

SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL  
OF  
BYZANTINE  
AND  
MODERN GREEK STUDIES

- 9 *AnnaLinden Weller*  
Narrative & Verisimilitude in Byzantium – an Introduction
- 15 *Baukje van den Berg*  
‘The Excellent Man Lies Sometimes’: Eustathios of Thessalonike on Good Hypocrisy, Praiseworthy Falsehood, and Rhetorical Plausibility in Ancient Poetry
- 37 *Stanislas Kuttner-Homs*  
L’historien comme témoin: le “je” historiographique est-il le garant de la vraisemblance dans l’Histoire de Nicétas Chôniatès?
- 61 *Markéta Kulhánková*  
Scenic narration in the *Daniel Sketiotes* Dossier of spiritually beneficial tales
- 81 *Jonas J. H. Christensen*  
I was there. Constantine Akropolites’ Typikon
- 95 *Jakov Đorđević*  
Experiencing Resurrection: Persuasive Narrative of the Pictorial Program in the Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery
- 125 *David Konstan*  
Sin: The Prehistory
- 141 *Adam Goldwyn*  
Theory and Method in John Tzetzes’ *Allegories of the Iliad* and *Allegories of the Odyssey*
- 173 Book Reviews

## Editorial

In this third volume of the Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, we are happy to welcome a guest-editor, Dr AnnaLinden Weller, who has edited five articles from a conference that she organized at Uppsala University in 2016 within the frame of the ‘Text and Narrative in Byzantium’ research network. The articles are written by Baukje van den Berg, Stanislas Kuttner-Homs, Markéta Kulhánková, Jonas J. H. Christensen and Jakov Đorđević, provided with an introduction by AnnaLinden Weller. In addition, the journal includes two more articles – one by David Konstan, based on his 2016 lecture in memory of Professor Lennart Rydén, and one by Adam Goldwyn – and two book reviews.

In October 2018, Modern Greek Studies in Lund will organise the 6th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies, and according to the number of submitted abstracts it promises to be an interesting event for scholars from many countries around the globe to come together.

The journal is open for unpublished articles and book reviews related to Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies in the fields of philology, linguistics, history and literature. It is published in collaboration with Greek and Byzantine Studies at Uppsala University and we welcome contributions not only from Scandinavian colleagues, but from scholars all around the world.

Vassilios Sabatakakis  
Modern Greek Studies  
Lund University

**Instructions for contributors to  
SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL  
OF  
BYZANTINE  
AND  
MODERN GREEK STUDIES**

SJBMGS encourages scholarly contributions within Byzantine and Modern Greek philology and history.

Manuscripts of articles to be considered for publication should be sent to Marianna.Smaragdi@klass.lu.se or Marianna Smaragdi, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Box 201, 22100 Lund, Sweden.

Your article will be refereed. If it is accepted for publication, you will be asked to supply a final version on e-mail. Authors will receive five copies of the journal volume.

The SJBMGS is a nonprofit venture to be distributed on an exchange basis to scholars and libraries.

*Copyright:* The authors and the editor.

*Editorial Board:*

Panagiotis Agapitos, professor, University of Cyprus

Demetrios Agoritsas, PhD

Christoforos Charalambakis, professor, University of Athens

Eric Cullhed, PhD, researcher, Uppsala University

Olof Heilo, PhD, deputy director, The Swedish Research Institute, Istanbul

David Holton, professor emeritus, University of Cambridge

Christian Høgel, professor wso, University of Southern Denmark

Ingela Nilsson, professor, Uppsala University

Staffan Wahlgren, professor, NTNU, Trondheim

*Editor-in-chief:*

Vassilios Sabatakakis

vassilios.sabatakakis@klass.lu.se

# ‘The Excellent Man Lies Sometimes’: Eustathios of Thessalonike on Good Hypocrisy, Praiseworthy Falsehood, and Rhetorical Plausibility in Ancient Poetry

