ΦΑΙΔΙΜΟΣ ΕΚΤΩΡ
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A Forgotten Piece of the Theban Saga?
Reassessing Hec. fr. 33 *EGM*

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Abstract This paper offers a fresh discussion of Hecataeus of Miletus' fr. 33 *EGM*, usually dismissed for its opaqueness. The reference to the seer Amphiaraus, who, according to Aelian, slept away his watch and nearly suffered the consequence of his negligence, is obscure, but has sometimes been interpreted as being a lost piece of the Theban saga. This reconstruction, however, is not the only one possible: as the story of the seer Evenius in Herodotus shows, this fragment might come from an account about Amphiaraus' initiation to the prophetic art.

Keywords Hecataeus of Miletus. Aelian. Amphiaraus. Theban saga. Evenius.

1 Introduction

Hecataeus of Miletus (end of 6th/beginning of 5th cent. BCE) earned a reputation for his confrontational temperament in the landscape of myth-telling. This is precisely how he describes his literary mission in the opening of his *Genealogies* (fr. 1 *EGM*): Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν. (Hecataeus of Miletus thus announces: I write these things, as they seem to me to be true. That is because the stories of the Greeks are many and they

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make me laugh, as they appear to me.)[1] However, despite this self-promotional move, he did not succeed in imposing his own truth and a staggering variety of myths kept on flourishing. Ironically, the extant evidence ascribed to him often shows unexpected treatments of the mythical subject as we know it: his accounts failed to exert the influence on the tradition he hoped for and do not appear to our readers' eyes as true, as he wished, but mostly as peculiar. For example, Deucalion's sons were Pronous, Orestheus, and Marathonius in fr. 13 *EGM*; Egypt had not even twenty children in fr. 19; Geryon's cattle were located in the north of Greece in fr. 26, and so forth. Herodotus' well-known animosity in proving him wrong, however, implicitly reveals that Hecataeus was hailed as an authority to be thus refuted.[2]

This paper investigates a fragment ascribed to Hecataeus, usually dismissed for its obscureness. The blatant difficulties in commenting on this text derive not only from its current textual shape, but also from the eccentricities of the story: nothing similar is attested anywhere else. The discussion is articulated as follows. The first paragraph provides the text with its translation, the second one reviews the only hypothesis that has been made so far to contextualise the story, and the last one discusses alternative interpretations that tie in better with the passage. This investigation will perhaps shed only flickering light on the passage, but, all in all, it raises salutary questions about the transmission of early Greek prose-writers in the Imperial age and, consequently, about the limits of our inquiry.

2 Amphiaraus' Watch and its Mysterious Consequences

The source of the under-analysis passage is the Roman-born rhetorician Claudius Aelianus (end of the 2nd/beginning of the 3rd cent. AD), who became famous in Severan Rome for mastering and writing in Attic Greek. Among his outputs, one finds a miscellaneous work, *De natura animalium* (*NA*), which is the 'cover-text' for the under-analysis fragment.[3] Throughout this work, Aelian grants significant space to natural curiosities and wonders about Egypt and India; as a result, the reader probably does not find this text too distant from paradoxography proper (Cameron 2004, 158). As far as India is con-

1 For a thorough discussion of the fragment, see Andolfi 2018, 79-91 with further bibliography.

2 On Hecataeus' role as Herodotus' predecessor much ink has been spilled, since some scholars believed the former's credit and prestige to be perhaps unearned: see West 1991; Armayor 2004; Condilo 2017, 242-8; Clarke 2018, 5-21, with reference to further modern literature on the subject.

3 This most useful terminology is borrowed by Schepens 1997, where "cover-text" stands for "the authors who quote" earlier writers.

cerned, he devotes much space to the marvellous elephants, which, according to him, were especially suited to acting as watchers because they were sleepless.[4] With their tireless watch Aelian contrasts an episode involving a Greek character, the seer Amphiaraus, where the guard was not immune to sleep:

