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THE VIEW FROM THE MOUNTAIN (OROSKOPIA) IN GREEK AND LATIN LITERATURE

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This paper argues for the existence of the topos of *oroskopia* in Greek and Latin literature. Gods and mortals are positioned on mountains to watch events or landscapes below. The view from above symbolises power (in the case of the gods) or an attempt at control or desire for power (in the case of mortals). It may also suggest an agreeable and relaxed spectatorship with no active involvement in the events watched, which may metaphorically morph into a historian's objectivity or a philosopher's emotional tranquillity. The elevated position may also have a temporal aspect, gods looking into the future or mortals looking back on their life.

In a famous letter about his ascent of Mont Ventoux on 26 April 1336, Petrarch describes how his elevated position allows him to view both France and the Alps (though not Italy). This text is generally hailed as the symbolic starting point of humanism, the romantic landscape tradition and alpinism. For me it is the end point, albeit a temporary one,¹ of a long literary tradition that positions gods or mortals on mountaintops in order to view the world below. It is no surprise that Petrarch himself flags his literary antecedents:

Today I made the ascent of the biggest mountain in this region . . . The idea took hold of me with special force when in rereading Livy's *History of Rome*, yesterday I happened upon the place where Philip of Macedon [. . .] ascended Mount Haemus in Thessaly, from whose summit he was able, it is said, to see two seas, the Adriatic and the Euxine. [Petrarch relates how he climbs to the top] At first, owing to the unaccustomed quality of the air and the effect of the great sweep of view spread out before me, I stood like one dazed. I beheld the clouds under our feet, and what I had read of Athos and Olympus seemed less incredible as I myself witnessed the same things from a mountain of less fame. (*Epistulae familiares* 4.1)²

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1 See my conclusion below.

2 Translation by J. H. Robinson, *Petrarch: The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters* (New York 1898). For an analysis of the landscape which Petrarch is looking at see e.g. Stierle (1979) and Michalsky (2006).

For the view from Mount Haemus Petrarch provides the exact textual reference, Livy, whereas we can only guess which texts (and hence mountain views) he is thinking of when speaking of the holy mountains of Christianity and ancient Greek paganism, Athos and Olympus.

Whatever texts Petrarch had in mind (and it is not my aim to answer that question), there is a wealth of possibilities.³ Indeed, the view from the mountain or, as I call it, *oroskopia* is found so regularly in both Greek and Latin literature that we may consider it a *topos*, comparable to *teichoskopia*. Since Homer famously introduced *teichoskopia* in *Iliad* 3, authors from antiquity to the present day have employed it in genres as diverse as epic, drama, historiography and the novel. It is a convenient device for introducing catalogues or battle-scenes,⁴ since their position on a wall allows persons to have what narratologists call a panoramic or bird's-eye view.⁵ But, as Helen Lovatt and Therese Fuhrer have recently argued, the *topos* also has a semantic force: it presents an anxious and passive (often female) view on war and fighting.⁶

This study argues that *oroskopia* is a *topos*, too, with a long history across many genres and a semantic force of its own. I will present my material under three rubrics: divine, mortal and metaphorical *oroskopia*.⁷ This subdivision is only for the sake of convenience, and there will turn out to be crucial connections between the three categories.

Divine *oroskopia*

As with *teichoskopia*, the first (highly influential) instances of *oroskopia* are found in Homer. Time and again we hear about gods watching human affairs while sitting on Mount Olympus or other mountains:

οἱ δὲ θεοὶ πᾶρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἄστεροπητῇ
θεεῦντο μέγα ἔργον Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων.
(*Iliad* 7.443–4)

3 If Petrarch was somehow connecting Olympus with the 'ur'-intertext Homer, this must have been on the basis of indirect references since he did not read Greek and had to wait until 1360 for Leontius Pilatus to publish a translation into Latin (which he shows to have read with great enthusiasm in his 'letter to Homer' from 1362).

4 Actually, the 'inventor' of the *teichoskopia*, Homer, presents his catalogues separately (in book 2), and what we get in his *teichoskopia* is no mass-scene (the army at large is only briefly referred to in 168, 190, 196, 227) but a series of close-ups of individual leaders.

5 See de Jong and Nünlist (2004), with older narratological theory, and Dennerlein (2009) 150–3. Linguists such as Taylor and Tversky (1996) 376 speak of the survey perspective: 'viewing an environment from the top of a tree or a hill' as if looking at a map.

6 Lovatt (2006), (2013) 217–50 and Fuhrer (2015); and cf. Scodel (2010).

7 Discussions of parts of the material are found in Fehling (1974) 39–58; Jacob (1984); von Koppenfels (2007) 31–66; Vout (2012) 83–94, 188–226; Lovatt (2013) *passim*; and Poiss (2014).

And the gods, sitting next to Zeus who handles the lightning, admiringly watched the great endeavour of the bronze-clad Greeks.⁸

Ἴδην δ' ἵκανεν πολυπίδακα, μητέρα θηρῶν,
 Γάργαρον, ἔνθά τέ οἱ τέμενος βωμός τε θυήεις.
 ἔνθ' ἵππους ἔστησε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
 λύσας ἐξ ὀχέων, κατὰ δ' ἠέρα πολὺν ἔχευεν. 50
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κορυφῆσι καθέζετο κύδει γαίων
 εἰσορόων Τρώων τε πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.

(Iliad 8.47–52)

And he [i.e. Zeus] reached Ida with the many springs, mother of wild animals, Gargaron, where are his precinct and fragrant altar. There the father of men and gods reined in his horses, unyoked them from the chariot and spread thick mist over them. But he himself sat down on the peak, glorying in his splendour and looking down at the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Greeks.⁹

There are several factors that explain divine *oroskopia*. In the first place, there is a religious logic to the gods' location: they often had sanctuaries on mountains and were supposed to live on one, Olympus, so of course they would have watched earthly affairs from mountaintops.¹⁰ Secondly, the gods' strong anthropomorphism in Homer also played a role. Even though Zeus by definition is *εὐρύοπα*, 'far-seeing',¹¹ and all gods have supernatural vision, their surveying large distances from an elevated position, just as mortals would do, makes this special eyesight more plausible.¹² Thirdly, divine *oroskopia* allows the narrator to introduce panoramic views on an even grander scale than those enabled by *teichoskopia*: thus gods see both Trojan and Greek armies at the same time (Il. 8.52; 11.82, 13.14; 15.6–11), exotic northern tribes such as 'the horse-herding Thracians, Mysians, fighters at close quarters, proud Hippemolgoi who live on mares'

8 Here and elsewhere I quote the text of Monro and Allen, OCT; translations are my own. Cf. 5.711–12; 7.17–20; 11.80–3; 19.340; 20.22–3; 21.388–90; 22.166–88; 24.23, 331–2. There are no examples in the *Odyssey*.

9 Cf. 11.181–4, 336–7; 13.1–9; 14.157–8; 15.4–12; 16.431. In 17.198–9 and 441 it is not clear whether Zeus finds himself on Ida or on Olympus. Poseidon in Il. 13.10–14 sits on the highest point of the island of Samothrace, in *Od.* 5.283 on a mountain in the territory of the Solymoi in Lycia. In Il. 20.145–52 the pro-Trojan gods sit on the hill of Callicolone in the Trojan plain.

10 For mountains and gods see Langdon (2000), for mountains in myth Buxton (1994) 81–96 and (2013) 9–32. Jason König (University of St Andrews) is preparing a monograph on mountains in classical literature and culture.

11 Cf. Zeus' epithet *παν(τ)όπτας* in A. Eu. 1045; *Supp.* 139; and S. OC 1085. The Homeric epithet *εὐρύοπα* may actually mean 'wide-sounding'.

12 Cf. the scholion ad 13.12: 'Samothrake is mentioned in the interests of plausibility (*πιθανῶς*), so that he [i.e. Poseidon] can look down on everything from above.'

milk, and the Abioi, most civilised of all men' (Il. 13.4–6),¹³ or Odysseus on his raft at the high sea (Od. 5.283–4).¹⁴

In addition to what they see, it is important that the gods watch human affairs. To them, the exertions of the heroes are a spectacle or show staged for their entertainment while they sit in their Olympian 'sky-boxes', sipping nectar and nibbling ambrosia. Of course they are occasionally touched emotionally when they see one of their favourites or even relatives killed, but these moments are only fleeting. And if the gods want, they can look away from the battle, as Zeus famously does in *Iliad* 13.1–9.¹⁵ Jasper Griffin well defined the effect of the gods' spectatorship in his *Homer on life and death*: 'The divine audience both exalts and humbles human action. It is exalted by being made the object of passionate concern of the gods, and at the same time it is shown as trivial¹⁶ in the sublime perspective of heaven' (1980: 201).