*Baukje van den Berg*

Around the year 1176, Eustathios, a widely celebrated teacher and orator, moved from Constantinople to Thessalonike to take up the archiepiscopal see of the city. His relationship with his new flock was problematic, and in several of his writings Eustathios complains about the lack of morality and religious devotion among the Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup> One such text is a sermon on the theme of ‘hypocrisy’ (ὕποκρισις), of which Eustathios distinguishes two types, one that is good and beneficial and one that is evil and harmful. The greater part of the sermon is devoted to the evil type of hypocrisy that, according to Eustathios, pervades the society of his time; at length, he describes and condemns the behaviour of flatterers, false friends, and many other victims of the ‘most evil beast’ (κάκιστον θηρίον) that is hypocrisy.<sup>2</sup> His

---

\* This article is part of a project funded by the National Science Centre (Poland) UMO-2013/10/E/HS2/00170. I wish to thank Panagiotis Agapitos, Adam Goldwyn, Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, and Przemysław Marciniak for their valuable comments on earlier versions.

<sup>1</sup> On Eustathios as archbishop of Thessalonike, see e.g. Angold 1995, 179–196; Magdalino 1997; Schönauer 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13 (= *On Hypocrisy*), 94.17. The references to and quotations from the sermon *On Hypocrisy* follow the edition by Tafel 1832. All translations in this paper are my own unless indicated otherwise. ‘Hypocrisy’ is also designated as ‘a beast’ by Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 37.5 and John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 3.9.14. On the sermon and its performance context, see also Agapitos 2015, 237–238 with n. 86.

intention, so he writes in the first part of the sermon, is to attack this widespread vice of hypocrisy and encourage people to live a virtuous life.<sup>3</sup>

Eustathios postulates a continuous decline of hypocrisy over time: in his view, the evil hypocrisy of his own day is a degenerated form of the good hypocrisy of ancient times, which malevolent people, like so many good things, corrupted in the course of time. In the first part of the sermon, Eustathios discusses this original, good hypocrisy, i.e. the art of ancient actors in tragedy, satyr play, and comedy. Eustathios' discussion thus provides us with a case-study of the reception of ancient tragedy and comedy in twelfth-century Byzantium. Although tragedy and comedy were no longer performed in theatres, the plays of the most prominent ancient dramatists (Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) continued to be read as part of the school curriculum throughout antiquity and the Byzantine era.<sup>4</sup>

Eustathios' analysis of ancient drama in *On Hypocrisy* sheds light on his ideas on the acceptability—and unacceptability—of deception and the role of truth and falsehood in narrative. Eustathios offers a more detailed discussion of similar issues in his monumental commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>5</sup> These works, therefore, can help to understand Eustathios' conception of the hypocrisy of ancient actors as well as his views on deception and falsehood more generally. For both the sermon *On Hypocrisy* and the Homeric commentaries it is important to keep in mind that, for Eustathios, tragedy and epic poetry, as well as all other forms of literary composition, belong to the realm of rhetoric.<sup>6</sup> Thus, he

---

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.5–12; 89.62–66. For similar ideas on hypocrisy in Prodomos, see Marciniak 2016.

<sup>4</sup> On ancient drama in Byzantium, see e.g. Marciniak 2009.

<sup>5</sup> It is generally assumed that Eustathios composed these works during his time in Constantinople, although he continued to expand and revise them after he had exchanged the capital for Thessalonike. On the textual genesis and respective chronology of Eustathios' philological works, see Cullhed 2016, 5\*–9\*.