> Ael. *NA* 13.22 (p. 326 1-9 García-Valdés; Llera Fueyo; Rodríguez-Noriega) unde *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 1.1 (2.128 p. 69.16 Lambros) = Hecataei Milesii frg. 33 *EGM*.
>
> τέσσαρες δὲ καὶ εἴκοσι τῷ βασιλεῖ [sc. τῷ Ἰνδῶν] φρουροὶ παραμένουσιν ἐλέφαντες ἐκ διαδοχῆς, ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ φύλακες οἱ λοιποί, καὶ αὐτοῖς παίδευμα τὴν φρουρὰν οὐ κατανυστάζειν· διδάσκονται γάρ τοι σοφίᾳ τινὶ Ἰνδικῇ καὶ τοῦτο. **καὶ λέγει μὲν Ἑκαταῖος ὁ Μιλήσιος Ἀμφιάρεων τὸν Οἰκλέους κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακὴν καὶ ὀλίγου παθεῖν †ὅσα λέγει†**. οὗτοι δὲ ἄρα ἄγρυπνοι καὶ ὕπνῳ μὴ ἡττώμενοι, πιστότατοι τῶν ἐκεῖθι φυλάκων μετά γε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰσίν.
>
> 3. κατανυστάζειν Lambros (seq. Fowler) : κατανυστάζουσι codd. Ael.; κατανυστάξαι Müller, <ἔχειν> φ. οὐ κατανυστάζουσι Hercher (seq. Jacoby) 5. κατακοιμίσαι codd. Ael.: κατακοιμῆσαι Ecloga 6. {ὀλίγου} Hercher; ὀλίγου παθεῖν ὅσα <τὸν Ῥῆσον Ὅμηρος> λέγει Weil; in ὀλίγου latere τὸν ἐλέφαντα, τὸν βασιλέα, vel regis nomen dubit. coni. Fowler 7. ὕπνῳ codd. Ael.: ὕπνου Reiske (seq. Fowler)
>
> Twenty-four elephants guard over the (Indian) king one after the other, like all the other guards, and they are instructed not to sleep through their watch; for they have been taught also this by Indian wisdom. **And Hecataeus of Miletus says that Amphiaraus, Oicles' son, slept away his watch and nearly suffered what (he?) narrates**. By contrast, those are wakeful and not overcome by sleep, and they are the most trustworthy among all the guards there, of course after men.[5]

The king of India can count on the prodigious skills of his elephants: those animals are capable of understanding human language, Aelian says, thanks to a mysterious gift of nature, so one elephant is taught to bow down before the King when he administers justice and to perform warlike motions. Moreover, twenty-four elephants act as the King's bodyguards after being instructed on how not to sleep through their watch. At this point one finds an elliptical reference to

4 For India as a land of marvels in the *NA*, see discussion in Smith 2014, 165-78.

5 Text and apparatus are based on modern editions. Translations are by the Author.

Hecataeus and to Amphiaraus, which is not of easy contextualisation since the myth Aelian alludes to is unknown to us. [6]

To complicate matters more, the verb κατακοιμίσαι could either be transitive ('to lull to sleep') or intransitive ('to sleep'), and scholars are often unsure which one to adopt.[7] However, as Aelian's consistent usage within the *NA* proves (1.15; 3.13), in this case κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακήν cannot but mean 'to sleep through his watch':

> … καὶ συνθλάσας αὐτὴν ἀπαλλάττεται, προτιμότερον τροφῆς καὶ πρεσβύτερον τὸ μὴ κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακὴν πεπιστευκὼς εἶναι. (*NA* 1.15)
>
> … and when he [*sc.* the wrasse] has crushed it [*sc.* the fisherman's bait], he releases it, considering it more honourable and important than his meal not to sleep during his watch.
>
> … τρεῖς δὲ ἢ τέσσαρες προφυλάττουσι τῶν λοιπῶν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακὴν ἑστᾶσι μὲν ἀσκωλιάζουσαι … (*NA* 3.13)
>
> … but three or four among the others are on guard; and in order to avoid to fall asleep during the watch they stand on one leg …

This syntactic usage is attested in ancient Greek since Herodotus (9.93), again with φυλακήν as the object, which is here an 'accusative of duration'/'cognate accusative' (Flower, Marincola 2002, 267). Should the object be something like τὰς φυλακάς, 'the watchmen', then the other meaning would be correct.[8]

The second half of the sentence is more problematic and Fowler in *EGM* I put it between *cruces*, even though in *EGM* II (410 fn. 40) he showed second thoughts. The sentence, as it stands, misses its point: what did Amphiaraus suffer? Possibly being killed or physi-

6 In Greek myth, supernatural creatures could be gifted with resistance to sleep: see Argus Panoptes, Io's watcher, in Hes. fr. 294 M.-W. = 230 Most, whom Hera gave tireless strength and sleep could not fall upon its eyes. For mythical plots featuring Amphiaraus, see discussion in Bethe 1891, 43-75 and Berner 1945.

7 Jacoby (*FGrHist*, I, 328): "schläfert A. die Wache ein oder verschläft er sie?"; Fowler, *EGM* I (app. *ad loc.*): "sed incertum quomodo irrepserit, et manifestum est non Amphiaraum sed custodes dormisse; ergo pessum dedit ille custodiam aut regem". It is curious that, whereas modern lexica of Greek language (*LSJ*, *Brill's Greek Dictionary*) agree in quoting Aelian's passage under the meaning of 'lull to sleep', modern translations adopt the intransitive 'to sleep' (e.g. Scholfield 1959: "went to sleep during his watch"; Pownall *BNJ*: "slept away his watch"; Brodersen 2018: "die Wache verschlaften").

