

Natur – Mythos – Religion
im antiken Griechenland
Nature – Myth – Religion
in Ancient Greece

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“THEY BLOW NOW ONE WAY,
NOW ANOTHER” (HES. *THEOG.* 875):
WINDS IN THE ANCIENT GREEK IMAGINARY

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1. INTRODUCTION: A LACK OF MYTH

In 487 BC, Herodotus tells us, the Athenians instituted a cult of the north wind, Boreas, on the banks of the Ilissos.¹ This was in response to that wind’s perceived role in the wrecking of the Persian fleet at Cape Sepias near Artemision. The Athenians explained the support of Boreas with a myth: he was, in effect, their son-in-law, since his wife was Oreithyia, the daughter of Erechtheus. Herodotus does not explain the myth that underpins this relationship, in which Boreas snatches Oreithyia and carries her off to Thrace: he assumed that the myth was known to his audience. And well he might: much insightful work has been done to explain how this myth was claimed and shaped by the Athenians in the year following the victory, using evidence from a variety of media. As well as the poem *The Sea Battle*, by Simonides (which Wilamowitz suggested was performed at the foundation of the sanctuary);² we know of plays (by Aeschylus and Sophocles);³ and images on around 77 whole or fragmentary vases, as well as depictions on the acroteria of temples.⁴

Across these ancient sources, the details of the myth seem to have changed, perhaps to reflect the ritual enactment of the myth that involved the new sanctuary. To begin with, it appears, Oreithyia was snatched from the Acropolis, where she was serving as a *kanephoros* (according to the sixth century prose account by Akousilaos of Argos, and seemingly in a number of the vase images).⁵ In the later versions of the myth she is snatched from a verdant setting, where she is playing, picking flowers and dancing. The location of that setting varies, but gradually comes to rest on Ilissos.⁶ Simonides and Khoirililos of Samos (in his *Persika*) appear to have been using a similar source for their version, because the former suggests Brilessos

1 Hdt. 7.189.

2 Simonides *IEG2* fr. 3; *PMG* 534 (= Schol. Apoll. Rhod. 1.211–215); but cf. Rutherford 2001: 35 suggesting that this could be also have been included in the *Xerxou Naumachia* (on the different poems by Simonides see *Suda* Σ 439 [iv 361 Adler]). On its performance, see Wilamowitz 1913: 206–208, and see discussion Molyneaux 1992: 159–163.

3 Aesch. *Oreithyia* fr. 280–281b Radt; Soph. fr. 956 Radt.

4 See Neuser 1982: 35. Finkelberg 2014: 94 identifies forty-two surviving vases (thirty-four of which date to between 475–450 BC) from the Beazley Archive.

5 Akousilaos: Schol. Hom. *Od.* 14.533 (Fowler no. 30; acropolis), and see discussion Brulé 1987: 296.

6 Ilissos: Pl. *Phdr.* 229b, Apoll. Rhod. 1.215, Paus. 1.19.5, Apollod. 3.199.

and the other the river Kephisos, and the one is the source of the other.⁷ Reflecting on the apparent dancing movements of the Oreithyia and Boreas in visual imagery, Margalit Finkelberg suggests that these indicate that the myth was being ritually enacted at the sanctuary in the course of the Panathenaia, and this was one of the ways in which this location “gradually replaced the traditional site of the abduction”.⁸ As she has argued, this myth offers a good example of how

“in the case of the local myths we should speak, therefore, of multichannel transmission, in which cult, performance, landscape, storytelling, literature and visual arts interlocked in creating a nexus of cultural practices that kept the myths alive among the members of the community to which they belonged”.⁹

Finkelberg’s apposite analysis of the ways in which local myths were shaped and maintained by means of many different routes of transmission and relating media, and the crucial interaction between community and events is helpful.¹⁰ However, in addition, this focus on the nature of the north wind and the variety of depictions in our sources, both literary and visual, of its relation to Athens highlights a further interesting aspect of the presence of winds in Greek myth: that is, that while we may often find winds personified, there are remarkably few surviving myths (described in written or visual sources) that portray winds as actors embedded in a complex narrative. This absence is particularly striking when we consider how winds must have helped to generate the “hazardscape” of ancient lived experience, recognising how “physical hazard exposure and social susceptibility to hazards must be understood within a geographic framework, that is, the hazardousness of a specific place”.¹¹ In this sense, the wind regime of the Mediterranean was crucial for creating both opportunities and hazards: winds helped to determine settlement patterns (which places could be easily reached, the precise placement of harbours and there-

7 As Finkelberg 2014: 92 observes. Brilessos: *PMG* 534 (= Schol Apoll. Rhod. 1.211–215). Kephisos: Khoirilios *SH* 321.

8 Finkelberg 2014: 98.

9 *Ibid.* Other winds do not seem to have received similar narrative or cult attention, at least during the Classical period. It has been suggested (Webb 2015) that Andronikos’ *Tower of the Winds*, now argued to be late Hellenistic in date (Kienast 2014) was in fact a cult building for the winds.

10 This mythic family retained its meaning for the Athenians in other ways. Just as the story of Oreithyia seems to have been adapted to fit current needs, in the same way, we find changes in the story of her grandchild, Eumolpos the Thracian, child of Poseidon and Khione (the daughter of Oreithyia and Boreas). In Euripides *Erechtheus* (test. ii; *TrGF* 24 fr. ii = Lycurg. 98 p. 67, 13 Conomis), this Eumolpos becomes conflated with the Eleusinian prince, Eumolpos, ancestor of the Eumolpidae, founder of the Mysteries, and, of course, in the course of founding those mysteries, invader of Athens. Thus, the Eleusinian Prince becomes a Thracian invader of Athens, and this becomes a theme of Athenian patriotic rhetoric (see Pl. *Menex.* 239a–b. Isoc. *Or.* 4.68). It is certainly the case that this change made the Eumolpids “the descendants of a barbarian war-lord” (Parker 1987: 203; he does not mention the connection between Khione and Oreithyia, but only notes in his discussion of Eumolpos that she was “a Thracian princess who, at least in later tradition, was born of an Athenian mother”). But what seems to get less attention is that it also made those historically independent Eleusinians the descendants of an Athenian princess.

11 Cutter, Mitchell and Scott 2000: 731.

fore of cities); the ease of fishing; the course of agricultural activity throughout the year.¹²

What shapes the external world usually plays a key role in populating our internal world, by which I mean the elements of the cultural imaginary. Cognitive theories explain the universal instinct for humans to attribute agency to the elements of their surroundings.¹³ But there is, in turn, great variety in the ways in which different communities develop that initial attribution of agency, including the contexts in which those imagined agents acquire personality, the relationships developed with those personalities, and the network of interactions that result. Thus, while it is far from unusual, across cultures, for winds to be perceived as animate beings with consciousness and character, and, in turn, to be allocated divine status,¹⁴ this is not always the case; a range of types of relationships may emerge. For example, a detailed study of the Foehn wind in Leukerbad, Switzerland, notes that there are certain predictable winds

“that visit or inhabit certain locales, intruding deeply into personal space and becoming a part of the identities of the residents, while at the same time asserting their status as entities unto themselves”.¹⁵

In this community, the winds, while attaining specific power, gaining certain characteristics and developing certain relationships with the locals, nevertheless have remained as abstract forces.

With this potential variety in mind, this essay examines evidence for the nature of the winds and for the relations between winds and mortals in ancient Greek culture. It focuses on identifying, on the one hand, visual or written stories about winds, and, on the other, evidence for cult, without assuming that visual imagery is necessarily a depiction of a divinity, and acknowledging the difficulties of distinguishing between personification and deity.¹⁶ The essay draws attention to the local nature of cultural responses to the winds, and, in this context, suggests that the role of selective personification is an important element of this response. By this I mean that our sources, while not apparently depicting fully personified versions of these entities, nevertheless emphasise specific features about them – which also, in turn, appear as key aspects of their cults.