<sup>6</sup> For Eustathios' ideas on Homeric poetry as rhetoric, see e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad* 221.20–27, where Eustathios argues that Homer knows each of the three types of rhetoric, and 731.20–23, where he states that *Iliad* 9 is full of judicial oratory. Cf. Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 2.10.29–33. See also Pontani 2016, 227–236 on the canonicity

uses rhetorical concepts to analyse ancient poetry and, perhaps more importantly, his ideas on deception, truth, and falsehood in ancient poetry may apply to other types of rhetorical composition too.<sup>7</sup>

## I. The Good Hypocrisy of Ancient Actors

In the opening paragraphs of *On Hypocrisy*, Eustathios argues that the decline of “hypocrisy” had already started in antiquity:<sup>8</sup> whereas tragedy as the oldest form of hypocrisy was entirely serious, the later satyr plays consisted of a blend of jest and earnest. While satyr plays, like tragedy, still featured heroic characters, this was no longer the case with comedy, the third form of hypocrisy, with its predominant focus on jest. All three types of ancient hypocrisy, however, were praiseworthy and beneficial, to be distinguished from their degenerate fourth counterpart. While, in Eustathios’ view, all hypocrisy, whether good or bad, is inextricably connected with ‘falsehood’ (ψεῦδος), the main difference between good and bad hypocrisy is that the former, i.e. the hypocrisy of ancient actors, uses falsehood ‘artfully’ (τεχνικῶς), ‘for a good purpose’ (ἐπ’ ἀγαθῶ), and ‘in a manner that is useful for life’ (ἐπωφελῶς τῷ βίῳ).<sup>9</sup> In what follows, Eustathios explains this “usefulness for life” mainly in ethical-didactic terms: in his view, the hypocrisy of ancient actors aims at the moral instruction of the audience and is therefore acceptable. Conversely, so Eustathios argues, the fourth type of hypocrisy is not good for the soul at all, for which reason ‘those who are fond of the truth’ (οἱ φιλοῦντες τὸ ἀληθές), among whom, of course, is Eustathios himself, are provoked to argue against it.<sup>10</sup>

Eustathios’ ideas on the beneficial value of ancient drama tie in with an age-old debate about the effects of drama on the spectators in a thea-

---

of Homer in the ancient rhetorical tradition.

<sup>7</sup> On rhetorical theory as the literary theory of the Byzantines, see Katsaros 2002.

<sup>8</sup> For a historical overview of the concept of hypocrisy, see e.g. Szabados-Soifer 2004, 19–36.

<sup>9</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.13–14.

<sup>10</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 89.62–64.

tre, and, more broadly, with the everlasting dispute over the educative value of poetry in general. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus and Euripides compete for the title of *wisest* poet or best educator; although they disagree about *what* tragedy should teach, they start from the assumption that, a priori, it is supposed to teach.<sup>11</sup> For Aristophanes' Aeschylus, tragedy teaches by providing the audience with models to imitate: like Homer's Patroclus and Teucer, the characters of his tragedies inspire in the audience a desire to be courageous in war. Euripides' characters, conversely, are morally bad and thus cannot serve as good models for imitation.<sup>12</sup> Aristophanes' *Frogs* has become a *locus classicus* for the idea that dramatic poetry—and poetry in general—was expected to provide moral instruction through models of morally good behaviour. These models were to leave a permanent impression on the souls of the audience and, hence, to be imitated by them. The idea of impressing the soul through models remained central to the debate and for Plato, for instance, it is one of the main reasons to ban poetry as it existed in his day from the ideal city. Without disputing the educative value of poetry per se, he rejects all existing poetry on the basis that it teaches the *wrong* things, providing its audience with bad models and, especially in tragedy, evoking in them harmful emotional responses.<sup>13</sup>

Aristophanes' and Plato's views, chronologically far removed from Eustathios, were taken up, twisted, and turned around by later writers reflecting on poetry and theatre. Christian writers—a prominent example is John Chrysostom—often condemned theatrical performances (mime and pantomime more specifically) as well as those attending them on the basis of arguments similar to Plato's: spectators are led to irrational emotions and the morally reprehensible acts presented in the theatre leave a harmful and lasting imprint on the spectators' souls.<sup>14</sup> Converse-

---

<sup>11</sup> See esp. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1008–1010.