It has been argued that the divine perspective is the standard one in the Homeric epics, which the narrator and narratees are supposed to share,¹⁷ but this cannot be the case.¹⁸ Homer records the gods' divine gaze only intermittently, while the default focalization is that of the mortal narrator. The two perspectives are even explicitly contrasted at Il. 22.158–66, when Achilles chases Hector around Troy's walls. First, the narrator presents his mortal focalization, emphasising that Achilles did not chase Hector in a normal foot-race, but as a matter of life and death. Then he turns with a simile to the perspective of the gods, for whom the chase is a game: the two men are like single-hoofed horses that wheel round turning posts, running at full stretch to win a great prize set out in funeral games.

Although the Homeric gods are primarily spectators, their *oroskopia* often leads them to intervene in mortal affairs, either harmfully or helpfully. Zeus sees from Mount Ida that the Trojans are hard pressed, so he boosts their morale by thundering and flashing (Il. 8.75–6, 170–1), and sending a storm (12.252–5); Athena watches 'the draw' in the chase between Achilles and Hector, so she descends from Olympus to persuade the Trojan hero to make a last stand against his Greek opponent (Il. 22.187–277); and Poseidon observes that his arch-enemy Odysseus is about to arrive safely in Ithaca, so he wrecks his raft in a violent storm (Od. 5.284–381). The second association of divine *oroskopia*, after leisured

13 For this passage see Haubold (2014) 25–8.

14 The narrator occasionally himself takes up a panoramic position, most notably in Il. 2.459–68 (when he surveys the thousands of Greek warriors marching into the Scamandrian plain) and Od. 13.81–92 (when he pictures the Phaeacian ship at high sea that carries Odysseus home); in both passages comparisons (with birds and flowers in a meadow, with a flying bird, and with horses in a plain) advertise his bird's-eye view.

15 In general on gods averting their gaze in epic see Lovatt (2013) 71–7.

16 I think 'trivial' is too strong and 'tiny' might be a better word. Thus the gods make or listen to songs about mortals (e.g. in Od. 24.197–8 or h.Ap. 190–3), which they would not do if human action were trivial to them.

17 See e.g. Purves (2010) 24–64 (in the *Iliad* the action is seen as a landscape from above and we are dealing with a permanent immortal point of view) and Lovatt (2013) 29–78 (esp. 32, 33: 'we can think of the gaze of Zeus, along with the gaze of the narrator, as overseeing the whole narrative', 43, 71).

18 What follows is based on de Jong (2004 [1987]) 228–9 (and cf. 43, 98–90). Essentially the same position is taken up by Griffin (1980) 180–1 and Strauss Clay (2011) 3–8.

spectatorship, therefore is power; and Lovatt aptly speaks of the ‘controlling gaze of Zeus’, the ‘vertical gaze downwards from a position of power’, and the gods who are ‘suspended in the air’ but any moment may ‘swoop down’ to destroy their prey.¹⁹ Zeus’s panoramic view is both spatial and temporal: as Solon says, he ‘oversees the end/fulfilment (τέλος) of everything’ (13.17).²⁰

After Homer, the divine view from above became a staple of Greek and Latin poetry, and developed in two ways. The watching from Mount Olympus was largely replaced by a watching from heaven (οὐρανός, *aether*, *caelum*, *ruhes*), what I call *ouranoskopia*, while the watching from local mountains nearby the action, type Zeus watching from Ida, continues to be found.²¹ The following passage from Apollonius Rhodius combines *ouranoskopia* and local *oroskopia*:

στράπτε δ' ὑπ' ἡελίῳ φλογὶ εἴκελα νηὸς ἰούσης
 τεύχεα· μακρὰ δ' αἰὲν ἔλευκαίνοντο κέλευθοι,
 ἀτραπὸς ὧς χλοεροῖο διειδομένη πεδίοιο.
 πάντες δ' οὐρανόθεν λεῦσσον θεοὶ ἤματι κείνῳ
 νῆα καὶ ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος, οἳ τότε ἄριστοι
 πόντον ἐπιπλάεσκον. ἐπ' ἀκροτάτησι δὲ νύμφαι
 Πηλιάδες σκοπιῆσιν ἐθάμβεον, εἰσορώσασα 550
 ἔργον Ἀθηναίης Ἰτανίδος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοῦς
 ἥρωας χεῖρεσσιν ἐπικραδῶντας ἐρετιά·
 (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.544–52)

As the ship advanced, their armour shone in the sun like flame; the long wake showed ever white, like a path seen stretching through a green plain. On that day all the gods looked down from heaven upon the ship and the generation of demi-gods who sailed the sea, best of all men of that moment. On the highest peaks the nymphs of Pelion gazed in wonder at the work of Itonian Athena and at the heroes themselves whose arms plied the oars mightily.²²

19 Lovatt (2013) 34, 35, 41, 43, 49 and 61.

20 Later Aristotle in his *On the cosmos* 397b26–8 will also give a symbolic interpretation of Zeus’s position on the mountain: ‘God has his home in the highest and first place, and is called superior for this reason, since according to the poet [i.e. Homer] it is “on the loftiest crest”.’ It is clearly in connection with Zeus’s Olympian vantage point that narratologists will come to use the term ‘Olympian’ perspective to refer to the omniscience of a narrator; cf. e.g. Stanzel (1984 [1979]) 126 or Schmid (2008) 147. The criticism of the term by Sternberg (1985) 88 (‘it is curious, therefore, that literary scholars should refer to a superhuman viewpoint as an “Olympian narrator”, for the model of omniscient narration they have in mind is actually patterned on the Hebraic rather than the Homeric model of divinity’) strikes me as curious itself.

21 For a full discussion of the post-Homeric instances of *ouranoskopia* and local *oroskopia* see de Jong (forthcoming). The name ‘Olympus’ remains *en vogue* for the abode of the gods, even if it is no longer referring to the mountain with that name.

22 I quote the text of Fränkel (1961) and the translation (with modifications) of Hunter (1993a).

Apollonius highlights the crucial moment of the Argo's departure by providing two sets of spectators: the gods in heaven (*ouranoskopía*)²³ and nymphs on the nearby mountain of Pelion (local *oroskopía*). The divine watching forms part of a series of four steps that gradually brings us close to the Argonauts: (1) Eos beholds Pelion's peaks (519–20); 2) the gods watch from heaven (544–9a) and (3) nymphs from Pelion (549b–52), and finally (4) Chiron runs down from Pelion to the shore and waves goodbye to the heroes (553–8). While the nymphs focus on the heroes' well-muscled arms²⁴ and the ship (built by Athena from wood from 'their' Pelion, cf. 2.1187–8 and E. *Med.* 3–4), the gods in heaven have a truly panoramic view of the gleam of the heroes' armour and the ship's long wake (their wide viewing angle being 'advertised' by the comparison of the wake to a path in a plain).²⁵

The spatial panoramic view also has a temporal component, a phenomenon that we will observe regularly. There are no less than three markers that indicate that the Argo's departure is an event from the distant past: ἡματι κείνω, 'on that day (in the past)', ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος, 'the generation of demi-gods', and οἱ τότε ἄριστοι, 'best of all men of that moment'. All are also found in Homer,²⁶ but separately rather than in combination. They stress the time between narrator and events (cf. *παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν*, 1.1), but here they also single out this day as a special one in the *longue durée* of history.²⁷

Unusually, this combination of divine *ouranoskopía* and *oroskopía* does not lead to an intervention. Here the only relevant point is that the gods play their traditional role of spectators of a spectacle, and thereby elevate the heroic action. But usually divine watching, as in Homer, does form a prelude to action. Thus in Valerius Flaccus' version of the departure of the Argo the peaceful *ouranoskopía* of the gods in heaven is followed by Boreas' angry *oroskopía* from the local mountain Pangaeus in Thrace, which eventually leads to the ship confronting a heavy storm on its maiden voyage (Arg. 1.574–86).²⁸ Local *oroskopía* in particular portrays gods who position themselves near the scene of action in

23 The force of the use of the topos is even greater when we realise, with Hunter (1993b) 78 and Lovatt (2013) 48, that this is actually the only collective *ouranoskopía* scene in the narrative. The effect is, according to Lovatt, to 'mark the departure of the Argo as a sublime epic moment' but also to mislead the narratees in assuming that this poem 'will be more Iliadic than it actually is'.

24 Cf. Lovatt (2013) 78, who speaks of the heroes as 'erotic objects'.

25 Cf. Fränkel (1968) 85: 'das Bild ist wie von oben gesehen, und von oben nahmen es auch ... Götter und Nymphen in sich auf'.

26 For ἡματι κείνω cf. Il. 2.482 and 4.543 and discussion in de Jong (2004 [1987]) 234–6; for ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος cf. Il. 12.23; and for absolute τότε, 'then, at that moment in the past', cf. Il. 6.314 and 14.287 and de Jong (2004 [1987]) 44.