8 E.g. in Ps.-Apollod. 1.9.23, where Medea sends the snake to sleep (τὸν φυλάσσοντα δράκοντα κατακοιμίσασα τοῖς φαρμάκοις) or in Luc. *Nav.* 44 (κοιμίζειν τοὺς φύλακας), where the speaker wishes to put to sleep the watchmen to enter rooms without being seen.

cally injured, but also robbed of what he was looking after and punished for that. But what has Hecataeus said about that? Admittedly, the sentence lacks something. Despite the opinion of Aelian's latest editors, there are good grounds to believe that the text is here corrupted and that something has been lost in transmission. Especially significant is the awkward sequence of λέγει: reading the text as it is, one has 'Hecataeus says that Amphiaraus nearly suffered what he says', which sounds more like a tautology than like a careless and incidental quote.[9] Therefore, it is highly likely that the text is not sound. Textual interventions that have been proposed are not satisfactory: deleting ὀλίγου, for instance, does not offer a better sense. A diagnostic emendation is that by Weil (1878), who writes ὀλίγου παθεῖν ὅσα <τὸν Ῥῆσον Ὅμηρος> λέγει, 'what Homer says that Rhesus (has suffered)'. The story of the Thracian king Rhesus, who was killed in his sleep by the Achaeans during the war at Troy (cf. Hom. *Il.* 10.427-563 and the homonymous Euripidean play), would fit nicely in this context, provided that Hecataeus actually described a failed attempt to murder Amphiaraus while asleep. Weil's integration is especially attractive because it gives coherence to the sentence in an economic way and it irons out the problem of the two closely placed λέγει. But theoretically other options built on the same pattern ('those things that *x* said *y* has suffered') would stand. To be sure, without knowing what happened to Hecataeus' Amphiaraus, it is hard to provide a not entirely speculative supplement.

After a first reading, one could find it difficult to appreciate the overarching coherence of the passage. Aelian firstly mentions the wakeful Indian elephants, secondly Hecataeus and his Amphiaraus, in conclusion he goes back again to the elephants and defines them the most trustworthy watchers, but of course after human beings.[10] The piece about Amphiaraus is therefore placed between the sentences about the elephants, in what one might call a 'quote sandwich'. At

9 If one analyses Aelian's *Zitierweise*, he does not refer to other works in such an elliptical way, unless his laconic manner implies that the reference was well-known to the audience: see *NA* 2.53, 7.11, and 16.21 with reference to Herodotus; *NA* 8.3 with regard to Xenophon, and *NA* 4.4 with regard to Homer. More similar to our case are other two passages. In *NA* 3.35 Aelian mentions the note emitted by the partridge and writes "what names these notes have, Theophrastus will tell", and in *NA* 5.13 "what the divine Plato says about the cicadas and their love for songs and music, this one may say about the choir of the bees". The former reference is not to a fully preserved work (fr. 355A FGH&S), while the latter is (*Phdr.* 230 c, 259 b). However, in these cases one has a fully formed allusion to something those writers said, whereas that to Hecataeus is pending and unfinished.

10 By saying: πιστότατοι τῶν ἐκεῖθι φυλάκων μετά γε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰσίν, Aelian means that elephants are the most trustworthy watchers among those available there, but of course after men, since animals need to be instructed before performing any activity. Human beings are still the best watchers, but they can be assisted by immune-to-sleep elephants.

a closer look, one sees that Amphiaraus' story is linked to the first sentence by a καί and contrasted with the third one through a δέ: this means that the opposition between him and the elephants is effective with regard to keeping one's eyes open during a watch, a fact confirmed by the correct interpretation of κατακοιμίσαι in its context.

Aelian did not usually engage with early prose texts, as a survey about the authors he cites shows.[11] On the contrary, in the *NA* one finds a good many quotations from drama, but without doubt the most quoted authorities are Homer, Herodotus, and, needless to say, Aristotle and his *Historia animalium*.[12] However, scholars have demonstrated that Aelian does not quote Aristotle first hand, but second, if not third. His sources are the epitome of the Aristotelian zoological works by Aristophanes of Byzantium, the ornithologist Alexander of Myndos, and possibly, as suggested by Wellmann (1916), Pamphilus of Alexandria, a grammarian follower of Aristarchus, whose work is hugely indebted to Didymus of Alexandria.[13] Didymus indeed was a major source for Roman mythographers, as outlined by Cameron (2004, 47-50). Consequently, even if Aelian was not particularly fond of mythographers, nevertheless his information about Hecataeus might come from Didymus (and more specifically from his *Strange History*), but it is at least fourth-hand.