<sup>12</sup> Aeschylus expresses his views in *Frogs* 1019–1088. For ancient ideas on the educative function of tragedy, see Croally 2005 with further references.

<sup>13</sup> For the dangerous lasting effects of imitation on the soul, see e.g. Plato, *Republic* 3.395c–396a. Plato's views on (truth and falsehood in) poetry have been studied extensively; see e.g. Gill 1993; Destrée-Herrmann 2011. For tragedy in particular, see Halliwell 2002, 98–117.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. John Chrysostom, *Against the Circuses and the Theatre* 266.44–267.6. On

ly, proponents of theatrical performances—most significantly Libanios and Chorikios—argue that theatre in fact is conducive to knowledge and moral improvement.<sup>15</sup> Eustathios thus joins in a long and complex debate on dramatic poetry when he expresses his views on the beneficial value of ancient drama. He argues that the examples of morally good behaviour presented by the ancient actor are there for the audience to imitate, while examples of morally bad behaviour are presented not to imitate but to avoid. The audience need to learn how to distinguish virtue from vice so as to be able to choose the former and reject the latter.<sup>16</sup> Eustathios' solution to the problem of bad models resembles the approach proposed by, for instance, Plutarch and Basil the Great in their respective treatises on how the young student should study ancient poetry. According to Plutarch, the student of poetry needs to be taught how to distinguish between examples of good and bad behaviour and to imitate the former, or, as Basil puts it, to pluck the roses while avoiding the thorns.<sup>17</sup>

In *On Hypocrisy*, Eustathios explains in more detail how the teaching of the ancient actors worked in practice:

Ἦν μὲν γάρ, ὅτε θεάτροις ἐνευδοκίμουν πρὸς ἔπαινον οἰκεῖον οἱ ὑποκριταί, σοφίαν αὐτοῖ ἐπικοσμοῦντες, ἦν ἐτέχουν οἱ τῆς τραγωδίας διδάσκαλοι, ἀνατρέχοντες εἰς παλαιγενεῖς ἱστορίας ἐκεῖνοι, δεξιὰς παιδεύειν σεμνῶς, καὶ τὰ κατ' ἐκείνας πρόσωπα ὡς οἷον ἐξανιστῶντες, καὶ εἰς θέαν προάγοντες δι' ἀνδρῶν, ὡς οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ἐκπροσωποποιούντων ὑποκριτικῶς ἐκείνοις ἔν τε πιθανότητι πλάσεως ῥητορικῆς καὶ εἰκονογραφία προσώπων, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνων πάθεσσι τε καὶ λόγοις, ὅσα καὶ κατόπτροις, εὐθετίζοντες πρὸς ἀρετῆς καλλονῆν τοὺς καὶ θεωμένους καὶ ἀκροωμένους, καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ ἀνειδωλοποιήσει (δοτέον δὲ καὶ προσωποποιίᾳ εἰπεῖν, ἤδη δὲ καὶ ὑποκρίσει) διδασκάλια ἐν βιβλιογραφία ἐκκαλοῦντες, δι' ὧν καὶ αὐτῶν εἰσέτι καταρτίζεται βίος ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς. (Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.17–31)

---

late-antique ideas on the effects of theatre on the audience, see Webb 2008, 168–196.

<sup>15</sup> Libanios, *Reply to Aristides on Behalf of Dancers* (*Oration* 64); Chorikios, *On Behalf of Those Who Represent Life in the Theatre of Dionysus*. On theatre in the early Christian world, see e.g. Webb 2008, 197–216; Barnes 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.56–72.

<sup>17</sup> Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 18B–F; Basil the Great, *Address to the Young Man on Reading Greek Literature* 4.48–51.