2. WIND AND THE ANCIENT CULTURAL IMAGINARY

Across mundane and mythic narratives, ancient Greek winds were depicted as sources of both benefit and harm. As the title of this essay recalls, our earliest written evidence is explicit about their ambivalent nature. Hesiod, in the *Theogony*,

12 Murray 1987: 139.

13 Hyper-Active Agent Detection (HAAD) is a term developed by Justin Barrett (2000) to describe how our cognitive systems pick up on traces of activities in the world around us, leading us to attribute agency in situations that are unclear.

14 Indo-European wind gods are described in West 2007: 263–265.

15 Strauss 2007: 166.

16 See Reinhardt 1960: 33 on the concept of “reine Personifikation”.

reports the existence of two different kinds of wind: some are “a great boon to mortals”; but others are “a great woe for mortals, they rage with an evil blast; they blow now one way, now another, and scatter the boats and destroy the sailors”.¹⁷ But other sources provide evidence for a huge variety of winds – their number and nature were legion – some named and others remaining anonymous.¹⁸ In modern cultures, in which relationships to weather are heavily mediated, it is easy to forget the local and even personal nature of people’s relationships to the winds, to which this evidence attests.¹⁹ The regularity of a wind’s manifestation, especially its direction, could be one aspect that might lead to it being given a name.²⁰ However, it was not just direction that was important in the identification of winds, but also the way they felt.²¹ Theophrastos distinguishes between the manifestations of the west wind, and notes that one of its key characteristics is that it can be “the most gentle of all the winds”, “moderate” and “soft”.²² The particular “feel” of the south wind, *Notos*, is found in its cognates, *noteros*, *noteo* and *notizo*, and *notia* and *notis*, all terms that relate to the sticky, damp or moist feelings associated with this wind.²³

Winds shaped sea and land, and, in Greek eyes, they also shaped the land’s inhabitants: their body, their health, and, as a result, their character. A number of treatises in the Hippocratic corpus identify the ways in which a particular wind may exert such effects. Not all of them go as far as the writer of the treatise *On Breaths*, who saw wind as the key to all disease: “For what can take place without it? In what is it not present? What does it not accompany? For everything between earth and heaven is full of wind.”²⁴ Rather they see the wind as part of the nosogenic environment. In general, the north wind was depicted as a source of health, while the south wind was thought to cause illness: the writer of *Epidemics I* offers a detailed exposition of the weather in Thasos before describing the health of its inhabitants,

17 Hes. *Theog.* 871–875 (transl. G. W. Most): θνητοῖς μέγ’ ὄνειρα and πῆμα μέγα θνητοῖσι, κακῆ θυίουσιν ἀέλλη | ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλαι ἄεισι διασκιδνάσι τε νῆας | ναύτας τε φθειροῦσι.

18 A few examples: ἀέλλα (stormy wind), ἄημα (blast), ἀήτης (blast), ἀμνεύς (SE wind), ἀντανεμία (contrary wind); ἀντίπνοια (conflicting wind), ἀπαρκτίας, ἄρκτος (N wind); γνοφίας (name of a wind), δυσσυρία (stormy wind), ἐγκολπίας ἄνεμος (local wind blowing from a bay), εὐρακύλων (name of a NE wind), εὐρόνοτος (wind between Εὔρος and Νότος, SSE wind); Εὔρος (E wind), Θηβάνας (the NE wind [κακίας] in Lesbos, Θρασκίας (the wind from NNW), Κάρβας (name in Kyrene for the wind Εὔρος), καταπορθμίας (an E wind, blowing down the Straits of Messina), Καννίας (a wind blowing from Kaunos in Karia to Rhodes), κέγχρων (a local wind on the river Phasis), λιβόνοτος (a wind between SW and S).

19 Vannini and McCright 2007.

20 Morton 2001: 217, who also argues for the importance of this aspect in the development of more detailed wind roses.

21 Murray 1987.

22 Theophr. *De Ventis* 38–48 (see transl. Symons and Wood 1894), esp. 38 (= Philoxenos of Kythera fr. 835).

23 Morton 2001: 218.

24 *Ἱπποκ. Flat.* 3 (all transl. from the Loeb edition): τί γὰρ ἄνευ τούτου γένοιτ’ ἄν; ἢ τίνοος οὗτος ἄπεστιν; ἢ τίνοι οὐ συμπάρεστιν; ἅπαν γὰρ τὸ μεταξὺ γῆς τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ πνεύματος ἐμπεδόν ἐστιν.

and clearly associates particular environment with certain kinds of disease.²⁵ The *Aphorisms* offers the following:

“South winds cause deafness dimness of vision, heaviness of the head, torpor, and are relaxing. When such winds prevail, their characteristics extend to sufferers from illnesses. A north wind causes coughs, sore throats, constipation, difficult micturition accompanied by shivering, pains in the sides and chest; such are the symptoms one must expect in illnesses when this wind prevails.”²⁶

In *On the Sacred Disease*, the north wind is seen as the source of health, while the south wind causes everything to “become dull instead of bright, hot instead of cold, wet instead of dry”; “by necessity, a south wind relaxes and moistens the brain and enlarges the veins, while north winds press together the healthiest part of the brain, separating the most diseased and moist, and washing it out.”²⁷ *Regimen II* goes beyond north and south to offer a somewhat more detailed account of the ways in which different winds coming from different locations offer living creatures more or less of a healthy environment.²⁸ Finally, for the writer of *Airs Waters and Places*, although he notes the winds’ effects on specific aspects of the environment, it is the contrast between seasons that is important.²⁹ In general, he applauds the tougher meteorological effects of distinct seasons: it toughens you up “for it is changes of all things that rouse the temper of man and prevent its stagnation.” Those who dwell on the Phasis, for example, are mostly moist; there “the north wind” rarely blows, and when it does it is weak and gentle.”³⁰ And while the Scythians live in the harsh environment of the north wind – and certainly exhibit a harsh character – nevertheless, because there is no change in their environment, “their physiques are gross, fleshy, showing no joints, moist and flabby, and the lower bowels are as moist as bowels can be.”³¹

25 Hippoc. *Epid.* I (4).

26 Hippoc. *Aph.* 3.5: Νότοι βαρυήκοοι, ἀγλυώδεες, καρηβαρικοί, νοθροί, διαλυτικοί· όκόταν ούτος δυναστεύη, τοιαύτα έν τήσιν άρρωστίησι πάσχουσιν. ήν δέ βόρειον ή, βήχες, φάρυγγες, κοιλία σκληράι, δυσουρίαί φρικώδεες, όδύναι πλευρέων, στήθεών· όκόταν ούτος δυναστεύη, τοιαύτα έν τήσιν άρρωστίησι προσδέχεσθαι χρή; see also Hippoc. *Hum.* 14.

27 Hippoc. *Morb. sacr.* 14: έκ τε λαμπρών νονοφώδεα γίνεται, και εκ ψυχρών θερμά, και εκ ξηρών νοτώδεα· and άνάγκη τοίσι μέν νοτίοισι λύεσθαι τε και φυλδάν τόν έγκέφαλον και τάς φλέβας χαλαρωτέρας γίνεσθαι, τοίσι δέ βορείοισι συνίστασθαι τώ ύγυρότατον του έγκεφάλου, τώ δέ νοσηλότατον 40και ύγρότατον εκκρίνεσθαι και περικλύζειν έξωθεν.