3 Amphiaraus, Hypsipyle, and Opheltes: A Modern Hypothesis

As already said, modern scholars have agonized over the identification of the main plot to which this passage belongs.[14] Only one hypothesis has been formulated, as far as I am aware, by Hecataeus' latest commentator, Fowler (*EGM* II, 410-11) developing a hint provided by Gantz (1993, 512). Namely, Fowler suggests that the Hecataean

11 See the table in Prandi 2005, 56-62, which lists all historiographers (and mythographers) quoted by Aelian in the *NA*. Hecataeus is cited twice, here and in 9.23 about the Lernaean Hydra. In this latter passage, Aelian only mentions him without further information. No other references are to be found to Hecataeus' peers, but only to Herodotus. As far as other prose-writers of the archaic/classical age are concerned, Aelian frequently engages with the Presocratics (e.g. Democritus in 5.39, 6.60, 9.64, 12.16-20; Empedocles in 9.64, 12.7, 16.29; Pythagoras in 5.11, 9.10, 17.8).

12 Scholfield 1959, 3, 441-5 provides a list of all quoted authors in the *NA*.

13 This conclusion has been suggested by parallel passages (esp. with Athenaeus), in which Pamphilus is mentioned as a source. The most relevant items about Aelian's sources are Wellmann 1891a, 1891b, 1892, 1916, and Keydell 1937. Aelian and Athenaeus probably rely on a common source: see Rudolph 1894.

14 The interpretation put forward by Parker 2008, 18, which implies that Amphiaraus was actually guarding the Indian king ("Amphiaraus was perhaps part of an aetiological myth about the foundation or civilising of India, inviting comparison with Heracles or Dionysus in that respect"), is groundless. The *comparandus* is endurance to sleep, regardless of whom is looked after.

episode might belong to the Seven's stop at Nemea on their way to Thebes.[15] Here, Amphiaraus asks Hypsipyle, the daughter of the Lemnian Thoas, seized by marauders and sold into slavery to the Nemean priest Lycurgus, to guide him to a spring: the Argives needed fresh water to perform a sacrifice for the happy outcome of their expedition. When close to a well, Hypsipyle inadvertently leaves Opheltes, Lycurgus' son and her nursling baby, unattended. This incautious decision will bear dreadful consequences: while the baby is playing on the ground, he is seized and killed by a serpent and Hypsipyle thus confronts the baby's mother, who wants her to pay with her own life. At this point of the story, Amphiaraus decides to intervene in favour of the wet-nurse: with his speech the seer convinces Eurydice that her child's sad fate was an ominous sign for the expedition against Thebes and that funeral games in his honour should be celebrated (the Nemean Games). Opheltes is thus renamed Archemorus ('first to die'). This is how we know the story from the play *Hypsipyle* by Euripides, as reconstructed by scholars on the basis of the lines preserved in *P.Oxy.* VI 852.[16] Hypsipyle's involvement in this episode has often been hailed as Euripides' own invention, since earlier accounts on the origins of the Nemean Games apparently do not mention her as the child's wet-nurse (Simon. PMG 553; Pind. *Nem.* 8.51 and 10.28; Bacchyl. 9.10-17; Aesch. *TrGF* 149a).[17] However, the murder of the child, its interpretation as an omen, and the foundation of the games in his honour are recurring elements since the earliest literary accounts in our possession.[18]

Fowler found it attractive to imagine a different plot than what became the mainstream version of the story, where Amphiaraus plays the part of the negligent babysitter, who fell asleep instead of looking

15 Amphiaraus is unanimously known as one of the Seven, but the same does not hold true for all his companions: for a complete overview of their names and identities see Cingano 2002.

16 Other versions of the myth, with minor divergences, are in: Paus. 2.15.2-3; Ps.-Apollod. 3.6.4; Stat. *Theb.* 4.746-850 and 5.499-753; Hyg. *Fab.* 74. On the serpent see Ogden 2013, 54-8.

17 Since Robert 1909 modern scholars agree on this point. The state of the art is well outlined by Cropp 2003, 133-5, who comes to the conclusion that Hypsipyle's involvement in the Nemean saga was prompted by Athens' interest in connecting places of religious and military importance like Nemea, Oropos, and Lemnos, whereas in the original myth a nurse or the mother of the child was involved. Aeschylus' *Hypsipyle* is sometimes linked to the *Nemea* by the same author (Séchan 1926, 341-2): should this be correct, it would prove wrong the assumption about Euripides. However, the majority of modern scholars find it more likely to place the Aeschylean *Hypsipyle* within the tetralogy dealing with the Argonauts (*Argo* – *Lemnioi* – *Cabeiroi*): see Gantz 2007, 65-7.