For there was a time, when actors [“hypocrites”] gained glory in theatres for their own praise, themselves adorning the wisdom that the teachers of tragedy crafted; they [sc. the tragedians] returned to ancient stories, clever stories to educate in a solemn way, and made the characters in them rise, as it were, and put them forward in view by men who, so to speak, represented them in acting, both in the plausibility of rhetorical invention and the drawing of characters, as well as in their sufferings and speeches; [thus, the tragedians], as if in mirrors, set straight both viewers and listeners toward the beauty of virtue, and with such a representation (it must also be allowed to speak of characterisation and, indeed, hypocrisy), they call forth lessons that are found in written books, through which also our life still is restored to a right mind.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the tragedians and their actors bring the heroes of the historical past back to life, a point that Eustathios elaborates later on: through their representation of the heroes of old, tragedians and actors allow their audiences to converse with the dead, as it were, and thus to draw useful lessons from history—lessons, Eustathios underscores more than once, that are still valid for readers of ancient drama in his own time.<sup>19</sup> The ‘hypocrisy’ or impersonation of the tragedians and their actors thus is key to the didactic function of tragedy.

While the hypocrisy of the actor consists in pretending to be someone he is not, the hypocrisy of the tragedian is a poetic one, amounting to an appropriate delineation of his characters in words, deeds, and emotions.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, ὑπόκρισις is also central to the performance of orators, as an anecdote about Demosthenes in Plutarch’s *Lives of the Ten Orators* illustrates: when asked what is the first most important aspect of

---

<sup>18</sup> The translation of this passage is partly based on Agapitos 1998, 141.

<sup>19</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.56–65. For the same image of conversing with the dead for studying ancient literature, see e.g. Christophoros Zotros (or Zonaras), who encourages his son to converse with the dead, i.e. to study ancient authors, in order to gain much knowledge (Mazzucchi 2004, 417). I owe this reference to Marciniak 2013, 106.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. scholia on Dionysius Thrax’ *Art of Grammar* 305.26–28; one scholiast argues that ‘we observe the talent of the poet by his hypocrisy’ (ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ ὀρῶμεν, 305.38–39 Hilgard 1901).

oratory, Demosthenes answered, ‘hypocrisy’, i.e. delivery. When asked about the second and third most important aspects, he again answered, ‘hypocrisy’.<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, rhetorical handbooks discuss “hypocrisy” as one of the key aspects of the art of rhetoric. It amounts to a convincing delivery of one’s speech by assuming appropriate character, emotions, posture, voice, etcetera in accordance with the content of the speech.<sup>22</sup> In Eustathios’ conception of hypocrisy in the rhetorical ‘genre’ of tragedy, these rhetorical, poetical, and theatrical notions of hypocrisy come together: the poet-rhetorician draws appropriate characters, both in their words and their deeds, while the actor-orator gives an appropriate dramatic delivery in order to effectively provide the audience with models of virtue and vice.

In the above-quoted passage Eustathios also mentions ‘the plausibility of rhetorical invention’ as an important aspect for the success of ancient hypocrisy. I will explore this rhetorical plausibility in more detail in Section III. In a similar vein, Eustathios argues later on that tragedians and actors do not always have to follow the truth: for tragedy to have its beneficial effect, it is not necessary that the narrative of the heroes’ deeds and words be historically accurate in every detail; rather, it should present ‘probable matters’ (ἐοικότα).<sup>23</sup> In other words, a plausible narrative, presenting probable events, may be more effective than historical accuracy for tragedy to achieve its edifying goal.<sup>24</sup> A similar idea seems to underlie Eustathios’ explanation of the “praiseworthy falsehood” of ancient actors:

Καὶ ἦν ὁ τότε ὑποκριτῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπάσης διδάσκαλος, παρεισάγων μὲν εἰς τὸ θέατρον καὶ τύπους κακιῶν, οὐχ ὥστε μὴν μορφωθῆναι τινὰ πρὸς αὐτάς, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκτρέψασθαι· εἰπεῖν δὲ καὶ ἄλλως, ψευδόμενος

<sup>21</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators* 845B.

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* 1404a12–19; Cassius Longinus, *Art of Rhetoric* 567.14–568.11. Eustathios refers to tragedy as rhetoric and the tragedian as orator in *Opusculum* 13, 89.22–30.