28 Hippoc. *Vict.* 2.38.

29 Specific aspects of the environment: Hippoc. *Aer.* 9 and 10.

30 Hippoc. *Aer.* 15: αί γάρ μεταβολαί εισι τών πάντων αί επεγείρουσαι την γνώμην τών ανθρώπων και ούκ έωσαι άτρεμίζειν.

31 Scythians: Hippoc. *Aer.* 19: διά ταύτας τάς άνάγκας τά είδεα αυτών παχέα έστι και σαρκώδεα και άναρθρα και ύγρὰ και άτονα, αί τε κοιλία ύγρόταται πασέων κοιλίων αί κάτω. A similar set of associations between good and bad health and the north and south wind emerges from Strauss’ study (2007) of the Foehn (a south wind) and Gemmiwind (a north wind) in Leukerbad, Switzerland. She argues that this is a way in which the local people help to generate a sense of their (local) identity (p. 178): “Recognition of the ferocity of the Gemmiwind and the ill effects of the Foehn are two other ways in which Leukerbadners demonstrate that they, too, have been formed by nature. The winds, ephemeral but ever-returning, also offer a resource for building

2.1 “Furious Boreas”

Returning to the wind with which this essay started, these examples all suggest that the north wind, Boreas, was perceived as particularly culturally significant, and this may be explained, perhaps, by its pronounced physical effects. It can be most closely identified with what is nowadays called “the Bora”. This is a very cold wind, which draws air from over the continental interior of Europe, and blows down across the Adriatic Sea, sometimes with great violence; it can be very dry, since its passage over the Alps removes the humidity. The ancient Boreas (along with the winds called Thraskias and Hellespontias) was similar: from the high-pressure areas over the continental interior of southeastern Europe, it appears to have blown down through the coastal plains of Macedonia, Thrace and Thessaly onto the warmer, moist, low pressure air of the Aegean.³² The fearsome effects of Boreas on land – both animate and inanimate aspects – are detailed for us by Hesiod:

“The month of Lenaion, evil days, ox-flayers all of them – avoid it, and the frosts that are deadly upon the earth when Boreas blows, which stirs up the broad sea through horse-raising Thrace when it blows upon it, and the earth and the forest bellow. It falls upon many lofty-leaved oaks and sturdy firs in the mountain’s dales and bends them down to the bounteous earth, and the whole immense forest groans aloud. The wild animals shiver and stick their tails under their genitals, even those whose skin is shadowed by fur; but, chilly as it is, it blows through them although their breasts are shaggy, and it goes through the hide of an ox, and this does not stop it, and it blows through the long-haired goat – but not at all through sheep does the force of the wind Boreas blow, for their fleece is plentiful. It makes the old man curved like a wheel, but it does not blow through the soft-skinned maiden who stays at the side of her dear mother inside the house, still ignorant of the works of golden Aphrodite; after washing her tender skin well and anointing herself richly with oil she lies down in the innermost recess inside the house – on a wintry day, when the boneless one gnaws its foot in its fireless house and dismal abodes, for the sun does not show it a rangeland towards which it can set out but instead roams to the dark men’s people and city, and shines more tardily for all the Greeks. And that is when the forest dwellers, horned and hornless alike, gnash their teeth miserably and flee through the wooded thickets, caring in their spirit only for searching for shelter and finding sturdy hiding-places down in the hollow of a stone; that is when they avoid the white snow and stalk about like a three-footed mortal whose back is broken and whose head looks down to the ground.”³³

Swiss identity, making even (or especially) city-dwellers in the flatlands a part of the locally produced landscape.”

- 32 I am indebted to Morton 2001 (here esp. 49–50) for my understanding of the topography of the winds.
- 33 Hes. *Op.* 504–535, (transl. G. W. Most): μῆνα δὲ Ληναίων, κάκ’ ἤματα, βουδόρα πάντα, / τοῦτον ἀλευάσθαι, καὶ πηγάδας, αἱ τ’ ἐπὶ γαῖαν / πνεύσαντος Βορέου δυσηλεγέες τελέθουσιν, / ὅς τε διὰ Θρηκίας ἱπποτρόφου εὐρέι πόντῳ / ἐμπνεύσας ὄρινε· μέμυκε δὲ γαῖα καὶ ὕλη· / πολλὰς δὲ δρυὸς ὑψικόμους ἐλάτας τε παχείας / οὐρεος ἐν βήσσει πλινᾷ χθονὶ πούλυβοτείρῃ / ἐμπίπτων, καὶ πάσα βοᾷ τότε νήριτος ὕλη· / θήρες δὲ φρίσσουσ’, οὐράς δ’ ὑπὸ μέξε’ ἔθεντο, / τῶν καὶ λάχνη δέρμα κατὰσκιον· ἀλλά νυ καὶ τῶν / ψυχρὸς ἐὼν διάησι δασυστέρνων περ ἐόντων. / καὶ τε διὰ ῥινοῦ βοδὸς ἔρχεται οὐδὲ μιν ἴσχει, / καὶ τε δι’ αἶγα ἄσι τανύτριχα· πῶσα δ’ οὐ τι, / οὐνεκ’ ἐπηταναι τρίχες αὐτῶν, οὐ διάησιν / ἴς ἀνέμου Βορέου· τροχάλων δὲ γέροντα τίθησιν / καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν, / ἣ τε δόμων ἐντοσθε φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει / οὐ πῶ ἔργ’ εἰδυῖα πολυχρῆσου Ἀφροδίτης· / εὐὲ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χροὰ καὶ λίπ’ ἐλαίῳ / χρισαμένη μυχὴ καταλέξεται ἐνδοθὶ οἴκου, / ἤματι χειμερίῳ, ὅτ’ ἀνόστεος ὄν πόδα τένδει / ἐν τ’ ἀπύρῳ οἴκῳ καὶ ἦθεσι λευγαλέοισιν· / οὐ γάρ οἱ ἤελιος δεικνυ νομόν ὀρημηθῆναι, / ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ

But, as a winter wind (although it can be stirred in summer), Boreas is, and was, particularly associated with storms at sea. It is, according to Herodotus, Boreas that causes the shipwreck of the Persian fleet near Mount Athos in 492.³⁴ This historical event is reinforced by the numerous epigrams that mention individual deaths caused by Boreas’ activities: for example, one that records the shipwreck of a sailor near the Mykale promontory near Samos recounts how,

“this is not the tomb of poor Satyros; Satyros sleeps not, as they tell, under the ashes of this pyre. But perchance you have heard of a sea somewhere, the bitter sea that beats on the shore near Mykale where the wild-goats feed, and in that eddying and desert water yet I lie, reproaching furious Boreas.”³⁵

In later literature the association continues: in the *Fall of Troy*, when Quintus Smyrnaeus is evoking a storm as a metaphor for the exploits that took place during the Trojan War, he uses a description that specifically evokes this wind.

“Recoiling back they fell, as waves onrolled by Boreas foaming from the deep to the strand, are caught by another blast that whirlwind-like leaps, in a short lull of Boreas, forth, smites them full-face, and hurls them back from the shore.”³⁶

It is not hard to see why the Greek imagination conjured an entire race – the Hyperboreans – that lived beyond the north wind, and thus inhabited a balmy, paradisiacal realm.³⁷

Boreas’ widespread reputation for violence may perhaps be why it is he, of all the winds, who attracts the most elaborate mythic narratives. But this is not to claim that the other winds have no mythic presence at all. Literary sources provide glimpses of some stories: Boreas, Zephyros and Notos all feature briefly in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, and reference is made to all *four* winds in the Homeric epics.³⁸ In the *Iliad*, Zephyros is given as the sire of Achilles’ horses; and Iris finds Zephyros and Boreas feasting together at Zephyros’ palace when she carries Achilles’ prayer

κυανέων ἀνδρῶν δῆμόν τε πόλιν τε / στρωφᾶται, βράδιον δὲ Πανελλήγεσσι φαείνει. / καὶ τότε δὴ κεραοὶ καὶ νήκεροι ὕληκοῖται / λυγρὸν μυλιόωντες ἀνά δρῖα βησσηέντα / φεύγουσιν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ τοῦτο μέμηλεν, / οἷ σκέπα μαιόμενοι πυκνοῦς κευθμῶνας ἔχουσιν / κάκ γλάφυ πετρῆεν. τότε δὴ τρίποδι βροτῶ ἴσοι, / οὐδ’ ἐπὶ νῶτα ἔαγε, κάρη δ’ εἰς οὐδας ὀράται· / τῷ ἴκελοι φοιτῶσιν ἀλευόμενοι νίφα λευκῆν.