27 A close parallel is 3.919–23, where Jason's radiant appearance ἡματι κείνω of his encounter with Medea is singled out as unique in history: 'Never in the previous generation, neither among all the descendants of Zeus himself nor among all the heroes who were sprung from the blood of the other immortals, had there been such a man as on that day Jason was made by Zeus's wife.'

28 Note that we here have a similar combination of focalizations as in A.R. 1.544–52: the sailing out of the Argo is first focalized by the mothers of the Argonauts who look at the ship from the shore until they can no longer see it (494–7), then the all-seeing focalization of the gods from heaven takes over (498–573), and finally we move over to Boreas on Mount Pangaeus (574–5).

order to be able to intervene quickly: e.g. Opis, Diana's *custos*, 'sentinel', sits on a mountaintop near the battle between the Italians and the Trojans in order to avenge Camilla as soon as she has met her fated death (Verg. *Aen.* 11.836–40); and Diana seats herself on Mount Cithaeron in order to support her favourite Parthenopaeus in the battle of the Seven against Thebes (Stat. *Theb.* 9.678–725).

The gods' power is often expressed symbolically in their all-embracing panoramic view: e.g. Hera, wanting to prevent any place on earth from receiving Leto and allowing her to deliver, places Ares on Mount Haemus in Thrace to watch over 'the space of the continent' (πέδον ἠπείροιο, Call. *Hymn* 4.62) and Irus on Mount Mimas as 'look-out of the far-flung islands' (νησάων ἐτέρη σκοπὸς εὐρείων, 66).²⁹ An interesting case is Jupiter who, after the terrible storm with which Juno afflicted the Trojan fleet has ended, looks down (*despicens*) from heaven at 'the sail-winged sea, the spread-out lands, the shores and peoples far and wide' and finally fixes his eyes on (*defixit*) Libya, where the Trojans have landed (Verg. *Aen.* 1.223–6). James Reed writes: 'here is a viewpoint whence to rule and conceptualize ... The string of objects ... does not just record the view, but seems to instil the god's easy mastery, which the two *de*-prefixes ... also reinforce.'³⁰ I also draw attention to the presence of a 'universal expression' such as *mare ... terrasque* (1.224).³¹ Jupiter's divine panoramic view effectively contrasts with Aeneas' restricted mortal *oroskopía* some lines earlier: having climbed a peak on the shore he 'seeks a full view far and wide over the deep, if he should see a sign of storm-tossed Antheus and his Phrygian galleys or of Capys or the arms of Caicus on the high stern', but he does not see any ship (1.180–4). Jupiter's spatial panoramic view, again, has a temporal correlate in that the god will soon afterwards reveal to Venus his prophetic vista of Aeneas' fate, including the foundation of Rome (1.257–96). 'Jupiter's perspective is, naturally, a commanding one. It is the perspective of Fate, of Time, of history. He regards events from a height that shrinks human values', writes Denis Feeney. And this means that, as in the case of the *Iliad*, the narratees cannot simply adopt the divine perspective: 'In this dismaying poem, most readers want to find a vantage point of comfort, and it is therefore tempting to construct a "high" Stoic position in the portrayal of Jupiter, yet his participation in the narrative means that this is never easy.'³²

29 I quote the text and translation of Mair (1969). Another example is Jupiter sitting on a mountain called Sky's Pillar and gazing 'on the world far and wide' (*late terras*) in Ennius, *Euhemerus* 62–4.

30 Reed (2007) 176.

31 For a discussion of such universal expressions see Hardie (1986) 293–335.

32 Feeney (1991) 155. A similar combination of spatial and temporal panoramic vantage point is found e.g. in A.R. 2.541–8 (Athena's flight to Bosphorus is compared to a traveller who mentally sees his whole voyage home), on which see Thalmann (2011) 5–6 ('a synchronic view of space ... is used to describe a radical compression of time in order to give an idea of divine "time-space"') and Val. Fl. 1.531–73, where the divine *ouranoskopía* is followed by Jupiter's historical preview that marks the Argonauts' expedition as the start of the Iron age culminating in the dominion of Rome, on which see Feeney (1991) 319 ('the voyage of the *Argo* is, as it were, one volume of Jupiter's larger story of the universe'). In general for the correlation of spatial and temporal perspectives see de Jong and Nünlist (2014).

Thus where *teichoskopia* indicates anxious spectatorship and passivity, divine *oroskopia* symbolises leisured spectatorship and power. Let us now turn to mortal *oroskopia* and see which associations are found there.

Mortal *oroskopia*

In an age lacking the binocular, mortals could see a panorama only by climbing a mountain, hill or cliff, and this is what we see many characters do in Greek and Latin literature, e.g. Odysseus in *Od.* 10.145–50:

καὶ τότ' ἐγὼν ἐμὸν ἔγχος ἐλὼν καὶ φάσανον ὄξυ	145
καρπαλίμως παρὰ νηὸς ἀνήϊον ἐς περιωπὴν,	
εἷ πως ἔργα ἴδοιμι βροτῶν ἐνοπὴν τε πυθοίμην.	
ἔστην δὲ σκοπιὴν ἐς παιπαλόεσσαν ἀνελθὼν,	
καὶ μοι ἐείσατο καπνὸς ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης	
Κίρκης ἐν μεγάροισι διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην.	150

And then I [i.e. Odysseus] took my spear and sharp sword and quickly went up from my ship to a look-out point, hoping to see signs of human activity and to hear sounds. Climbing to a rocky point of observation I stood there, and got a sight of smoke rising from the wide-wayed earth through the dense forest around Circe's house.

or Aeneas in *Aen.* 1.419–31:

iamque ascendebant collem, qui plurimus urbi	
imminet adversasque aspectat desuper arces.	420
miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam,	
miratur portas strepitumque et strata viarum.	
instant ardentem Tyrii, pars ducere muros	
molirique arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa,	
pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco;	425
iura magistratusque legunt sanctumque senatum.	
hic portus alii effodiunt, hic alta theatri	
fundamenta locunt alii, immanisque columnas	
rupibus excidunt, scaenis decora alta futuris:	
qualis apes aestate nova per florea rura	430
exercet sub sole labor . . .	

And already they were climbing the hill that looms large over the city [i.e. Carthage] and looks down on the towers before him. Aeneas marvels at the massive buildings, mere huts once; marvels at the gates, the din and paved roads. Eagerly the Tyrians press on, some to build lengths of walls and labour at constructing a citadel, and roll up stones by hand; some to choose the site for a dwelling and enclose it with

a furrow. Laws and magistrates they ordain, and a honourable senate. Here some are digging harbours, there others lay the deep foundations of their theatre and hew out of the cliffs vast columns, lofty adornments for the stage to be. Even as bees in early summer, amid flowery fields, ply their task in sunshine ...³³

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' oroscopic position is emphatically marked twice (περιωπήν, σκοπήν), and his panoramic view is underscored both by the use of the epithet εὐροδείης, 'wide-wayed',³⁴ and the 'smoke' motif, since Homeric travellers typically see smoke when approaching a place.³⁵ When Odysseus reports his panoramic view to his companions, he even enlarges his scope and adds that he has seen how they have landed on an island 'ringed by limitless sea' (194–7). In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' oroskopia allows him an (envious) panoramic view of a city under construction,³⁶ the very thing he himself is fated to do too. The movement of his eyes over the scene is suggested by anaphora (miratur ... miratur, hic ... alii ... hic ... alii), while a realistic effect of perspective is created by the simile in which the Carthaginians are compared to bees: this is how they appear to Aeneas when he looks at them from a distance.³⁷

All mortals occasionally need to climb a hill or mountain to get a good view of their surroundings, but generals in particular require this kind of strategic position.³⁸ A complex example is Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 5.6–10, where two generals position themselves on hills so as to be able to keep an eye on each other's manoeuvres. It starts with the Spartan general Brasidas taking up position with some of his troops at Cerdylum, 'a high ground across the river, not far from Amphipolis, and from there all was visible (καὶ καταφαίνετο πάντα αὐτόθεν)', to observe the movements of his opponent, the Athenian general Cleon, who is in Eion. Another part of his troops Brasidas posts inside Amphipolis.

When his soldiers become impatient, Cleon marches out from Eion, 'in order to reconnoitre' (κατὰ θέαν), not to fight (he is waiting for reinforcements). Accordingly, he posts his troops on 'a steep hill in front of Amphipolis'. From there he 'surveyed

33 The text is that of Fairclough (1968), the translation is mine. Other examples of mortal oroskopia are: Il. 5.770–2; Od. 10.97–9; *Cypria* fr. 16 (ed. M. West (2003)); Pi. N. 10.61–3; S. Tr. 523–5; Catull. 64.126–7; Prop. 4.4.3–22; Verg. *Aen.* 1.180–6; 6.675–8; *Ov. Met.* 7.779–93; 8.695–702; *Luc.* 2.619–24; *Val. Fl.* 1.700–1; *Stat. Theb.* 2.529–32; 4.28–31; and *Heliod.* 1.1.1–4. A special subgroup is the oroskopia by herdsmen (often in similes): Il. 4.275–82; Verg. *Aen.* 2.304–8; *Sil.* 7.364–6; and *Q.S.* 1.62–72; 11.266–72.