18 According to Punzi 1910, even the involvement of Amphiaraus and of the Argive warriors does not belong to the primordial version of the Nemean episode, whose aim is to show how Hypsipyle is rescued by her sons.

after the infant.[19] This reconstruction has been prompted by some remarks offered by Gantz (1993, 511-12), who suggested that the quarrel between Amphiaraus and Lycurgus depicted on an Amyclaean throne (550-500 BCE) and described by Pausanias (3.18.22) may have involved the child's father, angry at Amphiaraus who was defending the wet-nurse.[20] "If this is the Lycurgus of the *Hypsipyle*", continues Gantz, "he might well blame Amphiaraus for the tragedy and seek vengeance", but yet he is more inclined to believe that this has nothing to do with the Nemean stop because this Lycurgus is Pronax's son, thus the quarrel on the Throne "was somehow a part of the story of the Seven".[21] Gantz also suggests that the bad blood running between Amphiaraus and this Lycurgus might derive from the accident alluded to by Hecataeus. In saying this, however, he maintains that this episode is not linked to the Nemean one, whereas Fowler is the one who makes that step further and connects Hec. fr. 33, Opheltes' death in Nemea, and the scene on the Amyclean throne altogether.

Indeed, as intriguing as Fowler's suggestion is, it encounters some objections. For instance, in another passage of the *NA* (11.14) Aelian tells the story of an Indian elephant named Nicaia, which was instructed to look after her trainer's child. Were this actually the same

19 In support of Fowler's speculation, one could have quoted Bacchyl. 9.12-15, where at l. 13 the papyrus reads ἀσαγέροντα, second-hand emended in ἀσαργεύοντα. Since neither of them yields sense, modern editors usually print Neil's emendation ἀωτεύοντα, based on a Hesychian glossa (α 8996, ἀωτεύειν· ἀπανθίζεσθαι), and in agreement with other accounts where the infant is seized while picking flowers (Eur. *TrGF* 754). However, many commentators, including Maehler, believe the verb to mean 'to sleep' on the basis of few poetic passages from the archaic age (esp. the Homeric ὕπνον ἀωτεῖν: *Il.* 10.159). This piece of news would agree with Statius' *Thebaid* (5.501-504), where Opheltes plays with the grass, falls asleep on the patch, and is seized by the snake. Should this be the case, it may dovetail with Amphiaraus falling asleep together or after the child. Yet Cairns 1998 has efficaciously defended the first interpretation of ἀωτέω (cf. also Cairns 2010, 250-1). For a thorough overview of all literary sources dealing with Opheltes' death, see Pache 2004, 96-115 (and 115-33 for its presence in ancient art).

20 The same scene is to be found on a shield-band in Olympia (575-550 BCE): see Brillante 1983, 43, 51.

21 For Gantz it is unlikely that the Amyclean throne describes a fight related to the Nemean fact, since Pausanias (3.18.12) says that this Lycurgus is Pronax's son, while Ps.-Apollod. 1.9.14 says that Opheltes' father is Lycurgus, Pheres' son. Yet, for genealogical reasons, the king of Nemea cannot be the son of the Thessalian Pheres, but has to be the son of the Argive Pronax (Brillante 1983, 44-5). Ps.-Apollod. 1.9.13 acknowledges that Pronax is Adrastus' brother; what is more, Aelian (*VH* 4.5.9) and a Pindaric scholion (hyp. c Pind. *Nem.*) show a different version about the foundation of the Nemean Games: here they are established to celebrate Pronax (Talas' son). This information strengthens the case of Pronax's son being king at Nemea. However, *pace* Brillante (1983, 44, 45 fn. 7, 46) and Simon 1979, 32, this Lycurgus should be also the one featuring the Seven's expedition mentioned by Stesich. fr. 92 D.-F. Finally, it is worth recalling that, according to Menaichmus (*FGrHist* 131 F 10), Amphiaraus overthrew Pronax in Argos: this might be another reason to explain the bad blood running between the two (Bethe 1891, 50).

situation as that alluded to in fr. 33, where Amphiaraus was not a skilled babysitter as the Indian elephant, perhaps Aelian would have quoted Hecataeus' story here, for the parallel is more cogent. But the greatest hurdle to this hypothesis lies in connecting Hecataeus' fr. 33 with the scene of the throne and others depicting Amphiaraus' quarrel with Lycurgus.[22] Regardless of the specifics of such a fight, the sleepy φυλακή is better referable to other contexts (e.g. military scenes or religious watches). Having Amphiaraus as a negligent babysitter would mean to imagine a completely different Nemean plot, where the watch over the infant is long and can lead him to sleep, whereas the nurse leaves Opheltes alone nearby to the well for a very short time. What is more, there were no manifest and pending threats to the infant that would justify such a guard.[23] To put it succinctly: if the scene of the Amyclean throne actually portraits Lycurgus avenging Opheltes' death, his anger towards Amphiaraus is probably not caused by him being the infant's watcher, but by his involvement in the story – he distracts Hypsipyle from her duties.

