object of this appendix is to continue this line of inquiry and explore the functions of the myth in Sicily. We shall examine the political exploitation of the Sicilian myth of Minos by two tyrants of Akragas, Phalaris and Theron, and its role in the foundation of the Sicilian cities of Akragas and Minoa.

As we have seen (see p. 126-7) Phalaris of Akragas dedicated a *crater* to Athena Lindia sometime during his tyranny ca. 570-555 BCE. Its dedication, although referring to the story, leaves out Minos altogether: Δαίδαλος ἔδωκε ξεινιόν με Κωκάλοι. As the inscription states on the rim, the *crater* is an imagined gift of friendship that Daidalos offered to Kokalos, a gift of which Phalaris approved, as the real dedicatory inscription on the crater's base reads: Φάλαρις ἐξ Ἀκράγαντος τῇ Λινδίᾳ Ἀθάναι.¹

The scenes depicted on the cauldron, a titanomachy and the myth of Cronus and Rhea, suggest a turbulent context for Phalaris' dedication, where enemies are defeated

¹ *FGrHist* 532 27.

and a political succession takes place. The tyrant's overthrow of the city's previous government likely fits the occasion.² If this interpretation is correct, Phalaris' failure to acknowledge Minos in the dedication might mean that the myth had been used by the former regime to legitimize the foundation of Akragas. As their Cretan ancestors did at the time of Gela's settlement, the Geloan-Cretan founders of Akragas could have appealed to the story of Minos' death in order to substantiate territorial claims to an area nearby Kamikos for the new colony.³ If this is the case, then the tyranny of Phalaris could not but distance itself from the Cretan king: Phalaris' dedication makes the point of eliding Minos, thus ranking the tyrant among the enemies of the Cretan king, Daidalos, and Kokalos.⁴ As an important corollary, Phalaris' elision of Minos and his sponsorship of friendly relations between Greek Daidalos and Sikanian Kokalos served to promote the Greek tyrant's policy of creating harmonious relationships between himself and the Sikanians, with an eye to expanding Acragantine territory.⁵

The political valence that the story of Minos' death took on later for Akragas can be detected in Diodoros, the other major source for the tradition beside Herodotos. Diodoros presents a very different story from the one we have in Herodotos and is thought to have drawn his account from Timaeus, the Sicilian historian from

² Perlman (2002) 195.

³ Perlman (2002) 193. Kamikos has long -and securely- been identified with Sant'Angelo Muxaro, thirty kilometers north of Akragas: Pugliese Carratelli (1956) 97 with n. 20.

⁴ Phalaris' use of the infamous bronze bull (Polyb. xii.25.1-2) wherein the tyrant roasted his enemies is best understood as the conscious recourse to a religious symbol appealing to the Cretan, the Rhodian and Sikanian elements (Caputo [1969] 39-48) rather than a contradictory propagandistic strategy to present himself as a tyrant in the footsteps of Minos (Perlman [2002] 195-6).

⁵ Bianchetti (1987) 54-5.

Tauromoenium.⁶ Following Minos' demise, king Kokalos returned the corpse to his Cretan comrades-in-arms: they buried the body with all honors and above it erected a temple to Aphrodite, worshipped by the locals. The Cretans, now bereft of their commander, decided to remain in Sicily where they founded a city named Minoa in honor of their king and Engyon named after a local spring.⁷ This tradition is clearly at odds with the version in Herodotos that has the Cretans first return to Crete, then organize a punitive expedition against Kamikos and finally, after a five-year long unsuccessful siege of the city, while trying to return home, end up shipwrecked in Iapygia, where they settled the city of Hyria.⁸ Clearly, we do have two distinct traditions about the deeds of the Cretans:⁹ they either stayed in Sicily to found Minoa and Engyon, or left the island establishing themselves in South Italy.¹⁰

The mention of Minoa as a Cretan colony is troublesome. According to Herodotos and compatibly with the tradition he reports about the departure of the Cretans from Sicily, Minoa was founded by Selinous (Hdt. v.46). Diodoros' testimony, however is not isolated. A fragment from Herakleides Lembos' epitome of Aristotle's *politeiai* states that Minos himself conquered the barbarian center of Macara, whose name he changed to Minoa after giving it Cretan laws (Heraclid. Lemb. 59 [Dilts]). The archaeological record from Herakleia Minoa, identified with Minoa, seems to support Herodotos' version: the

⁶ Bianchetti (1993-4) 184 and n. 25.

⁷ Diod. iv.79.3, 5.

⁸ Hdt. vii.170.1-2.

⁹ See Rizzo (1967) 121.