34 The meaning of εὐροδείης is debated (whether from ἔδος or ὄδος), see LfgE s.v., but in both cases it suggests horizontal extensiveness.

35 See de Jong (2001) ad 1.166–7.

36 Of course Aeneas also looks very much with Roman eyes which mentally add things not visible (the institution of laws, magistrates and senate). Reed (2007) 87–8 discusses the passage in terms of 'ethnic assimilation'.

37 The bee simile, of course, has many more meanings, for which see Polleichtner (2005). That the optical effect of reduction was intended by Virgil may be gathered from the fact that when he makes Dido watch from a tower the Trojans preparing their ships for departure, he inserts an ant simile (4.401–11). For more instances of reduction and comparison of human beings with insects see the next two sections.

38 It is the perspective chosen in battle paintings from the fourteenth century onwards, see Schoch (2014), who speaks of 'die topographische Übersicht aus der Feldherrnperspektive' (234).

(ἐθεᾶτο) the marshy part of the Strymon and the situation of the city in respect to the surrounding Thracian country, and he thought that he could withdraw whenever he pleased without a battle; for no one was visible (οὐδὲ ἐφαίνετο ... οὐδεὶς) on the wall or was seen coming out by the gates, which were all closed'. Thucydides explicitly notes that, despite his elevated position, Cleon does not see Brasidas' troops within the city, while the absence of Cerdylium in his panoramic view (which includes only the Strymon and the city) perhaps suggests that he also fails to see Brasidas' troops on that hill.

But while Cleon's oroscopic view is imperfect, Brasidas' is excellent. As soon as he sees Cleon and his troops moving towards Amphipolis, he leads the rest of his troops inside Amphipolis and announces to his men that he will make a sudden attack with a small contingent: 'For I imagine that the enemy ascended the hill in contempt of us and because they could not have expected that anybody would come out for battle against them, and now, with broken ranks and intent upon reconnoitring (ἀτάκτως κατὰ θέαν τετροαμένους), are taking small account of us.' It appears that Brasidas has not only noted that Cleon had moved from Eion towards Amphipolis but also that he had taken up a position on a hill in front of the city. He guesses correctly that Cleon has taken up that position to reconnoitre (Brasidas' κατὰ θέαν echoes that of the narrator) but frames it in negative terms as a sign that the Athenians are not ready to fight: they are not in battle formation (ἀτάκτως) and, he later adds, are 'not prepared' (ἀπρόρασκευοι, 9.6) but 'relaxed' (ἐν τῷ ἀνεμμένῳ αὐτῶν τῆς γνώμης, 9.6).

After Brasidas' speech, Thucydides returns to Cleon and the Athenians: 'But he [i.e. Brasidas] had been seen when he came down from Cerdylium and sacrificed at the temple of Athena in the city, which is in full view from outside (ἐπιφανεῖ οὐση ἔξωθεν); and word is brought to Cleon (for he had gone ahead in order to reconnoitre, κατὰ τὴν θέαν) that the whole army of the enemy is visible in the city and that the feet of men and horses in great numbers are visible under the gates, giving the impression that they are about to sally.' Now the Athenians from their hill see Brasidas entering the city and even the feet of men and horses under the gates, a feat called by Hornblower (1996: ad 10.1) 'surprising ... without binoculars or telescope', but, tellingly, this bad news has to be reported to Cleon who had gone ahead 'to reconnoitre' but, again, had missed the mark (the third use of κατὰ τὴν θέαν in this passage, like the first instance, ironically points up his failure to see what he should see).

Thucydides uses the motif of *oroskopia* in this passage to symbolise the difference in strategic talent between Brasidas and Cleon: the former sees everything and correctly reads his opponent's mind, the latter does not see enough, or he sees it too late.³⁹

A slightly different spin is given to the *oroskopia* topos by Herodotus in connection with the Persian king Xerxes. He watches the battle of Thermopylae while sitting on a throne on the high mountain on the inland side of the pass (7.212.1; for the mountain, see 176) and the battle of Salamis while sitting 'at the foot of the hill opposite Salamis called Aegaleos' (8.90.4).⁴⁰ He is

³⁹ See analysis in Greenwood (2006) 26–30.

⁴⁰ In the case of Salamis, Herodotus echoes A. Pers. 466–7.

not so much watching as a general who needs to be able to react tactically to what happens on the battlefield, but as a spectator enjoying a game or as an arbiter (he has notes taken during the battle of Salamis so that he can reward the good commanders and punish the bad ones). His leisurely spectatorship markedly contrasts with the behaviour of the Greek commanders who themselves participate in the battle and even, in the case of Leonidas, die. It also implicitly aligns him with Zeus and the other gods on Olympus,⁴¹ a comparison which, like the many explicit comparisons of Xerxes with Zeus in the *Histories* (cf. 7.8.γ.2, 56.2, 212.1, 220.4),⁴² is not meant positively. It is one of Herodotus' strategies to expose the Persian king's hubris.⁴³

The *oroskopía* topos is again employed in a negative way, in a very different age and context, by Lucan in his *Bellum civile*. He makes Julius Caesar, upon his return to Rome from Gaul, catch his first sight of the city from a mountain:

excelsa **de rupe** procul iam **conspicit** urbem
Arctoi toto non visam tempore belli
miratusque **suae** sic fatur **moenia Romae**
(Lucan, *Bellum civile* 3.87–9)

At last from a high-up rock he [i.e. Caesar] already discerns the city from a distance, which he had not seen during all the time of his wars in the north, and marvelling at the walls of his Rome he speaks like this.⁴⁴

By having Caesar look at Rome from a mountain,⁴⁵ Lucan subtly reveals Caesar's aspirations for deification: 'Caesar is already acting like a divine figure before he arrives in Rome.'⁴⁶ The

41 The connection with a god is intertextually advertised when Herodotus says that Xerxes, startled by what he saw, 'thrice sprang up from his throne', an obvious echo of Hades doing the same in Il. 20.62 (admittedly, not on Olympus but in the underworld).

42 Van Rookhuizen (forthcoming) suggests 7.42 as another implicit example, when Xerxes leads his troops through territory at the foot of Ida (clearly to be associated with the Ida of Homer as is indicated by the use of the definite article τὴν Ἴδην ... λαβὼν ἐς ἀριστερὴν χεῖρα, '(the famous) Ida', and the description of the territory as τὴν Ἰλιάδα γῆν, an echo of the title of Homer's poem which Herodotus actually is the first (for us) to use: 2.116.2). He argues that this action should be seen in a negative light since camping for the night at the foot of Ida the Persians suffer from a storm which leads to the death of many: 'Herodotus may have implied that by hubristically taking the direct route through Zeus' private territory, Xerxes ruthlessly exposed his men to the anger of the supreme god of the Greeks.'

43 The use of the *oroskopía* motif in 7.44–6 is different: sitting on a 'lofty seat of white stone' which had been set up for him on a hill near Abydos, Xerxes 'looks down on his army and fleet' and 'seeing the whole Hellespont hidden by his ships and all the shores and plains of Abydos full with his men' he first declares himself happy but then starts weeping at the thought of the shortness of human life. De Bakker (2015) 97–8 convincingly argues that Herodotus undermines all instances of panoramic viewing by Xerxes.

44 The text is of Duff (1928), the translation is mine.

45 Mount Alba and Jupiter's temple thereon have just been mentioned, and although the 'high-up rock' probably is not the top of that mountain, the juxtaposition is suggestive.

46 Feeny (1991) 295–6, and cf. Henderson (1998) 198–9 ('Julius' Olympian speech from his epic vantage point will take further his sacrilegious translation into Jupiter tonans of Rome').

point is brought home both *intertextually* through the strong association of *oroskopia* with gods in epic in general and *intratextually*, since Jupiter had been described, by Caesar himself, in exactly the same oroscopic position earlier in the poem:

‘O magna qui **moenia prospicis** urbis
Tarpeia **de rupe**, Tonans, ...
et residens celsa Latiaris Iuppiter Alba
... fave coeptis’

(Lucan, *Bellum civile* 1.195–200)

‘O God of thunder, who from the Tarpeian rock looks out upon the walls of the great city, ... and Jupiter of Latium residing on sublime Alba ... favour what I have started.’