4 A Warrior and a Seer: A Fresh Interpretation

It is therefore crucial to survey which context(s) might have hosted this kind of narrative, in the light of Amphiaraus' reputation as a warrior and a seer (ἀμφότερον μάντιν τ' ἀγαθὸν καὶ δουρὶ μάρνασθα: *Thebais* PEG F 10; Pind. *Ol.* 6.16-17; cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 568-569).

The first option that crosses one's mind is that of military services and nightly watches, which dovetails nicely with Amphiaraus' reputation as a warrior and with his alleged mistake. In the *Iliad*'s tenth book, for instance, one sees both the Greeks and the Trojans testing their men's resistance to sleep at night and trying to enter the rival camp to kidnap prisoners and to catch important hints about the enemies' next moves (*Il.* 10.96-301). After Odysseus and Diomedes kidnap the Trojan spy Dolon, thanks to the prisoner's information they kill the Thracian king Rhesus while he is sleeping and steal his beautiful horses. Presumably, when Weil integrated the text so as to allude to Rhesus' death, he believed Amphiaraus' episode to take place

22 Not to be confused with the bad blood running between Amphiaraus and Tydaeus (cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 377-383) – Gantz admits that having Tydaeus would make interpretation easier, but Pausanias' words are incontrovertible.

23 Of course, one can act as someone's guardian in dangerous situations: see, for example, Hdt. 1.41, where Adrastus the Phrygian looks after Croesus' son (φύλακα παιδός) during a hunt, since a dream alarmed him. Aelian uses φυλακή for animals watching their offspring to keep them safe from predators (*NA* 1.16 and 12.14) or for a dog guarding his owner's corpse (*NA* 7.10).

within a military setting.[24] If Amphiaraus' involvement in the expedition of the Seven is decidedly the most famous military event of his life, it is difficult to envisage when exactly to place his sleepy guard, for one has no information about a nightly episode which could match this one. Another good starting point could be Amphiaraus' purported participation in the Argonaut's journey in search of the Golden Fleece, which Hecataeus treated in the *Genealogies*' first book (frr. 17-18).[25] The variety of adventures within the Argonautic saga would have easily accommodated such an episode, even if one struggles in venturing who or what exactly Amphiaraus was supposed to watch at night.[26]

But Amphiaraus was not only a warrior, but also a seer, and in Greek literature one finds a peculiar initiation into prophetic art, which involved a sleepy and negligent watch at night. This passage comes from Herodotus, an author whose debt to Hecataeus has been mentioned in the opening paragraph, and it is the most stringent parallel passage available. It is worth citing it in its entireness (Hdt. 9.93.1-3, p. 827 Wilson):

> Ἔστι ἐν τῇ Ἀπολλωνίῃ ταύτῃ ἱρὰ Ἡλίου πρόβατα, τὰ τὰς μὲν ἡμέρας βόσκεται παρὰ *** ποταμὸν, ὃς ἐκ Λάκμονος ὄρεος ῥέει διὰ τῆς Ἀπολλωνίης χώρης ἐς θάλασσαν παρ' Ὥρικον λιμένα, τὰς δὲ νύκτας ἀραιρημένοι ἄνδρες οἱ πλούτῳ τε καὶ γένεϊ δοκιμώτατοι τῶν ἀστῶν, οὗτοι φυλάσσουσι ἐνιαυτὸν ἕκαστος· περὶ πολλοῦ γὰρ δὴ ποιεῦνται Ἀπολλωνιῆται τὰ πρόβατα ταῦτα ἐκ θεοπροπίου τινός· ἐν δὲ ἄντρῳ αὐλίζονται ἀπὸ τῆς πόλιος ἑκάς. (2) Ἔνθα δὴ τότε ὁ Εὐήνιος οὗτος ἀραιρημένος ἐφύλασσε. καί κοτε αὐτοῦ κατακοιμίσαντος τὴν φυλακὴν παρελθόντες λύκοι ἐς τὸ ἄντρον διέφθειραν τῶν προβάτων ὡς ἑξήκοντα. Ὁ δὲ ὡς ἐπήισε, εἶχε σιγῇ καὶ ἔφραζε οὐδενί, ἐν νόῳ ἔχων ἀντικαταστήσειν ἄλλα πριάμενος. (3) Καί οὐ γὰρ ἔλαθε τοὺς Ἀπολλωνιήτας ταῦτα γενόμενα, ἀλλά κως ἐπύθοντο, ὑπαγαγόντες μιν ὑπὸ δικαστήριον κατέκριναν, ὡς τὴν φυλακὴν κατακοιμίσαντα, τῆς ὄψιος στερηθῆναι.
>
> In Apollonia there is a flock of sheep sacred to the Sun, which by day graze along the river flowing from Mount Lacmon through the region of Apollonia towards the sea by the harbour at Oricus, and which by night the most illustrious man of the city selected for wealth and nobility guard, each one for a year: for the Apolloniates