34 Hdt. 6.44.

35 AP 7.397 (= Gow-Page, *GP* 2244–2249) Ergycius of Thessaly: Οὐχ ὄδε δειλαίου Σατύρου τάφος, οὐδ’ ὑπὸ ταύτῃ, ὡς λόγος, εὐνηται πυρκαϊῇ Σάτυρος· ἀλλ’ εἴ που τινὰ πόντον ἀκούετε, πικρὸν ἐκεῖνον, τὸν πέλας αἰγονόμου κλυζόμενον Μυκάλας, ὅκεινον δινήεντι καὶ ἀτρυγέτῳ ἐτι κεῖμαι ὕδατι, μαινομένῳ μεμφόμενος Βορέῃ. See also AP 7.303 (= Gow-Page, *HE* 350–355), and AP 7.495 (= Gow-Page, *HE* 90–95).

36 Quint. Smyrn. 11.227–232: οἱ δ’ ἀπὸντες χάζοντ’, ἤντε κύμαθ’, ἅ τ’ ἐκ βορέαο θυέλλης πόλλ’ ἐπιπαφλάζοντα κυλινδεταὶ αἰγιαλοῖσιν ὀρνύμεν’ ἐκ πόντοιο, τὰ δ’ ἔκποθεν ἄλλος ἀήτης ἀντίον ἀΐζασι μεγάλῃ περὶ λαίλαπι θύων ὥση ἀπ’ ἠϊόνων Βορέῳ ἐτι βαιὸν ἀέντος·. See also 1.625, 4.552, 8.205.

37 Hdt. 4.36, Diod. Sic. 2.47.1–6, Str. 1.3.22.

38 Hes. *Theog.* 378–380: Astraios weds Eos and produces the three winds Zephyros, Boreas, and Notos; see also Hom. *Od.* 5.295. I am not including here those passages where the winds’ activities are simply described.

for their help in kindling Patroklos' pyre.³⁹ A fragment of Alkaios preserves a story in which this wind fathered Eros with Iris.⁴⁰ But the narrative types do not venture beyond these largely genealogical accounts. There is one exception: the myth that Zephyros was Apollo's rival for Hyakinthos, and responsible for the misdirection of the discus that kills the young man. This is first found in literary evidence in Palaephatus;⁴¹ the more popular, and earlier, versions attribute this death simply to the impact of Apollo's discus, which looks as if it was also a familiar story pattern.⁴² However, some surviving imagery suggests that perhaps these stories were more well-known: Neuser has argued that ten vase images can be identified as showing the Zephyros-Hyakinthos story; most of these date to the early fifth century.⁴³

3. GREEK WIND AND RITUAL

It is not surprising that there were attempts to tame such potentially destructive forces and keep them under some kind of control, but the balance of the nature of the evidence is intriguing. On the one hand, although there are relatively frequent examples in the Homeric epics of gods controlling winds, there is relatively little evidence for the cult of specific divinities whose *epikleseis* suggest that they were invoked for this purpose.⁴⁴ In contrast, while Boreas and Zephyros are the only winds named in Homer as appearing to receive cult, there is extensive evidence for cults relating to winds – both general and specific.⁴⁵

As we might expect, there were a number of other cities that paid homage to the north wind, for similar reasons to those of Athens: there was a cult in Megalopolis in thanks for the way, during the siege of Megalopolis by the Spartans, it blew “violently and continuously, and broke up the engine of Agis, scattering it to utter destruction”.⁴⁶ And it is possible that the Thurians also had a cult: we are told by Aelian that when a headwind prevented Dionysius from attacking Thurii,

39 Sire: Hom. *Il.* 16.149–151; feasting: Hom. *Il.* 23.193–202. (Zephyros appears alongside Boreas at Hom. *Il.* 9.5 and *Od.* 5.295).

40 Alc. 327 LP.

41 Palaephatus 46 (Stern 1996: 78–79). Then in Paus. 3.19.4–5; Lucian. *Dial. D.* 16 (14); Nonnus *Dion.* 10.253–255. Tzetz. *Chil.* 1.241–266. Zephyros becomes Boreas in Serv. *ad Buc.* 3.63 and the Second Vatican Mythographer 181.

42 Hes. fr. 171 MW; Eur. *Hel.* 1469–1475 (no mention of Apollo's love); Nic. *Theor.* 902–906; Ov. *Met.* 10.162–219; Apollod. 1.3.3, 3.10.3. Rohde (1925: 112, n. 43) notes the popularity of the story pattern of being killed by a blow from a discus.

43 Neuser 1982: 120–121; eight of the ten vases are from the first half of the fifth century BC.

44 Paus. 3.13.8: Zeus of the Fair Winds in Sparta; Paus. 4.35.8: Athena of the Winds in Mothone, Messenia. In the Homeric epics, sacrifices for fair winds are made to Poseidon or the other gods: *Od.* 3.178 and 159; *Il.* 2.306, as Stengel 1900: 627. And the gods are described as controlling the winds: Athena *Od.* 2.420, 5.382; Apollo *Il.* 1.479; Hera *Il.* 15.26 and Poseidon *Od.* 5.293; also Kirke and Kalypso, see *Od.* 5.268, 11.6.

45 Hom. *Il.* 23.192–198: when the pyre of Patroklos will not burn, Achilles offers a libation to the gods Boreas and Zephyros, and promises them many fair offerings.

46 Paus. 8.27.14: κατέλωσέ τε γὰρ τὸ μηχανήμα τοῦ Ἄγιδος καὶ διεφόρησεν ἐς ἀπόλειαν παντελεῖ βιαίῳ τῷ πνεύματι ὁμοῦ καὶ συνεχεῖ; see also 8.36.6.

and, indeed, wrecked his fleet, they “offered sacrifices to Boreas, decreed rights of citizenship to the wind, allocated to him a house and a plot of land, and established an annual festival.”⁴⁷ These honours are particularly striking since they are, as Papazarkadas has observed, secular awards to a divine entity; he draws a parallel with the award by the Athenians of a golden crown to the hero, Amphiaraos.⁴⁸

Other specific winds are rarely mentioned in a cult context, although apparently the Athenians also had an altar to Zephyros.⁴⁹ In general, other cults are to “the winds” as a group, and the nature of their worship varies. For example, before the Athenians claim the help of their particular relative Boreas, Herodotus tells us that the Delphians had been advised by the oracle, “to pray to winds, because winds would be great allies to Greece.”⁵⁰ Once they have received the good news, they establish an altar for the winds at the sanctuary at Thyia (which Herodotus describes as the present location of the precinct of Thyia, the daughter of Kephisos).⁵¹ Pausanias notes that in Boiotia, “on the market-place of Koroneia I found two remarkable things, an altar of Hermes Epimelios (Keeper of flocks) and an altar of the winds.”⁵²

Later literary and epigraphic sources also provide more details about the local rites involved. A second century BC calendar from Kyrene begins with a sacrifice of a goat to the winds.⁵³ In a first century AD cult calendar from Athens, probably for a private association, a number of different deities are provided for with the sacrifice of a cake with twelve knobs, with no wine in it:⁵⁴ among the recipients

47 Ael. *VH* 12.61: οἱ Θούριοι τῷ Βορρᾷ ἔθυσαν καὶ ἐψηφίσαντο εἶναι τὸν ἄνεμον πολίτην καὶ οἰκίαν αὐτῷ καὶ κληῖρον ἀπεκλήρωσαν καὶ καθ’ ἕκαστον ἔτος ἐπετέλουν αὐτῷ. Noel Robertson (2009: 182) observes that Aelian’s assertion of kinship between Boreas and Thuri should not be trusted (he suggests that the source is Timaeus, who “had a habit of romancing and could say what he liked of Thuri, then a very dejected place” [his grounds for calling Thuri dejected are unclear], and was most likely writing at Athens); this is no doubt an exaggeration of the relationship by Aelian – but Robertson does not comment on the honours apparently awarded, or the implied status of the god.