Verbal echoes (*de rupe, conspicit/prospicis* and *moenia*) connect the two passages closely.⁴⁷

If in the cases of Xerxes and Caesar the association of a general on a mountain with Zeus/Jupiter remains implicit, it is made explicitly in Appian, *Roman history* 8.71:

ὁ δὲ Σκιπίων ἐθεάτο τὴν μάχην ἀφ’ ὑψηλοῦ καθάπερ ἐκ θεάτρου. ἔλεγε τε πολλάκις ὕστερον, ἄγωσι συνενεχθεὶς ποικίλοις, οὐποτε ὧδε ἡσθῆναι· μόνον γὰρ ἔφην τόνδε τὸν πόνον ἄφροντις ἰδεῖν, μυριάδας ἀνδρῶν συνιούσας ἐς μάχην ἔνδεκα. ἔλεγε τε σεμνύων δύο πρὸ αὐτοῦ τὴν τοιάνδε θέαν ἰδεῖν ἐν τῷ Τρωϊκῷ πολέμῳ, τὸν Δία ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰδῆς καὶ τὸν Ποσειδῶνα ἐκ Σαμοθράκης.

Scipio witnessed this battle from a height, as if sitting in a theatre. He often said afterwards that he had witnessed various contests, but never enjoyed any other so much. For, he said, only this struggle had he seen at his ease, 110,000 men joining battle. He added with an air of solemnity that only two had watched such a spectacle before him: Zeus from Mount Ida, and Poseidon from Samothrace in the Trojan war.⁴⁸

Here a general, Scipio, is watching a battle in the Second Punic War like a spectator in a theatre (and of course we have to think now of a Roman amphitheatre which did host spectacular land- or sea-battles). He flags the intertextual relationship with the Homeric ‘ur’-intertext by referring to Zeus on Ida and Poseidon on Samothrace. Scipio could take this relaxed (ἄφροντις) position because the battle did not involve Romans, so his *oroskopia* has the ease and detachment of the gods.⁴⁹

47 In the intertextual reworking of Luc. 3.87–9 in Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.168–70 (*sed quis ab excelsis Troianae collibus Albae, | unde suae iuxta prospectat moenia Romae | proximus ille deus, ‘but who is this messenger from Trojan Alba’s lofty hills, whence that present god [i.e. Domitian] looks out upon the walls of his Rome close by’*), the mortal has become a god.

48 I quote the text and translation of White (1964).

49 Some other examples of *oroskopia* by generals are: Xen. *An.* 7.4.21–5 (Xenophon and his men see the sea for the first time in months while standing on the summit of Mount Theches); Liv. 22.14; Luc. 4.16–23; 7.647–53 (the spatial

A very special exploitation of *oroskopia* by a general involves Livy's presentation of Hannibal looking out from the Alps:

Hannibal in promunturio quodam, unde longe ac late prospectus erat, consistere iussis militibus Italiam ostentat subiectosque Alpinis montibus circumpadanos campos, moeniaque eos tum transcendere non Italiae modo sed etiam urbis Romanae; cetera plana, proclivia fore; uno aut summum altero proelio arcem et caput Italiae in manu ac potestate habituros. (Livy, *History of Rome* 21.35.6–9)

Hannibal ordered his men to halt on a certain spur which commanded a far and broad prospect, and pointing out Italy to them, and just under the Alps the plains about the Po, he told them that they were now scaling the walls not merely of Italy but of the city of Rome itself; the rest of the way would be level or downhill; and after one, or, at most, two battles, they would have in their hands and in their power the citadel and capital of Italy.⁵⁰

Hannibal is halfway through crossing the Alps and needs to lift the spirits of his men who are frightened by their height and wild inhabitants. He exploits the 'far and broad prospect' offered by the mountain view to show them how close they are to their destination, Rome. Of course they cannot literally see Rome, but he reduces the psychological distance by metaphorically presenting the Alps as 'the walls' of Rome.⁵¹

A case of *failed oroskopia* by a general is found in Liv. 40.21.2–22.5:

cupido eum ceperat in verticem Haemi montis ascendendi, quia volgatae opinioni crediderat Ponticum simul et Hadriaticum mare et Histrum amnem et Alpes conspici posse: subiecta oculis ea haud parvi sibi momenti futura ad cogitationem Romani belli . . . ut vero iugis appropinquabant, quod rarum in altis locis est, adeo omnia contacta nebula erant, ut haud secus quam nocturno itinere impedirentur. tertio demum die ad verticem perventum. nihil volgatae opinioni degressi inde detraxerunt, magis credo, ne vanitas itineris ludibrio esset, quam quod diversa inter se maria montesque et amnes ex uno loco conspici potuerint.

The desire had seized him [i.e. Philip] of climbing to the top of Mount Haemus, because he had accepted the popular belief that from there could be seen all at

panoramic view is complemented by a temporal one, in that Pompey foresees his own death); and Sil. *Pun.* 17.597–603.

50 Here and elsewhere I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of Foster (1919–59).

51 I have profited much from the analysis of this passage, part of a larger discussion of space in Livy's narration of Hannibal's march over the Alps, in Fabrizio (2015) 140–2. Livy's passage is intertextually reworked in Petron. *Sat.* 122.152–5 (as part of Eumolpus' poem on the civil war), where Caesar is made to look down at Italy while standing on the Alps (*summo de vertice montis*) and in Sil. *Pun.* 3.509–10, where Hannibal at the moment they start climbing the Alps says to his men that 'they are scaling the walls of Rome (*moenia Romae . . . conscendere*) and the lofty hill of Jupiter [= the Capitoline hill]'.

once the Pontic and the Adriatic seas, the Hister river [i.e. Danube] and the Alps. To have these spread out before his eyes would have, he thought, no small weight in determining his strategy in a war with Rome. [With great difficulty he ascends the mountain.] But when they approached the top, everything was so covered with fog, which is rare at great altitudes, that they were retarded just as if they were found marching by night. At last on the third day they reached the summit. When they had descended they said nothing to contradict the popular belief, more, I suppose, to prevent the futility of their journey from becoming a subject of ridicule than because the widely separated seas, mountains and rivers could really be seen from one spot.

This general ascends a mountain for a strategic and imperialistic outlook, but the panorama is obscured by fog. As Mary Jaeger (2007) convincingly argued, the fog symbolises Philip's fatal blindness in his desire to attack Rome, which will lead to the loss of his kingdom. By stating that fog at this altitude is rare Livy may well hint that it was sent by the gods, who are known to be angry at Philip (cf. 40.5.1, 6.14). It would be their punishment for his hubris in 'trying to achieve a position from which to share the omniscience of the gods' (Jaeger (2007) 402). It was this passage that inspired Petrarch to climb Mount Ventoux, as discussed above, but he conveniently forgot the fog ...⁵²

Panoramic view versus reduction in mortal oroskopia

As the passages from Livy show, high vantage points potentially allow mortals vast geographical panoramas (Italy or the Pontic and Adriatic seas, the Hister and Alps), comparable to that of Zeus who can see the faraway tribes of the Thracians, Mysians, Hippemolgoi and Abioi in *Iliad* 13.4–6. Herodotus places Darius on a headland of the Wandering Rocks and, making him scan the Black Sea, uses the king's oroscopic position as a convenient 'peg' on which to hang his own extensive description of that sea (4.85–6). And the geographer Strabo tells us explicitly how he climbed up the Acrocorinth in order to be able to describe its impressive view of mountains (Parnassus and Helicon, the Oneia mountains), sea (the Crissaeen gulf) and surrounding regions (Phocis, Boeotia, Megaris) (8.6.21).⁵³

An interesting case is the Argonauts' view from Mount Dindymum in Ap. Rh. *Arg.* 1.1112–16:⁵⁴

⁵² Another instance of failed oroskopia is Liv. 22.6.

⁵³ I owe this instance of oroskopia to Poiss (2014). His article argues that next to the common hodological principle that governs much geographical description in ancient literature, there are also instances of bird's-eye view descriptions. Other examples are Strabo 13.4.5 and D.C. 50.12.3–4, and see n. 56.

⁵⁴ For discussions see e.g. Williams (1991) 85–9 and Thalmann (2011) 3–7.

τοῖσι δὲ Μακριάδες σκοπιαὶ καὶ πᾶσα περαιή
 Ἰθρηκτικῆς ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἑαῖς προφαίνετ' ἰδέσθαι·
 φαίνετο δ' ἠέροεν στόμα Βοσπόρου ἠδὲ κολῶνας
 Μύσια· ἐκ δ' ἑτέρης ποταμοῦ ῥόος Αἰσῆπιου
 ἄστου τε καὶ πεδίου Νηπήϊον Ἀδρηστείας.

And to them the Macrian heights and the whole coastline of Thrace opposite were visible as if they held them in their hands; the misty entrance to the Bosphorus and the Mysian heights were visible too, and on the other side, the river Aesepus and the city and Nepeian plain of Adrasteia.