24 The most significant analogy between Amphiaraus' and Rhesus' stories is their ultimate destiny after death, namely the gift of immortality and of prophetic art that they practice being concealed in under-earth chambers: see Ustinova 2009, 105; Liapis 2009, 283; Fries 2014, 468.

25 Amphiaraus was an Argonaut in Ps.-Apollod. 1.9.16.

26 Less likely is the option of the Calydonian boar hunt (Paus. 8.45. 6; Ps.-Apollod. 1.8.2; Ov. *Met.* 8.317).

> hold in high esteem such sheep in consequence of an oracle. The herd is penned up in a cave far from the city. So once this Evenius after being chosen was the guardian: and one night when he fell asleep during the watch, some wolves coming into the cave killed about sixty of the sheep. As soon as he woke up, he kept silence and did not tell anybody, planning to substitute them buying others. However, the fact did not escape the Apolloniates' notice, but they were somehow informed, they arraigned him before a court and sentenced him to be deprived of eyesight for sleeping away his watch.

Herodotus goes on telling that the city of Apollonia was afflicted by a calamity: their flocks neither bore any young nor the land any crop. Oracles predicted that that happened as a consequence of the unjust blinding of Evenius, for the gods had sent the wolves and arranged the slaying of the sacred flock and were now avenging its unfairly blinded guardian. The Apolloniates therefore needed to offer Evenius reparation for what they did and, quite predictably, after he got the two finest estates in Apollonia, the gods gave him the gift of prophecy. The same pattern of compensation is in the famous story of Tiresias, who lost his outer sight and was then gifted with second sight. However, in this latter case the seer-to-be is blinded by the gods because he saw something he was not allowed to see, whereas Evenius is blinded by the humans because they thought he did not see what he should have.[27]

This passage comes soon after the mention of Deiphonus, Evenius' son and a seer himself, who performed the sacrifice on behalf of the Greek army before the battle ad Mycale: at this point Herodotus offers a digression explaining the origins of that mantic family based in Apollonia.[28] Given the evident parallel with what one reads about Amphiaraus' fault and its consequences, it might be tempting to infer that this story as well has to do with his acquisition of mantic skills.[29] This deduction is also consistent with what one knows about Amphiaraus' initiation to the art. Despite being a descendant of

27 This point is made by Grottanelli 2003, 210, who offers a thorough reading of the passage in the light of male initiation rituals. Other useful analyses are by Griffiths 1999 and Vignolo Munson 2001, 70-3. For Evenius' and Tiresias' stories and the parallelism between them see Flower 2008, 37.

28 On Deiphonus' actual paternity there were doubts, to which Herodotus alludes (9.95): claiming to be Evenius' descendant would have enhanced his credibility as a seer. See Flower 2008, 45 and Grottanelli 1994, 85-6 for an ingenious interpretation of Deiphonus' name, which would testify to his being Evenius' son (δηόω + φόνος, 'slay' and 'slaughter').

29 Despite all modern commentators mention Hdt. 9.93.1 for the phrase κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακήν and its intransitive employment, surprisingly no one has ever compared the two texts. Fowler (*EGM* II, 421), however, wonders whether the passage in Hecataeus has something to do with Amphiaraus' initiatory sleep in Paus. 2.13.7.

Melampus, the founder of the Argive seers' lineage, he acquired his skills when he was a grown-up. Pausanias (2.13.7) describes the circumstance whence Amphiaraus acquired his second sight: he slept in the so-called seers' house in Phlius, where he had his first vision. Before that time, people of Phlius say, he was an ordinary citizen and not a seer.