48 See discussion Papazarkadas 2011: 47, n. 127, concerning the secular award, with comparison to Amphiaraos’ award in *I. Oropos* 296, 332/1 (see Parker 1996: 247).

49 Paus. 1.37.1.

50 Hdt. 7.178: καὶ σφι ἐχρήσθη ἀνέμοισι εὐχεσθαι· μεγάλους γὰρ τούτους ἔσεσθαι τῇ Ἑλλάδι συμμάχους.

51 McInerney (1999: 307–308) notes that the site of this sanctuary may be identified by the altar of the winds seen by the Greek geographer Kremmos (citing Kremmos 1876: 87 [non vidit]; see Dasios 1992: 1969), at modern Arachova. This is likely to mark the settlement of Anemoreaia, where ancient sources note the winds (see Schol. ad Hom. *Il.* 2.521 and Str. 9.3.15). The name Anemoreaia also recalls the name of the priestess of the winds found at Knossos (*A-ne-mo-i-je-re-ja*).

52 Paus. 9.34.3, in Boeotia: Κορώνεια δὲ παρείχετο μὲν ἐς μνήμην ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς Ἑρμοῦ βωμὸν Ἐπιμηλίου, τὸν δὲ ἀνέμου.

53 *SEG* 20.719.

54 Sokolowski 1969: no. 52, ll. 19–20 = *IG* II² 1367. The cake is χοινικιαῖον ὀρθόνφαλον δωδεκόνφαλον νηφάλιον. Brumfield (1997: 150) suggests that this may be the same as ὀρθοστατής (see Porph. *Abst.* 2.7, Poll. 6.74 and Hsch. s. v.); and that this type of cake may be represented resting on the head of a figurine from the Athenian Eleusinion (citing Thompson 1954: 94, 105 and pl. 20: 8).

in the month of Posideon (December–January) are Poseidon Khamaizelos and the winds.⁵⁵ As Sokolowski has observed:

“Nous y voyons un mélange de divinités, semblable à celui qu’on rencontre dans les hymnes orphiques avec la prépondérance des dieux de l’agriculture, du beau temps et de la Nature.”⁵⁶

The orphic elements are arguable, but the focus on agricultural divinities is manifest. Similar observations have been made about the cult of the Tritopatris, found chiefly in Attica (although there is also evidence for the cult in Delos, Kyrene and Selinus).⁵⁷ The nature of these entities is much debated, and scholars have argued that they were spirits of the dead, a point to which we will return below.⁵⁸ The evidence here, meanwhile, draws attention to another aspect of their role, namely, their connection to fertility: their sacrificial rites were linked, at least temporally, to other agrarian deities.⁵⁹

A greater range of victims appears in other evidence. For example, Hesychius (s. v. *anemotas*) tells us that among the Tarentines, a donkey was sacrificed to the winds,⁶⁰ while Festus (s. v. *October Equus*) reports that the Spartans killed horses on Taygetos, immolating them and spreading their ashes “per fines”.⁶¹ In calendars from Erchia and Marathon, a full-grown sheep is sacrificed for the Tritopatris, while the *Lex Sacra* from Selinus describes different sacrificial rites and offerings for “the foul” and the “pure” types of Tritopatris.⁶² The inscription likens these rites to those for heroes and gods, respectively, and, as Robertson has suggested, it looks as if they take place in a pit.⁶³ Both the division of rites and even the use of a pit may help to explain another set of wind-related rituals that Pausanias reports from a sanctuary in Sikyon:

“In Titane there is also a sanctuary of Athena, into which they bring up the image of Koronis. In it is an old wooden figure of Athena, and I was told that it, too, was struck by lightning. The sanctuary is built upon a hill, at the bottom of which is an Altar of the Winds, and on it the priest sacrifices to the winds one night in every year. He also performs other secret rites at four pits, taming the fierceness of the blasts, and he is said to chant as well charms of Medea”.⁶⁴

55 Sokolowski 1969: no. 52, ll. 19–20.

56 Sokolowski 1969: 103.

57 Robertson 2009: 169.

58 On Tritopatris as “the souls of ancestors who have become wind-spirits” see originally Rohde 1925: 204, n. 124; cf. Robertson 2009: ch. 10–11.

59 Robertson 2009: 172–174.

60 See Nenci 1995 for the argument that this sacrifice was influenced by Spartan sacrificial practice.

61 The Roman October horse was connected to war: see Beard, North and Price 1998: 47–48 with n. 144. The sacrifice of donkeys and horses in order to be eaten was also not unknown, see Ekroth 2007: 259–260, and Georgoudi 2005 on horse sacrifices in ancient Greek evidence.

62 Erchia: *SEG* 21.541; see Daux 1963: 606–610 (Δ 41–46); Marathon, *IG* II² 1358 (*SEG* 50.168) A col. 2, l. 32; for the *Lex Sacra* from Selinus, see Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993.

63 Robertson 2009: 157–158 (discussing col. A, ll. 9–17 of the *Lex Sacra* from Selinus).

64 Paus. 2.12.1 [Sicyon]: Ἐν δὲ Τιτάνῃ καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς ἱερὸν ἐστίν, ἐς ὃ τὴν Κορωνίδα ἀνάγουσιν· ἐν δὲ αὐτῷ ἕζονον Ἀθηνᾶς ἐστίν ἀρχαῖον, κεραυνωθῆναι δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐλέγετο· ἐκ τούτου τοῦ λόφου καταβάσιν – φκοδόμηται γὰρ ἐπὶ λόφῳ τὸ ἱερὸν – βωμός ἐστιν ἀνέμων, ἐφ’ οὗ τοῖς ἀνέμοις ὁ ἱερεὺς μιᾶ νυκτὶ ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος θύει. ὄρα δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἀπόρρητα ἐς βόθρους τέσσαρας,

The types of rites and kinds of sacrifices that are offered have some implications for the perceived nature of their recipients. The winds at Athens are not distinguished from the other divinities by receiving gifts of cakes: the private nature of the calendar suggests that this choice of offering may have been a matter of economy.⁶⁵ The horses and perhaps the donkey are more striking: these are less common choices of sacrificial animal. Nevertheless, sacrifice of horses is found elsewhere for other divinities: specifically Pausanias reports a particular cult of Poseidon, in which a horse was thrown into water, and also describes rites on Mount Taygetos (this time in honour of Helios), in which horses were among other animals that appear to have been sacrificed more usually.⁶⁶ In the case of each of these gods, their connection with horses makes sense of the choice of sacrificial animal. Similarly, in the case of the winds, the sacrifice of these animals could in each case be an allusion to the winds’ close association with horses. In myth, both Zephyros and Boreas breed with horses: Zephyros fathered Achilles’ horses Xanthos and Balios with the harpy Podarge; Boreas, who is described by Hesiod as coming from “horse-breeding Thrace”, takes on a horse shape to mate with Erichthonios’ mares.⁶⁷ Resonating with this imagery, in Book 10 of the *Odyssey*, the figure who controls the winds is called Aiolos Hippotades (the Horse-reiner).⁶⁸

Pausanias uses the regular language of sacrifice, *thuo*, in his descriptions of these sacrifices; however, their nature does include elements of what has been called “high-intensity” ritual, in the sense that horses were far from commonplace

ἡμερούμενος τῶν πνευμάτων τὸ ἄγριον, καὶ δὴ καὶ Μηδείας ὡς λέγουσιν ἐπωδὰς ἐπάδει. Pausanias (8.29.2) also notes the cult of other weather events: the Arkadians, for example, offer sacrifices to lightnings, hurricanes and thunders at a place called Bathos: the locals claimed that the battle between giants and gods took place there.