<sup>23</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 89.14–16.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Poetics* 1451b5–11, where Aristotle argues that, while historians record particular historical events, the universal patterns of reality are the subject of poetry, which makes poetry more serious and scientific than history.

ἐκεῖνος τὸ πρόσωπον, ἀληθιζόμενος ἦν τὸν διδάσκαλον· καὶ εἶχον οἱ θεαταὶ πορίζεσθαι τηρικαῦτα ψεῦδος καὶ ἐκεῖνο ἐπαινετόν, οὗ τὸ μὲν παχὺ καὶ πρὸς αἴσθησιν οὐδὲν οὐδόλως ἦν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, τὸ δὲ πρὸς ἔννοιαν τὴν ἐκλαλουμένην ψυχῆς ἦν τι μὸρφωμα. (Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.69–77)

And the actor [“hypocrite”] of that time was a teacher of every virtue, introducing into the theatre also models of vices, not, of course, so that someone moulded himself after them, but to turn away from them. To put it differently: by falsely impersonating the character, he was truly being the teacher. At that time, the spectators could also obtain that praiseworthy falsehood, of which the part that is dense and concerns the senses did not at all concern truth; the other part that concerns the meaning that was expressed was a mould for the soul.

The dichotomy that Eustathios makes here is between the corporeal aspect of performing on the part of the actor on the one hand and the meaning delivered, the ethical lesson conveyed on the other. Whereas the performance does not concern truth—the actor pretends to be someone he is not—the ethical lessons that he teaches are certainly true, which makes his falsehood a praiseworthy one.

Taken together, Eustathios’ discussion of the “hypocrisy” of ancient actors demonstrates that, in his view, deception is not necessarily reprehensible provided it is used for the right reasons. It suggests, moreover, that probable events, presented with rhetorical plausibility, are preferable to truth *qua* historical accuracy if this helps the poet-rhetorician to put across his message more effectively. I now turn to the *Commentaries on the Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where Eustathios’ ideas about praiseworthy falsehood and plausible rhetorical invention are fleshed out in more detail within the rhetorical-didactic context of these works.

## II. Praiseworthy Falsehood and the Art of Rhetoric in Homeric Poetry

Eustathios’ commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have a strong rhetorical focus: Eustathios analyses Homer’s eloquent style and skilful composition in rhetorical terms so as to provide the potential twelfth-century

author of rhetorical prose with methods and techniques to imitate.<sup>25</sup> As the *summus orator*, moreover, Homer has intentionally woven many rhetorical lessons into his poetry, to be identified and elucidated by Eustathios in his commentaries. Eustathios lists some of these rhetorical lessons in the proem of the *Commentary on the Iliad*.<sup>26</sup> One of these lessons is ‘praiseworthy deceptions’ (δόλοι ἐπαινετοί), for which he elsewhere throughout the commentaries—and in the sermon *On Hypocrisy*, as we saw above (Section I)—uses terms such as ἀπάτη (‘deception’) and ψεῦδος (‘falsehood’). For our current purposes, it is interesting to pinpoint where, for Eustathios, the boundary lies between praiseworthy or good deceptions and their evil counterparts. When is deception acceptable? Eustathios’ comments on Agamemnon’s words in *Iliad 2*, where the commander tells his troops that Zeus has devised ‘an evil deception’ (κακή ἀπάτη) for them, shed light on this issue:<sup>27</sup>

ὅτι δὲ ἐστὶν οὐ μόνον κακή ἀπάτη ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγαθή, Αἰσχύλος δηλοῖ εἰπών· «ἀπάτης δικαίας οὐκ ἀποστατεῖ θεός». εἴη δὲ ἂν ἀπάτη ἀγαθὴ ἢ ἐν καιρῷ καὶ οὐδ’ ἐπιβλαβής. τῇ δὲ τοιαύτῃ γνώμῃ συγγενὲς καὶ Ἡροδότου τὸ «ἔνθα χρὴ τι ψεῦδος λέγεσθαι, λεγέσθω». οὕτω καὶ δόλιος Ὀδυσσεὺς κατὰ ἔπαινον καὶ πᾶς δὲ ὅστισοῦν στρατηγός. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 188.42–45)