The Argonauts climb the mountain (a second time, cf. 985–8) in order to propitiate the goddess Rhea/Cybele who has a temple on its top. From this vantage point, they look to the north, east, south and west. This is the only time in the *Argonautica* that the Argonauts are allowed such a grand panoramic view.⁵⁵ For once during their long and dangerous journey, they have a clear view of their position (and so a grip on events). Thus, they will appease Rhea/Cybele, who at dawn will stop the opposing winds she had sent, and they will be able to row away from the island. The panoramic view also has a temporal aspect: they see landscapes that the story will soon show them visiting. Mysia will be the scene of the ensuing Hylas episode, and much of book 2 will be devoted to their passing of the dangerous Bosphorus.⁵⁶

Sometimes the panoramic view of mortals symbolises their power over what is seen, as in the case of divine oroskopia,⁵⁷ e.g.:

dumque suis victrix omnem de montibus orbem
 prospiciet domitum Martia Roma, legar.
 (Ovid, *Tristia* 3.7.51–2)

And as long as Martian Rome shall look out victorious upon the whole conquered world from its hills, I shall be read.

55 Usually the Argonauts are overwhelmed, frightened or disoriented by the landscapes they encounter; see Klooster (2012) 66–75.

56 Another important model for panoramic descriptions of geography is the literal bird's-eye perspective of someone flying, which we find e.g. in A.R. *Argon.* 3.164–6 (Eros); *Ov. Met.* 2.210–28 (Phaëthon); 2.708–31 (Mercury); 4.605–30 (Perseus); 5.346–408 (Pluto); 7.350–90 (Medea); 8.220–5 (Icarus); *Stat. Theb.* 2.1–88 (Mercury); and Eratosthenes, *Hermes* fr. 16. It is figuratively imitated in (parts of) Dionysius Periegetes, *Description of the known world*; see Lightfoot (2014) 120–31. The topic of the aerial perspective requires a separate discussion and I can only note some studies: Jacob (1984); Luck-Huyse (1997); and Pausch (2016).

57 Cf. Fehling (1974) 48–9 and Vout (2012) 214, who speak of 'territoriale Herrschaftsanspruch' and 'the imperial gaze'.

The personified city of Rome is said to ‘look out upon’ the world from its seven hills, and her power is made explicit in *victrix* and *omnem domitum orbem*. The spatial aspect of *oroskopia* is complemented by a temporal one, since the idiom ‘as long as X, so long Y’ (‘as long as Rome reigns the world, so long will Ovid’s poetry be read’) is typically used to express eternity.⁵⁸ Seneca notes that generals such as Marius, Pompey and Caesar built their villas near Baiae at the top of mountains because they believed it was more soldier-like ‘to look down from a lofty height upon lands spread far and wide below’ (Ep. 51.11).⁵⁹

The association of *oroskopia* with power over what is seen may be universal, since it is also found in the Old Testament (God shows Moses, just prior to his death, the promised land while standing on Mount Nebo: Deut. 3.34.1–4),⁶⁰ and the New Testament, the temptation of Jesus:

Πάλιν παραλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λίαν, καὶ δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ “Ταῦτά σοι πάντα δώσω ἔὰν πεσὼν προσκυνήσῃς μοι”. τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς “Ὑπάγε, Σατανᾶ: γέγραπται γάρ “Κύριον τὸν θεὸν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις.” (Matthew 4.8–10)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour and said to him: ‘All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me’. And Jesus said to him: ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”’⁶¹

No better place for the devil to tempt Jesus than atop a mountain, which allows him to see with his own eyes ‘all the kingdoms of the world’ that the devil promises him.

While mortals may see far and wide from a mountain, some authors, interestingly, also pay attention to the phenomenon of reduction, the optical law that more distant objects appear smaller. We already came across one example in Virgil’s simile of the bees, representing the Carthaginians from Aeneas’ *oroskopos* perspective. I would suggest that the detail ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἑαῖς, ‘as if they held them in their hands’, in the panoramic view of the Argonauts from Mount Dindymon in Ap. Rh. Arg. 1.1113 is meant to convey the same

58 Cf. e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3.30.7–9 (‘I shall continue to grow, fresh with the praise of posterity, as long as the priest climbs the Capitol with the silent virgin’) with Nisbet and Rudd (2004) ad loc. for more examples.

59 For the imperialistic view from the hills of Rome or the Roman villa’s set on these or other hills see Fehling (1974) 54–5; Reed (2007) 176–9, and esp. Vout (2012) 83–94 and 188–226. A possible Greek example is Ar. Eq. 168–75, where the sausage seller is made to look from a table placed on a platform at the territory which an oracle promises will be his; cf. Sommerstein (1981) ad 170: ‘The whole passage is probably a parody of some scene or story in which a man was taken to a mountain-top for a panoramic view of the lands over which he was destined to rule.’

60 For a discussion of this and other mountain passages in the Old Testament see Hieke (2013).

61 Cf. Luke 4.5 and Revelation 21 (Johannes, brought by angels to a very high mountain, is given a view of Jerusalem). Commentators, e.g. Davies and Allison (1988), note the connection between the various instances of *oroskopia* in both Old and New Testament but do not seem aware of the topos in classical literature.

sensation. Another instance is found in the course of Martial's description of the panoramic view from a friend's villa on the Janiculum hill in Rome. From one side one can see the hills of Rome, Mount Alba and Tusculum (13–17), from the other the Flaminian and Salarian Ways and river Tiber:

Flaminiae Salariaeque
gestator patet essedo tacente,
ne blando rota sit molesta somno, 20
quem nec rumpere nauticum celeuma
nec clamor valet helciariorum,
cum sit tam prope Mulvius sacrumque
lapsae per Tiberim volent carinae.

(Martial 4.64.18–24)

The traveller on the Flaminian and Salarian Way is in view; but his carriage makes no sound, lest the wheel disturb soothing slumber that neither boatswain's call nor bargee's shout is strong enough to interrupt, even though Mulvius be so near and keels glide rapidly down sacred Tiber.⁶²

The reduction here effects that one can *see* traveller, boatswain or bargee without having to *hear* the disturbing noise of their carriage, call or shout. This situation comes close to the Epicurean ideal of ataraxy or tranquility, a life free of mental anxiety which this philosopher, interestingly in view of the divine association of *oroskopia*, deems equal to the life of the gods.⁶³

The effect of reduction is both adhered to and subverted at the same time by Lucian in his *Charon*. Charon, ferryman of the dead, leaves the underworld to see how people live and asks Hermes to be his guide. Hermes wants him to see as much as possible in little time and on his suggestion they pile up four famous mountains (Ossa, Pelion, Oeta and Parnassus). Looking down from this tower of mountains Charon has a panoramic view, but with the inevitable reduction this entails:

(ΧΑΡΩΝ) ὀρώ γῆν πολλὴν καὶ λίμνην τινὰ μεγάλην περιρρέουσαν καὶ ὄρη καὶ ποταμούς τοῦ Κῶκυτοῦ καὶ Πυριφλεγέθοντος μείζονας καὶ ἀνθρώπους πάνυ μικροὺς καὶ τινὰς φωλεοὺς αὐτῶν. (ΕΡΜΗΣ) πόλεις ἐκεῖναι εἰσιν οὗς φωλεοὺς εἶναι νομίζεις. (ΧΑΡΩΝ) οἶσθα οὖν, ὦ Ἑρμῆ, ὡς οὐδὲν ἡμῖν πέπρακται, ἀλλὰ μάτην τὸν Παρνασσὸν αὐτῇ Κασταλίᾳ καὶ τὴν Οἶτην καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὄρη μετεκινήσαμεν; (ΕΡΜΗΣ) ὅτι τί; (ΧΑΡΩΝ) οὐδὲν ἀκριβὲς ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ

62 I quote the text and translation of Shackleton Bailey (1993).

63 Cf. Moreno Soldevila (2006) 435. There may even be a hint of Olympus in the description of the hill on which the villa is situated, since its 'smooth summit . . . enjoys a cloudless sky', which recalls Od. 6.44–5 (ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἶθρη | πέπαται ἀννέφελος).

ὕψηλοῦ ὄρω· ἐδεόμην δὲ οὐ πόλεις καὶ ὄρη αὐτὸ μόνον ὥσπερ ἐν γραφαῖς ὄραν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους αὐτοὺς καὶ ἃ πράττουσι καὶ οἷα λέγουσιν. (Lucian, Charon 6)

(Charon) I see a vast stretch of land with a great lagoon encircling it, mountains, rivers bigger than Cocytus and Pyriphlegethon, tiny little men, and things which look like their dens. (Hermes) Those things which you take to be their dens, are cities. (Ch.) Do you know, Hermes, we haven't accomplished anything, but have moved Mount Parnassus, Castaly and all, Mount Oeta and the rest of them for nothing. (Her.) Why? (Ch.) I can't see anything in detail from up here. What I wanted was not just to look at cities and mountains like in a painting, but to observe men themselves, what they do and say.⁶⁴

The reduction becomes clear from Charon taking the cities of men to be dens and is further advertised through the comparison of what he sees to a painting (ὥσπερ ἐν γραφαῖς).⁶⁵

After Hermes gives Charon a charm to make him sharp-sighted, a series of vignettes of famous figures from history follow (7–14), the format of question–answer obviously imitating Homer's *teichoskopia*. Now Charon can both see and hear men as if close by, and the reduction is thus replaced by magical enlargement.⁶⁶ After a while Hermes and Charon regain their reduced view, which makes the men on earth look like insects (15):

⁶⁴ Here and elsewhere I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of Harmon (1968).