- 65 The specific ingredients for the cakes are given in each case (χοινικιαῖον, made from a choenix-measure of flour); the same is true of other calendars that list cakes (see *LSCG* 135, with Kearns 1994: 67). Kearns (1994: 69) suggests that the specifics of a sacrificial cake may have indicated the “individuality of the cult”, and this seems likely in particular with regard to the shape of the cake. Here, as Kearns observes (*ibid*), the 12-knobbed cake may have been a distinguishing mark of the *thiasos*. In addition, when it is also possible that when the offering is, as it were, only a cake it would also make ritual sense to ensure that it was prepared “properly” both in terms of ritual (*stricto sensu*) and with regard to sufficient expenditure (Kearns 2011: 102 notes the growing interest in a worshipper’s intentions in 5th–4th century Greek literature, and the rejection of ostentatious offerings on grounds of piety). The calendar does not explicitly mention “bloodless” sacrifice (see Eckhardt 2014), but it may be that there is a clear ideology behind the choice of offerings.
- 66 See Paus. 8.7.2, for Poseidon (as Georgoudi (2005: 140) points out this is a similar action to that of a holocaust since it abandons the whole animal to its fate: “on lui en fait une offrande ‘totale’”). For Helios: Paus. 3.20.4 notes that sacrifices of horses on Taygetos are to Helios, and note Georgoudi’s argument (2005: 139) that the Rhodian *Hippokathesia* may have been in honour of Helios rather than Poseidon *Hippios*. Herodotus reports that the Massagetai sacrificed horses to the sun (1.216.4): their reasoning (that this is the swiftest of mortal beings sacrificed to the swiftest of gods) seems better to fit a cult of the winds.
- 67 Zephyros: Hom. *Il.* 16.149–151 and see 19.415; Boreas: Hom. *Il.* 20.223–225; Hes. *Op.* 504 (the imagery is found elsewhere, e.g., Eur. *Phoen.* 212).
- 68 Aiolos Hippotades: Hom. *Od.* 10.1–54.

choices for sacrifice, and were used in moments of particular need.⁶⁹ In support of this idea, we also find more explicit references to moments of crisis associated with wind and sacrifices to placate their destructive power. For example, Dionysos' expostulation in *Frogs*: "A lamb, boys, bring out a black lamb! Here's a hurricane hurtling our way!"⁷⁰ And the language used of the sacrifice to the wind offered in Xenophon's *Anabasis* provides another instance:

"Then it was that one of the soothsayers bade them offer sacrifice to the wind, and sacrifice was offered; and it seemed quite clear to everybody that the violence of the wind abated. But the depth of the snow was a fathom, so that many of the baggage animals and slaves perished, and about 30 of the soldiers."⁷¹

Elements of high-intensity ritual are also apparent in other rites performed to propitiate winds, as recorded by Pausanias. For example, the division of the cock used to try to control the Lips (a SW wind) at Methana, in Corinth is puzzling. The action recalls the division of animals in rites of oaths, but this does not quite align, since the oath there is sworn on the pieces.⁷² More appropriate is Herodotus' description of Xerxes' division of Pythius's son, when the army was made to march out between the two halves of the boy.⁷³

However unusual these rites appear, nevertheless, they were all institutionalised rituals. Indeed, the priest at Titane may perhaps have been a member of a particular clan: at Corinth there was a *genos* who claimed to be able to control the winds.⁷⁴ Similarly, from Athens, the name of a lawsuit attributed to Deinarchos indicates another *genos* whose name, *Heudanemoi*, suggests some kind of role in propitiating winds.⁷⁵ But alongside these communal rites, there is also evidence for individuals who claimed the power to control the winds. We must treat with caution those literary figures such as Aiolos in Book 10 of the *Odyssey* who sends off Odys-

69 For high- and low-intensity rituals with regard to sacrifice, see Ekroth 2008: 90. On sacrificing horses as at best an exorbitant choice, at worst a non-Greek or barbarian action, see Georgoudi 2005: 138–140, with Hom. *Il.* 23.170–175, Eur. *Hel.* 1258, Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3, 11–12, 24.

70 Aristoph. *Ran.* 847: ἄρν' ἄρνα μέλανα, παῖδες, ἐξενέγκατε· / τυφῶς γὰρ ἐκβαίνειν παρασκευάζεται...

71 Xen. *An.* 4.5.4: ἐνθα δὴ τῶν μάντεων τις εἶπε σφαγιάσασθαι τῷ ἀνέμῳ, καὶ σφαγιάζεται: καὶ πᾶσι δὴ περιφανῶς ἔδοξεν λῆξαι τὸ χαλεπὸν τοῦ πνεύματος. ἦν δὲ τῆς χιόνος τὸ βάθος ὄργυια: ὥστε καὶ τῶν ὑποζυγίων καὶ τῶν ἀνδραπόδων πολλὰ ἀπόλετο καὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ὡς τριάκοντα.

72 See Dem. Or. 23.67–68. Similarly, the oath requested by Tyndareos, Helen's father, Stesich. fr. 14 (and Paus. 3.20.9); Paus. 5.24.11, and cf. Dem. Or. 49.10.

73 Hdt. 7.39. Howe and Wells (*ad loc.*) cite evidence suggesting that it was "a Persian custom to make those one wished to preserve from harm pass between two parts of a sacrificed animal". Thomas (2012: 238) cites Hittite evidence, but rightly asks if this can be taken to indicate historical Persian custom.

74 See Eust. *Od.* p. 1645, 41–42 and Hsch. s. v. *Anemokoitai*; also mentioned without reference to the *genos* in *Suda* s. v. Ἀνεμοκοῖται (= α 2257 Adler).