That there is not only evil but also good deception is indicated by Aeschylus, who says: ‘god is not absent from rightful deception’ [fragment 601 M]. For deception that happens at the right moment and is not hurtful could be good deception. And Herodotus’ words

<sup>25</sup> In the proem of the *Commentary on the Iliad* (2.27–36), Eustathios claims to have produced the work with a view to the prose-author. The rhetorical-didactic focus of Eustathios’ Homeric commentaries has been explored by Van der Valk in the preface to his edition (1971, XCII–C and 1976, LI–LXX), and more recently by Cullhed 2016, 2\*-4\*, 9\*-33\* and Van den Berg 2016. See also Nünlist 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1.30. The references to and quotations from the *Commentary on the Iliad* follow the edition by Van der Valk 1971–1987.

<sup>27</sup> *Iliad* 2.114–115: νῦν δὲ κακὴν ἀπάτην βουλευσατο, καὶ με κελεύει / δυσκλέα Ἄργος ἰκέσθαι, ἐπεὶ πολλὸν ὄλεσα λαόν, ‘but now he has planned evil deception, and tells me to return inglorious to Argos, when I have lost many men’. The text of the *Iliad* follows the edition by Allen-Monro 1902–1912; translations are from Murray-Wyatt 1999.

‘when it is necessary to speak a falsehood, do so’ [3.72.4] are similar to such a maxim. Thus Odysseus, too, is deceitful in a praiseworthy manner as well as every military commander in general.

Eustathios’ connection of deception and military command may go back to Xenophon, who lists four scenarios in which lying is acceptable. The second of these concerns the military commander who wishes to encourage his men.<sup>28</sup> Even Plato, the strong opponent of poetic lies and rhetorical sophistry, accepts lies in certain situations, if they are educational for the people or beneficial for the state.<sup>29</sup> Christianity does not seem to have altered this rather pragmatic attitude toward lies altogether: John Chrysostom justifies deception if it is instrumental in achieving a good cause.<sup>30</sup> Eustathios’ notion of praiseworthy falsehood, whether in ancient drama or Homeric poetry, thus ties in with earlier ideas about the acceptability of lying and deception, if used for the right reasons.

In Homeric poetry such praiseworthy deceptions are the speciality of Odysseus, who became the prototypical trickster in ancient tragedy, the inventive rhetorician in the eyes of the sophists.<sup>31</sup> Eustathios’ evaluation of the hero’s tricks and deceptions is generally positive: in the commentary on *Iliad* 4, for instance, he explains that Odysseus’ praiseworthy deceptions are an indication of the hero’s inventiveness and make him loved rather than hated by people.<sup>32</sup> This inventiveness often involves rhetorical skilfulness and it may therefore be no coincidence

---

<sup>28</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.2.15–17. Eustathios makes the same connection in e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad*. 628.6–9 (on *Iliad* 6.113–115) and 668.12–13 (on *Iliad* 7.108–114).

<sup>29</sup> On the acceptability of lies in Plato, see Page 1991.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 1.8, where Chrysostom apologises for deceiving a friend by distinguishing good deception from its evil counterpart. Deception is acceptable, he argues, if it happens with good intentions and for a good cause.

<sup>31</sup> On Odysseus as liar in Homer, see e.g. Pratt 1993, 54–94; on Odysseus in tragedy and oratory, see Worman 1999.