⁶⁵ For the comparison with a painting cf. Plin. Ep. 5.6.13, in the course of a description of his Tuscan villa to a friend: *magnam capies voluptatem, si hunc regionis situm ex monte prospexeris, neque enim terras tibi, sed formam aliquam ad eximiam pulchritudinem pictam videris cernere*, 'You would take great pleasure to look down on the countryside from the mountain, for you would seem to look not at the land but at some painted image of the highest beauty.' It is facilitated of course by landscape painting in Roman art, where we often find a bird's-eye view; see Leach (1988). The comparison will become a topos: cf. e.g. Calceolarus, *Iter Baldi civitatis Veronae montis* 927: 'Even towns and cities can be seen, which appear to the eyes of the viewers as clearly as if they were being viewed as depicted on some map (*tabella*) or, rather, canvas (*linleo*), by the hands of a Dutch painter with all his skill and charm' (and see Barton (2017) 67–113); Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* 3.5: Emma Bovary looks at Rouen from Saint Catherine Hills: 'Ainsi vu d'en haut, le paysage tout entier avait l'air immobile comme une peinture'; or Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, chapter 2: 'The traveller from the coast, who, after plodding northward for a score of miles over calcareous downs and corn-lands, suddenly reaches the verge of one of these escarpments, is surprised and delighted to behold, extended like a map beneath him, a country differing absolutely from that which he has passed through.'

⁶⁶ The same combination is found in Lucian's *Icaromenippus* or the sky-man 11 (vantage point the moon): on the one hand a panoramic view ('and perching on the moon, I rested myself, looking down on the earth from on high and like Homer's Zeus, now observing the land of the horse-tending Thracians, now the land of the Mysians, and presently, if I liked, Greece, Persia and India; and from all this I got my fill of kaleidoscopic pleasure'), on the other hand reduction ('In the first place, imagine that the earth you see is very small, far less than the moon, I mean, so that when I suddenly peered down I was long uncertain where the big mountain and the great sea were, and if I had not spied the Colossus of Rhodes and the lighthouse on Pharos, I vow I shouldn't have known the earth at all'); and *Veræ historiae* 1.26 (a looking glass on the moon allows to hear all that is said on earth and to see every city and country as if standing over it). It also seems to be at play in Amm. Marc. *Res gestae* 18.6.20–2, where a general stands on a mountain 'from which, if one's eyes did not fail, one could see even the most minute object fifty miles off but at the same time is able to discern the clothing and wrinkles of the leader of the enemy' (I thank Daan den Hengst for pointing out this passage to me.) For a discussion of the combination of reduced and enlarged perspective see Jacob (1984) 154–6.

(ΧΑΡΩΝ) ὁρῶ ποικίλην τινὰ τὴν διατριβὴν καὶ μεστὸν ταραχῆς τὸν βίον καὶ τὰς πόλεις γε αὐτῶν ἐοικυίας τοῖς σμήνεσιν, ἐν οἷς ἅπας μὲν ἴδιόν τι κέντρον ἔχει καὶ τὸν πλησίον κεντεῖ, ὀλίγοι δὲ τινες ὥσπερ σφήκες ἄγουσι καὶ φέρουσι τὸ ὑποδεέστερον.

(Charon) I see that their activities are varied and their life full of turmoil, and that their cities resemble hives, in which everyone has a sting of his own and stings his neighbour, while some few, like wasps, harry and plunder the meaner sort.

This ‘Ameisen-Perspektive’, as von Koppenfels (2007, 33) calls it, of course suits well Lucian’s satirical aims and leads to a (quasi-)philosophical discussion of the futility of human ambitions in view of the fickleness of fate and man’s inevitable mortality.⁶⁷ From a passage such as this, it is only a small step to the metaphorical use of the *oroskopia* motif.

Metaphorical *oroskopia*

The reduction of the human senses when looking down from a mountain is exploited by Statius in his description of the mind of his Epicurean friend Pollius Felix who inhabits a villa on a promontory in Sorrento:

non ambigui fasces, non mobile vulgus,
non leges, non castra terent, qui pectore magno
spemque metumque domas voto sublimior omni, 125
exemptus Fatis indignantemque refellens
Fortunam; dubio quem non in turbine rerum
deprendet suprema dies, sed abire paratum
ac plenum vita. nos, vilis turba, caducis
deservire bonis semperque optare parati, 130
spargimur in casus: celsa tu mentis ab arce
despicias errantes humanaque gaudia rides.

(Statius, *Silvae* 2.2.123–32)

[You] shall not be chafed by the dubious rods, the fickle populace, the laws, the armies; for your great soul masters hope and fear, loftier than any desire, immune from the Fates and rebuffing indignant Fortune. Your final day shall not find you caught in the doubtful whirl of events, but ready to go, fed full with life. We, worthless crew, ever ready to serve perishable blessings, ever hoping for more, are scattered to the winds of chance; whereas you from your mind’s high citadel look down upon our wanderings and laugh at human joys.⁶⁸

67 Cf. von Koppenfels (2007) 33: ‘Die Menschheit bei ihren mehr oder minder heroischen Verrichtungen erscheint dem Blick von oben als Gewimmel sinnlos zappelnder und aufeinander einstechender Insekten.’

68 I quote the text and translation of Shackleton Bailey (2015).

The elevation of Pollius' villa and the reduction of its view on the world (of politics, war and lawsuits) below symbolise his Epicurean friend's tranquillity: his mind is a high citadel from which he can look down upon the idle ambitions and exertions of other mortals. As van Dam notes, the idea of the 'arx as symbol for a refuge from the world's follies is old and popular since Epicurus himself.⁶⁹ Indeed, I would like to suggest that Statius combines the mountain as the typical vantage point of gods (which enables them to watch human affairs with detachment and as a mere spectacle) and the mountain of virtue (which only wise men can climb, and only with much effort).⁷⁰

This same combination is found in two other passages. The first is Silius Italicus, *Punica* 15.101–7:

(Virtus is addressing Scipio)
 'casta mihi domus et celso stant colle penates,
 ardua saxoso perducit semita clivo.
 asper principio – neque enim mihi fallere mos est –
 prosequitur labor: annitendum intrare volenti,
 nec bona censendum, quae Fors infida dedisse 105
 atque eadem rapuisse valet. mox celsus ab alto
 infra te cernes hominum genus.'

'My household is pure; my dwelling is set on a lofty hill, and a steep track leads there by a rocky ascent. Hard at first – it is not my way to hold out false hopes – is the toil you must endure. If you seek to enter, you must exert yourself; and you must not reckon as good those things which fickle Fortune can give and can also take away. Soon you will gain the height and look down upon mankind below you.'⁷¹

The second is Lucian, *Hermotimus* 5 (a dialogue featuring the Stoic philosopher Hermotimus):

(ΕΡΜΟΤΙΜΟΣ) ὅσοι δ' ἂν εἰς τέλος διακαρτερήσωσιν οὗτοι πρὸς τὸ ἄκρον ἀφικνοῦνται καὶ τὸ ἀπ' ἐκείνου εὐδαιμονοῦσιν θαυμάσιόν τινα βίον τὸν λοιπὸν βιοῦντες, οἷον μύρμηκας ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕψους ἐπισκοποῦντές τινας τοὺς ἄλλους. (ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ) παπαί, ὦ Ἐρμότιμε, ἠλίκοις ἡμᾶς ἀποφαίνεις οὐδὲ κατὰ τοὺς Πηγμαίους ἐκείνους, ἀλλὰ χαμαιπετεῖς παντάπασιν ἐν χρῶ τῆς γῆς. εἰκότως – ὑψηλὰ γὰρ ἦδη φρονεῖς καὶ ἄνωθεν· ἡμεῖς δὲ ὁ συρφετὸς καὶ ὅσοι χαμαὶ ἐρχόμενοι ἐσμέν, μετὰ τῶν θεῶν καὶ ὑμᾶς προσευξόμεθα ὑπερνεφέλους γενομένους καὶ ἀνελθόντας οἱ πάλαι σπεύδετε.

⁶⁹ Van Dam (1984) ad 2.129–32.