75 Dion. Hal. *de Dinarch.* 11 (= Baiter and Sauppe 1850: ii.323b 9 f.). The case "*Concerning the Basket*" is a *diadikasia*: the speech vs. the Kerykes indicates involvement in the Eleusinian ritual.

seus and his men with Zephyros as guide, and provides a curious gift of winds in a bag – which, when released by his disobedient men, blow the ships off course.⁷⁶

A similar bag was apparently used by Empedokles, who claimed the power to allay and raise winds, and who acquired either the name *Alexanemas* (“Averter of Winds”), or *Kolusanemas* (“Wind-stayer”), because he controlled the winds (at Akragas).⁷⁷ The method described there involves flaying asses, making bags and then setting these out around hills to catch the winds. Plutarch tells the story twice, substituting a wall of skins for the bag.⁷⁸ Empedokles, he reveals there, carried out these aversive actions because the winds were bringing pestilence, and sterility and plague, respectively; Clement of Alexandria also describes this disease-carrying wind as causing barrenness in women.⁷⁹

4. WINDS AND DEATH

A number of the elements already mentioned, including the wineless sacrifices of the Athenian calendar, Dionysos’ plea for a black lamb, and the possible nature of the Tritopatris, suggest that the cult of the winds, indeed, the winds themselves, had chthonian characteristics; indeed, some scholars have argued that they were originally conceived as spirits of the dead.⁸⁰ Certainly, the most elaborate of the rituals described by Pausanias – the night-time sacrifices at Titane involving four pits or *bothroi* – reminded Stengel of Odysseus’ activities to raise and control the spirits of the dead, and he associated it with hero-cult.⁸¹ But the variety of sacrifices tends to nuance that interpretation;⁸² it suggests rather that these were powers that

76 Hom. *Od.* 10.1–54.

77 Empedokles (B 111 DK) notes to his pupil Pausanias that *παύσεις δ’ ἀκαμάτων ἀνέμων μένος οἱ τ’ ἐπὶ γαίαν | ὀρνύμενοι πνοαῖσι καταφθινύθουσιν ἀρούρας·| καὶ πάλιν, ἦν ἐθέλησθα, παλίντιτα πνεύμα(α) ἐπαξεις*. Wind bags: *FGrH* 566 Timaios fr. 30a (*ap.* DL 8.60: *Κωλυσάνεμαν*); *Suda* s. v. *Ἀμύκλαι*, and s. v. *Ἄπνους* (*Κωλυσάνεμον*) (= α 1671 and 3242 Adler); Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.3 (Akragas). “Averter of Winds” *Alexanemos*: Porph. *Pyth.* 29 = Iamb. *Pyth.* 136.

78 Wind barrier: Plut. *de curiositate*. 1; *Adv. Col.* 32.

79 Pestilence: Plut. *de curiositate* 1; pestilence and sterility: Plut. *Adv. Col.* 32; barrenness: Cl. Al. *Strom.* 6.3.

80 See Sacconi 1964: 139. Hampe 1967: 11: “Aber die eigentlichen Windgötter waren chthonische Wesen und empfangen Ehren wie chthonische Gottheiten oder heroisierte Tote.” This raises interesting questions for Robertson’s interpretation of the Tritopatris (in the *lex sacra* from Selinus; see Robertson 2009: ch. 10–11) as wind gods rather than ancestral spirits.

81 Stengel 1900: 633; the spirits of the dead: Hom. *Od.* 11.36. Although Ekroth (2002: esp. ch. 4, <http://books.openedition.org/pulg/504>) has established that this particular connection does not occur before the Roman period; nevertheless, she does emphasise that “the use of *bothroi* for the purpose of calling and contacting a figure of the underworld is apparent from most contexts in which the term is found, no matter what the date or the recipient.” Sacconi (1964: 139) argues that all the evidence for the cult of the winds suggests similar rites, but here cites only Aristophanes and Xenophon.

82 See Parker 2011: 80–84 and 283–286. Scullion who defends the distinction (1994: 116) distinguishes between chthonian gods and weather gods.

required active and ongoing propitiation, because their activities could in a variety of ways – directly or indirectly – lead to death.⁸³

These associations are brought out by some explicit links made in literary texts between winds and human sacrifice; they draw attention again to the rapacity of the north wind. The first is the description of Iphigenia’s sacrifice from Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*. Although the reason for Iphigenia’s sacrifice lies in Artemis’ anger, the act of sacrifice is described by the chorus, explicitly, as calming the winds, and then, more specifically by Clytemnestra as soothing the north wind.⁸⁴ The Trojan war remains the focus in a story told by Herodotus about Menelaus, who, stranded in Egypt, sacrificed two children.⁸⁵ The idea of human sacrifice also appears to be alluded to in Herodotus’ story of the Persian soldiers obediently jumping overboard in order to save Xerxes’ ship from the Strymonian wind, although this story is also part of the theme of inhumane violence that is associated with the Great King. Later sources tell us that Themistocles made human sacrifices before the battle of Salamis, although their recipient was Dionysos *Omestes*.⁸⁶

Some scholars have seen in these stories evidence for the winds demanding human sacrifices.⁸⁷ Although there is no epigraphic or material evidence to support these ideas, the narratives can perhaps be argued to resonate with the story pattern illustrated by the myth with which this essay started: that is, of people being snatched away by the wind. To begin with, it may be possible to forge such an interpretation from the Boreas and Oreithyia myth, reading it as a myth to propitiate the dangers posed by an angry wind god. One of the fragments of Aeschylus’ play *Oreithyia* seems to allude to threats that Boreas is making against the city if he does not get his way.⁸⁸

Boreas is not the only wind to commit such an act; our sources indicate that another set of wind entities were also associated with this behaviour: the harpies. We hear about their activities in the *Odyssey* from Penelope who, in a moment of despair, wishes that she might be either killed by Artemis, or snatched away by the harpies, like the daughters of Pandareos.⁸⁹ She makes clear the windy nature of these creatures, calling them first *thuellai*, and then in her second description of the

83 In this respect at least, resembling the “heilige Handlungen” of Nock (1972: 590), “intended to exercise direct and efficacious influence upon divine powers or upon forces of nature”.

84 First by the chorus (214–217): *πανσανέμου γὰρ θυσίας / παρθενίου θ’ αίματος ὄρ- / γᾶ περιόργως ἐπιθυ- / μεῖν θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἶη*; then, by Clytemnestra (1417–1418): *ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλάτην ἐμοὶ / ὠδῖν’, ἐπφδὸν Ὀρηκίων ἀημάτων*.

85 Hdt. 2.119.2; the wind is not named, but it is likely to be northerly, see Murray 1995: 40–42.

86 See Plut. *Vit. Them.* 13.2 and *Vit. Pel.* 21.3. Hampe (1967: 8–9) makes a link between this Dionysos and the wind, tracing a Lesbian tradition of stories of sacrifice to the winds by the Atreidai during the Trojan War (Sappho fr. 17 and Alc. fr. 129–134); he supports this with arguments for Dionysos receiving human sacrifice on the islands of Chios and Tenedos (but cf. Georgoudi 2011 on the Tenedos cult).

87 As Hampe (1967: 9), who compares the winds to the wind and weather gods of the Near East.

88 Boreas: Aesch. fr. 281 Sommerstein. The earliest version of the Oreithyia story indicates that she was snatched from the Acropolis; this is reminiscent of the story pattern of Aglauros jumping from the Acropolis in order to save the city (Philochoros *FGrH* 328 fr. 105).

89 Hom. *Od.* 20.63–78.

abduction, *harpuiai*.⁹⁰ If we have any doubts, their nature is also manifest in the names that Hesiod gives them in his *Theogony: Aello* (Stormwind) and *Okupete* (Swift-foot).⁹¹

In trying to understand this passage, Sarah Iles Johnston focuses on the Erinyes, and suggests that Penelope’s narrative should be set within the context of ancient demonological beliefs: she argues that Penelope is expressing the desire to become a reproductive demon, because “it might be easier to become one of them than to carry on in her own situation”.⁹² In turn, using the same example, Emily Vermeule has suggested that being carried off by a winged creature may have been a particularly attractive type of death for women – the desire for it prompted by feeling “stupid or uncertain.”⁹³

Neither of these explanations is convincing in terms of the specific literary context, or for more general interpretative aims. Vermeule’s conflation of winged and wind divinities, and the nature of love and death, underplay the evidence for the ways in which the winds would have been perceived to pose real dangers, especially for men at sea. In turn, Iles Johnston herself admits the Pandareids are “never [...] mentioned in connection with attacks on babies and parturient women”;⁹⁴ although she provides an ingenious argument for associating the Erinyes with obstructing a woman’s progression into marriage and child-bearing, in the epic poems, the Erinyes are primarily depicted as ensuring cosmological order, usually by punishing wrongdoing.⁹⁵ And, indeed, examination of other appearances of the Erinyes elsewhere in the poem (which are also associated with Penelope’s fate), suggest that this is their primary characteristic in this passage as well.