¹⁰ Also, Conon (*FGrHist* 26 F1); Strabo vi.3.28 (drawing from Antiochus of Syracuse; his version has the Cretans found a colony near Tarentum).

city's necropolis dates to the mid-sixth century.¹¹ Why, then, did two sources attribute Minoa to a Cretan foundation, whether by Minos or his followers? The discrepancy finds a possible motivation when we consider that Akragas conquered Minoa sometime in the second half of the sixth or the first decade of the fifth century BCE.¹² We are thus to interpret the testimonies by Diodoros and Herakleides Lembos as echoes of the territorial claims of Akragas over Minoa,¹³ presented as a Cretan colony connected with Minos (given its name) and therefore rightfully belonging to Akragas: the Minos myth once again is put to good use by Akragas.

Diodoros provides the final instance of how the myth of Minos in Sicily was made relevant by the Acragantines. Our source reports that at the time of Theron's tyranny over Akragas (498-72),¹⁴ the bones of Minos were rediscovered within the temple of Aphrodite and returned by Theron to the Cretans.¹⁵ This interesting example of "osteo-politics" ought to have had political ramifications, whether we see in the Cretans mentioned by Diodoros the islanders or the descendants of the Cretan colonists of Akragas.¹⁶ In the former case, Theron might have tried to secure the neutrality of the

¹¹ De Miro (1962) 145-6; Rizzo (1967) 230.

¹² In the Lindian Chronicle (*FGrHist* 532 30). The *termini post* and *ante quem* are provided by the entries preceding and following the dedication of the Acragantines, respectively the dedication of Amasis and that of Artaphernes.

¹³ Perlman (2002) 197. Also, Euryleon, one of the four chief-commanders following the Spartan Dorieus in his failed expedition to Sicily, conquered Minoa (Hdt. v.46). Minoa was a hotly contested property between the Spartan emigrants, its metropolis Selinous and the allegedly Cretan sister-city Akragas in the second half of the sixth century: whether disputing with Euryleon -- if his conquest of Minoa preceded that of Akragas -- or Selinous, it makes no difference as to the claims of a Cretan connection Akragas could advance.

¹⁴ The date is based on Diod. xi.53.1 where Theron is said to have died in 472 after sixteen years of rule.

¹⁵ Diod. iv.79.4.

¹⁶ I do not agree with Bianchetti (1993-4) 185 that by returning the bones to the Cretans Theron showed disinterest in appropriating the Sicilian myth of Minos.

Cretans in the wake of the battle of Himera against the Carthaginians.¹⁷ In the latter, two scenarios may be envisaged. First, the rediscovery of Minos' tomb supported Akragas' claims to Minoa, if the bones were unearthed there;¹⁸ by accepting Minos' remains, the descendants of the Cretan colonizers of Akragas reinforced the community in its belief that they were entitled to the possession of Minoa, and with them the other non-Cretan citizens of Akragas. Second, Theron's act may be thought to duplicate Kokalos' mythical restitution of Minos' bones to the Cretans: that was a gesture of reconciliation followed by what we may understand as the permission to inter the foreign king's corpse and settle two colonies in Sikanian territory. Theron's symbolic act would confirm his policy of maintaining harmonious relationships between the Cretan/Greek component and the Sikanian one within Akragas, and promote Theron as a champion of the unity of the entire Sicily.¹⁹

In sum, we have considered the story of Minos in Sicily as the final, tragic installment of his sea power. Historically, the myth made for an important propagandistic tool at the hands of the tyrants of Akragas, Phalaris, and Theron: whether denied or rediscovered, Minos constituted a mythical reference useful to endorse each tyrant's agenda. Ignored by Phalaris on a dedication and revitalized by Theron with the discovery of his bones, Minos paradoxically allowed both to present themselves as champions of the Greek-Sikanian unity. The story was exploited as a unifying mythical example to endorse pacific relations between the local Sikanians and the (Cretan-)Greeks of Akragas.

¹⁷ Marta Sordi's opinion reported in Caputo (1969) 40.

¹⁸ Perlman (2002) 197-9.

¹⁹ Fontana (1978) 213-9.

On a more speculative plane, the myth could have also played a role in justifying the foundation of Gela's colony, Akragas, and the latter's conquest of Minoa. There is little doubt that the myth originated in a Cretan environment and was exploited originally to support Cretan/Acragantine territorial ambitions and conquests in Sicily: the continued fortune of the myth attests to the import of the Cretan component in Gela and Akragas.

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VITA

Valerio Caldesi Valeri was born in Camposampiero (PD), Italy, on December 3 1973, the son of Domenico Caldesi Valeri and Saveria Tonetto. After completing his secondary education at the Liceo Classico Marchesi, Padova, Italy, he began his undergraduate studies at the Università degli Studi di Padova and graduated in March 1998. He then successfully attended the European Socrates Master (CDA) “Archaeology and Dynamics of Writing” in the academic years 1998/99 and 1999/2000, earning an M.A. degree. He entered the doctoral program in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin in August of 2001.

Permanent Address: 224 E Mulberry Ave #4, San Antonio, Texas 78212.

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