⁷⁰ The metaphorical or allegorical depiction of *aretē*/virtue as sitting on a mountain top (and hence the road to her being long, steep and hard) goes back to Hesiod's *Works and days* 289–92. For a discussion of this depiction in classical literature see e.g. Maciver (2012) 66–86.

⁷¹ I quote the text and translation of Duff (1918). Another example is Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2.5.

(*Hermotimus*) But only as many as endure to the end arrive at the top, and from then on are happy having a wonderful time for the rest of their life, from their heights seeing the rest of mankind as ants. (*Lyaius*) Goodness, *Hermotimus*! How small you make us, not even as big as pygmies! Utter groundlings crawling over the earth's surface. It's not surprising – your mind is always away up above; and we, the whole trashy lot of us ground-crawlers, will pray to you along with the gods, when you get above the clouds and reach the heights which you have been working hard to reach for so long.⁷²

Those who reach the summit of virtue can look down, both literally and figuratively, at normal mortals and their idle hopes and ambitions like insects.

These three passages of metaphorical *oroskopia* belong to the larger category of what von Koppenfels calls *Kataskopie*,⁷³ the looking down upon the world from any elevated position. One example is the opening of the second book of Lucretius, *De rerum natura*. Here the poet sings the praise of the possession of 'lofty sanctuaries serene (*edita templa serena*), well fortified by the teachings of the wise, whence you may look down upon (*despicere*) others and behold them all astray, wandering abroad and seeking the path of life: – the strife of wits, the fight for precedence, all labouring night and day with surpassing toil to mount upon the pinnacle of riches and to lay hold on power' (2.7–13).⁷⁴ Mountains, thus, are not the only locus for reflection on human existence but they certainly are a very popular one, and they remain so in later literature.⁷⁵

I end with two passages where metaphorical *oroskopia* has a somewhat different force.

ἡ γὰρ δὴ πρώτη λόγου δύναμιν ἐξελέγξασα οὐκ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἐφικνουμένην ἤδε ἐστί· περὶ ἧς μὴ ὅτι εἰπεῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἔστιν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἰδεῖν ἀξίως αὐτήν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀληθῶς Ἄργου τινὸς πανόπτου, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ κατέχοντος αὐτὴν πανόπτου θεοῦ δεῖ. τίς γὰρ ἂν τοσάδε ὄρων κορυφὰς κατελιμμένας, ἢ πεδίον νομοῦς ἐκπεπολισμένους, ἢ γῆν τοσῆνδε εἰς μίαν πόλεωσ ὄνομα συνηγμένην, εἶτα ἀκριβῶς καταθεάσαιτο ἀπὸ ποίας τοιαύτης σκοπιᾶς; (*Aelius Aristides, Roman oration 16.1*)

This city is the first to have exposed the power of oratory as not entirely sufficient. Far from being able to speak properly about it, it is not even possible to view it properly,

72 I quote the text and translation of Kilburn (1959).

73 Von Koppenfels (2007) 31–66; he also discusses *Kataskopie* in post-classical authors such as Boethius, *Consolatio*, Dante, *Divina commedia*, or Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*.

74 I quote the translation of Rouse (1924). Other examples: Verg. *Ciris* 14–17 (looking down from the topmost citadels of Wisdom at the errors and lowly cares of mankind); Ov. *Met.* 15.147–51 (looking down from the shoulders of Atlas); Sen. *Nat.* 1.5–10 (looking down upon the earth from above, one says: 'Is this that pinpoint which is divided by sword and fire among so many nations?'); Ep. 82.5; and Cic. *Rep.* 6.16 (looking down from heaven Scipio notes that 'the earth itself seemed to me so small that I was scornful of our empire, which covers only a single point, as it were, upon its surface').

75 See e.g. Ireton and Schaumann (2012) on mountains in German literature, with the speaking title 'Heights of reflection'.

but truly some all-seeing Argus is required, or rather the all-seeing god who holds the city. For who upon viewing so many occupied hills or the urbanized pastures of the plains, or a territory so extensive brought together into the name of a single city, could accurately observe all these things? Where would be his look-out point?⁷⁶

Aristides here uses the *oroskopía* motif to present a novel variant of the common ‘*aporia*’ motif (there is so much to tell that a speaker does not know where to begin). An orator would need not only the superhuman eyesight of ‘all-seeing’ gods like Argus and Jupiter but also their elevated position (such as that of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill, who is clearly evoked by the ‘all-seeing god who holds the city’) in order to be able to view and describe a city as magnificent as Rome.

καὶ ὅλως ἐοικέτω τότε τῷ τοῦ Ὀμήρου Διὶ ἄρτι μὲν τὴν τῶν ἵπποπόλων Θρηκῶν γῆν ὀρῶντι, ἄρτι δὲ τὴν Μυσῶν – κατὰ ταυτὰ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ἄρτι μὲν τὰ Ῥωμαίων ἴδια ὀράτω καὶ δηλοῦτω ἡμῖν οἷα ἐφαίνετο αὐτῷ ἀφ’ ὑψηλοῦ ὀρῶντι, ἄρτι δὲ τὰ Περσῶν, εἴτ’ ἀμφοτέρω εἰ μάχονται . . . ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἀναμιχθῶσι, κοινὴ ἔστω ἡ θεά, καὶ ζυγοστατεῖτω τότε ὡσπερ ἐν τρυάνῃ τὰ γιγνόμενα καὶ συνδιωκέτω καὶ συμφευγέτω. (Lucian, *How to write history* 49)

In brief let him be then like Homer’s Zeus, looking now at the land of the horse-rearing Thracians, now at the Mysians’ country – in the same way let him look now at the Roman side in particular and tell us how he saw it from on high, now at the Persian side, then at both sides when they have joined battle . . . When the battle is joined he should look at both sides and weigh the events as it were in a balance, joining in both pursuit and flight.⁷⁷

In this passage Lucian describes a historian’s objectivity and impartiality in terms of Zeus’s balanced view from Ida, which moves from one party to another.⁷⁸ The Homeric Zeus holding his golden scales (cf. *Il.* 8.69–72 and 22.208–13) is the embodiment of impartiality, and this image is clearly alluded to by Lucian in the comparison of the historian weighing the events ‘as it were in a balance’.

Conclusion

I have argued for the existence of the topos of *oroskopía*, next to the well-known topos of *teichoskopía*. Gods and mortals are positioned on mountains to have an overview. This view from above symbolises power (in the case of the gods) or an attempt at control or

⁷⁶ I quote the translation of Behr (1981).

⁷⁷ I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of Kilburn (1959).

⁷⁸ Lucian liked the passage in *Il.* 13.3–6 where Zeus looks at the Thracians and Mysians, since he alludes to it again in *Icaromenippus* 11, quoted in n. 66. Both the stress on objectivity and the detachment of the historian in this passage are typical of Lucian’s conception of historiography; see Free (2015), esp. the summary on pp. 255–7.

desire for power (in the case of mortals). It may also suggest an agreeable and relaxed spectatorship with no active involvement in the events watched, which may metaphorically morph into a historian's objectivity or a philosopher's emotional tranquillity. It is often both spatial and temporal, gods looking into the future or mortals looking back on their life. The latter is exactly what Petrarch does when sitting on Mont Ventoux:

Then a new idea took possession of me, and I shifted my thoughts to a consideration of time rather than place. 'To-day it is ten years since, having completed your youthful studies, you left Bologna. Eternal God! In the name of immutable wisdom, think what alterations in your character this intervening period has beheld!' [emphasis added]

When I mentioned Petrarch in my introduction, I noted that his *oroskopia* certainly does not mark the end of the history of this topos. We need only think of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, from which the inhabitants look down on (and philosophise) about the 'Flatland' below.⁷⁹ Another instance is found in a novel by Winfried Sebald, published in 1992:

... Montrond, von dessen Gipfel sie eine Ewigkeit auf die um ein Vielfaches verkleinert wirkende, wie für eine Spielzeugetisenbahn gebaute Genfer Seelandschaft hinabgeblickt hätten. Diese Winzigkeiten einerseits und zum anderen das sanft auftürmende Massiv des Montblanc, die in der Ferne fast verschimmernden Glaciers de la Vanoise und das den halben Horizont einnehmende Alpenpanorama hatten ihr zum erstenmal in ihrem Leben ein Gefühl vermittelt für die Widersprüchlichen Dimensionen unserer Sehnsucht. (W. G. Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten* 67–8)

Here we meet once more with the reduction ('the toy train'), the perspective of ants ('the futilities') and the resulting reflections on the past ('for the first time in their life'). To discuss this later development of the topos would require a separate study, which I leave to the modern language colleagues. Where classical literature is concerned, the view from the mountain is a remarkably wide-spread, powerful and versatile image that is employed to give expression to important aspects of man's understanding of himself, the gods, and his world.⁸⁰

79 Another example is found in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, book 1, chapter 18, where Don Quixote climbs a hillock to see the flocks of sheep which he takes to be armies.

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