The first of these occurs as part of Telemachos’ response to Antinoos’ plea that he punish his mother for her deceit towards them. Telemachos describes how, if he were to send his mother from the house, she would invoke these creatures upon him.⁹⁶ The second, again in relation to Antinoos, recalls this idea. Odysseus has returned to Ithaca in disguise and Antinoos has thrown a footstool at “the beggar”. Odysseus replies: “Ah, if for beggars there are gods and Erinyes, may the doom of

90 Hom. *Od.* 20.63 and 66 (*thuellai*) and 77 (*harpuiai*).

91 Hom. *Od.* 20.63–78. See Hes. *Theog.* 267 for the original names of the harpies, and see Apollod. 1.9.21 for variations. Roman authors add a third harpy Kelaino (see Verg. *Aen.* 3.211 and Hyg. *Fab.* 14).

92 Johnston 1994: 150.

93 Vermeule 1981: 169: “Greek women had for centuries wished to die in such an embrace, especially when they felt stupid or uncertain.”

94 Johnston 1994: 149.

95 E. g., Hom. *Il.* 9.454 and 541, 15.204, 19.87, 259; *Od.* 2.135, 11.280. The meaning of Eustathius’ comment that the Pandareids acquired an “Erinyes-like character” because they were orphaned and suffered does not, in itself, support the idea that they became reproductive demons (contra Levianouk [2008: 26–27], who confuses matters by adding to her summary that the Pandareids are “barren and horrible” which is not part of Eustathius’ description of them). Importantly, Eustathius describes them as handed over to the Erinyes, which suggests that they are their victims rather than becoming like them.

96 Hom. *Od.* 2.135.

death come upon Antinoos before his marriage”.⁹⁷ His speech, replete with a description of the pain of losing one’s possessions, is a moment of succinct dramatic irony – and, again, it relates the idea of vengeance to the loss of Penelope. Returning to Penelope’s account of the myth of the snatched Pandareids, we find this idea is neatly expressed once more. Whether or not Penelope has in fact recognised her husband is much debated; in this speech she talks of him as if she has not, as if the situation she now faces is unbearable. She, like the Pandareids, could have had a happy married life, but now she would rather be snatched by the Harpies. The parallel suggests that then she, like the mythic girls, will serve the Erinyes. The preceding passages clarify the meaning: Penelope is no reproductive demon; rather, she will become the servant of vengeance.⁹⁸

But this is to focus on the Erinyes: when we turn our attention back to the role of winds, we have to wonder about the selection of this particular parallel. An answer lies within the poem, and the set of associations that have been developed around the role of the Harpies or *thuellai*. Repeatedly, they are used to convey the loss of one or other of Odysseus’ family: Telemachos, talking about Odysseus to the disguised goddess Athena, describes how the Harpies have snatched his father;⁹⁹ similarly, Eumaios uses it to a disguised Odysseus, again about Odysseus’ fate;¹⁰⁰ and, finally, Penelope employs a similar phrase to describe Telemachos sailing off to Pylos.¹⁰¹ These references suggest that the Harpies were generally assumed to threaten those who put to sea, which aligns with the other evidence for the risks posed by the winds examined above. When Penelope wishes to be snatched, she is wishing for a death that echoes her husband’s presumed fate.

5. CONCLUSION: GREEK WINDS AND HAZARDS

It may be the case that “Winds fertilize nature year by year, bringing rain or shine, coolness or warmth, producing flowers and foliage and crops”, but as we might expect, this is not the aspect that we see most prominently exercised in ritual practice or explored in literary or visual narratives.¹⁰² Rather, these present a strong sense of the risks posed by the winds, and their part in the local hazardscape of ancient lived experience. In the case of the narratives, the evidence ranges from direct information about the real-life dangers of the winds, especially, but not only, for those at

97 Hom. *Od.* 17.475–476: ἀλλ’ εἴ που πτωχῶν γε θεοὶ καὶ Ἐρινύες εἰσὶν, Ἀντίνοον πρὸ γάμοιο τέλος θανάτοιο κτελεῖν.

98 This use of the Pandareid myth to evoke her difficult situation is foreshadowed by her earlier account of the myth of Aedon, daughter of Pandareos in Book 19. Her telling of this story leads into Penelope’s concerns about her son’s behaviour towards her. Olga Levianouk (2008: 12–13) has argued convincingly that the telling of this myth to Odysseus, whom she has recognised, is a way of letting him know her situation, and conveys her fear that she will accidentally cause the death of her son.

99 Hom. *Od.* 1.241.

100 Hom. *Od.* 14.371.

101 Hom. *Od.* 4.727–728.

102 Robertson 2009: 183.

sea; to the myth stories that indirectly suggest that hideous sacrifices were required to keep the threats of the winds at bay. The evidence of the medical writers suggests a further dimension of this relationship, in which the winds shape not only the external landscape, but even the physiognomy of local people. The evidence for wind cults is in many cases puzzling, but by its propitiatory nature, also appears to confirm this sense of threat. To describe wind cult as “chthonian” is too broad a categorisation (although the rituals at Titane raise questions, Pausanias’ description is not sufficiently detailed to allow this judgement). Rather, there seems to be a variety of different cultic approaches across communities, including specialisation of ritual practice among individuals or families.

This localised aspect may help to develop an answer to the question with which this essay began: that is, why do Greek myths so rarely develop extensive narratives about winds, given that the relationship between human beings and winds was so variously important? The evidence for cults of the winds suggests the importance for local communities of maintaining relationships with the winds, sometimes, specific winds. In this context, it appears to have been, in general, less important to portray these relationships in terms of figuration, as with, for example, river gods.¹⁰³ If those depictions were part of a narrative of local identity, in which a community evoked a sense of place and its role within it, then relationships with winds were concerned more immediately with less controllable, potentially more dangerous powers.

In line with this, the material examined above suggests that although extended personification and related narratives are, for the most part, not available, nevertheless, there are numerous examples of the selective personification of winds. In these instances, the written and visual evidence tends to highlight those personified features of the winds that resonate with their threatening characters, for example, their activities, emotions or appetites. Indeed, many of these examples are concerned with behaviours that are excessive or simply monstrous, so that the particular personification is endowed with characteristics that are beyond human or even non-human.

These observations about winds and wind gods may contribute to current analyses of the possible routes of development identified for deified abstractions. Stafford has observed how, with the exception of Eleos, these cults were “facilitated by the figure’s appearances in literature and the visual arts, appearances for which, in turn, the demonstrable existence of a cult has implications.”¹⁰⁴ Winds seldom appeared in literature and the visual arts with any kind of developed personality; however, the features highlighted by selective personification appear to be the key focus of propitiatory cult activity, and vice versa.

It may be argued that Boreas in Athens provides an exception: the evidence for stories about this wind, along with the surviving visual imagery, indicates a more complete process of personification and the development of an accompanying cult. But this exception is, in turn, one that reinforces the larger argument of this essay:

103 See for example, the discussion in Huskinson 2005.

104 Stafford 2000: 227.

Boreas' anthropomorphic evolution largely occurs on a local stage, within the community of Athens, and is concerned with specific local dangers. On the broader stage, in contrast, his presence is one not of strong personality, but of dangerous power.¹⁰⁵

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¹⁰⁵ The power of an abstraction as the explanation for its deification is given by Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.23.61.

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