Pausanias' piece about Amphiaraus is in line with a standard foundation account about a line of diviners, which is usually called incubation.[30] For example, the famous narrative about Epimenides of Crete, "the prophet about the past" (Arist. *Rh*. 1418a21), and his fifty-seven-year long sleep (Diog. Laert. 1.109) presents both an incubation and the action of tending sheep. By contrast, Evenius' story in Herodotus falls short of the standard requirements to be labelled as an incubation story proper: his sleep is in the first instance an unfortunate accident. He did not have any vision or dream which initiated him to the mantic craft, but that was only an expedient, to which he did not oppose any resistance (indeed Evenius' name means 'docile'). In other cases, the divine gift is a fair return for an arguably unjust treatment: Archilochus in the Mnesiepes inscription (*SEG* 15.517 = T 4 Tarditi), for instance, is involved in a similar narrative. To be sure, the sleep originates the series of events ultimately leading to Evenius' new life as a seer and as the initiator of the prestigious mantic tradition in Illyria. Also the location in a cave, where the flock was penned up, recalls the setting of oracles in underground settings.[31]

Thus the Herodotean text about Evenius opens up the possibility that in Hecataeus Amphiaraus might have been involved in something similar at the very beginning of his career as a prophet. The mysterious object to guard therefore might be a cattle.[32] As far as Evenius' punishment and loss of eyesight are concerned, Amphiaraus might have run a similar risk (he *nearly* suffered). Of course, Amphiaraus could not have been blinded, since he was going to take part to the war at Thebes. As a consequence, he could have not received his prophetic gift as a compensation for an unjust treatment and Hecataeus says that he did not suffer. This is a substantial difference with Evenius' initiation: the parallelism works inasmuch as they sleep while guarding sheep. Perhaps, during his sleepy watch Amphiaraus

30 For Greek incubation, see discussion in von Ehrenheim 2015 with further literature. Pausanias (1.34.4) believed Amphiaraus' oracle to be mainly a dream-oracle.

31 See, for instance, Trophonius' oracle at Lebedea, in Boeotia, which Pausanias (9.39) thoroughly describes, or Amphiaraus' one in Oropus since Hdt. 8.134 (cf. also 1.46 and 52). On this subject, see Ustinova 2009, 89-109.

32 This would come as no surprise, for Greek *manteis* have often something to do with a flock. For instance, Melampus had to steal Phylacus' cattle in order to win Pero's hand for his brother Bias. Similar stories are those of Odysseus and the Cattle of the Sun and of Heracles and Geryon's flock. Significantly enough, all of them are placed in the most remote regions of the world (Reggiani 2011, 128-9).

received his gift, as it is in Pausanias and as required by the incubation ritual, similarly to what happened to Epimenides of Crete. Then Amphiaraus may have escaped his punishment precisely because he became a seer and thus a venerable citizen.

5 By Way of Conclusion

As detailed in paragraph 3, referring the Hecataean episode to Seven's stop at Nemea is not a fully convincing option. Given the paucity of elements provided by Aelian, the textual corruption, and the cover text's overall level of trustworthiness, one can also, and legitimately, doubt that this piece has anything to do with Hecataeus in the first place. The parallel passage provided by Herodotus, a writer who was surely familiar with Hecataeus, has shown how sleepy watches can be linked to a seer's initiation to the mantic art. At the current state of our knowledge on the subject, this seems to be the most likely interpretation.

Yet it is difficult to say a final word and many doubts still affect this passage, and potentially a good many quotations of now lost prose texts. Is the expression κατακοιμίσαι τὴν φυλακήν to ascribe to Hecataeus? Or are these Aelian's own words? Can someone go as far as to claim that this is a case of intertextuality between Hecataeus and Herodotus? Or should one detect Aelian's intervention behind this lexical parallel? Aelian was much more familiar with Herodotus than with Hecataeus, so this latter option cannot be ruled out. However, when he quotes Herodotus, he seems to handle carefully his text, for his quotations do not twist the contents and he sometimes also preserve the original words.[33]

Aelian's quote of Hecataeus is perhaps destined to remain opaque. As recalled in the opening paragraph, during the process of textual transmission from antiquity to us, Hecataeus' text has met an ironic fate. Whereas his aim was that of posing order among a bewildering variety of stories, he ended up providing later readers with eccentric mythical accounts. In the teeth of the literary agenda emerging from fr. 1, his stories are to later readers' eyes not truer than those of his peers: they are in some cases less well-known or they even faded into complete oblivion, as it is the case of fr. 33.

33 See the cases of the longest quotations, like *NA* 6.60 and Hdt. 1.216; *NA* 10.3 and Hdt. 3.103; *NA* 10.4 and Hdt 3.113; *NA* 17.36 and Hdt 7.125. Despite the opinion of Macan quoted by Scholfield 1959, xx fn. 1 ("the items in Aelian show little or no sign of Herodotean colouring and are plainly drawn from independent sources"), it is evident that Aelian quotes Herodotus but does not consistently cite him word-by-word. It is by all means possible that he quotes him via intermediary sources; nonetheless quotations look quite accurate.

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