<sup>32</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 480.38–45. In three places in the *Commentary on the Odyssey*, Eustathios designates Odysseus’ lies as ἐπαινετοὶ δόλοι, which have brought him many victories: 1459.58–59 (on *Odyssey* 3.119), 1629.1 (on *Odyssey* 9.281), and 1862.60–61 (on *Odyssey* 19.212). For Eustathios’ ideas on acceptable deception, see also Pontani 2000, 26.

that Homer's Odysseus became the model for the virtuoso orator in later reception. Ancient scholiasts, for instance, identify Menelaus, Nestor, and Odysseus as representatives of the simple, middle, and grand style respectively,<sup>33</sup> while Hermogenes considers Odysseus the most 'skilful' (δεινός) orator.<sup>34</sup> Eustathios follows suit and argues that Homer made Odysseus the most powerful orator, while he made Nestor the best.<sup>35</sup>

In Nestor, too, deception and effective rhetoric go hand in hand, as Eustathios explains in his commentary on *Iliad* 1. Nestor mediates in the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, saying that Priam and the Trojans would certainly rejoice if they heard that the two most prominent Greeks, 'who surpass all the Danaans in counsel and in fighting' (οἱ περὶ μὲν βουλὴν Δαναῶν, περὶ δ' ἔστε μάχεσθαι, *Iliad* 1.258), are quarrelling. Eustathios explains:

Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι διδάσκει ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ ἐνταῦθα, ὡς ψεύσεται ποτε κατὰ καιρὸν ὁ σπουδαῖος, καθάπερ ὁ Νέστωρ ἐνταῦθα. οὐ γὰρ ἀληθεύει λέγων, ὅτι ἐν τε βουλῇ καὶ μάχῃ περίεστιν οἱ ῥηθέντες βασιλεῖς. Ἀχιλλεὺς μὲν γὰρ πάντων τῇ μάχῃ περίεστιν, οὐ μὴν δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων. τῇ μέντοι βουλῇ ἀμφοτέρωτεροι ἐλαττοῦνται τοῦ τε Νέστορος τοῦτου καὶ τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως. ἐψεύσατο οὖν καιρίως ὁ γέρον κολακικώτερον ἐν δέοντι λαλῶν καὶ μαλθάσων οὕτω τὴν τῶν ἡρώων σκληρότητα. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 99.29–34)

One should know that the poet teaches also here that the excellent man sometimes speaks a falsehood at the right moment, as Nestor does here. For he does not speak the truth when he says that the kings in question excel in counsel and in fighting. For Achilles surpasses everyone in fighting, but Agamemnon certainly does not. In counsel, however, both are inferior to Nestor himself and Odysseus. The old man thus spoke a falsehood at the right moment, appropriately speaking in a more flattering manner and thus softening the harshness of the heroes.

<sup>33</sup> Scholion A bT on *Iliad* 3.212; cf. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Life and Poetry of Homer* 172. On ancient rhetorical criticism of Homer, see Hunter 2015; Pontani 2016, 227–236.

<sup>34</sup> Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 2.9.7–12.

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 199.41–45. The rhetorical excellence of his heroes, ultimately, is to Homer's credit: 'the poet appears to be not just admirable, but even inimitable' (οὐ θαυμαστός ἀπλῶς ὁ ποιητὴς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀμίμητος φανεῖται, 199.43).

Eustathios approves of Nestor's slight distortion of truth—strictly speaking, Agamemnon is not the best fighter, and neither Agamemnon nor Achilles are best in counsel—as appropriate and timely: to achieve his goal of flattering the heroes and calming their anger, Nestor's version of the facts is more effective than the truth. With Nestor's example, moreover, Homer teaches that excellent men sometimes use a falsehood, as he does himself too (see Section III).<sup>36</sup>

Throughout the commentaries, Eustathios repeatedly connects such good deceptions or acceptable distortions of truth with the art of rhetoric. He evaluates as “rhetorical” scenes in which Homeric characters, whether human or divine, deliberately distort the truth or cleverly present the facts in such a way as to achieve the desired effect on the part of their addressee, which often involves persuading someone to do something. For example: in *Iliad* 1, Agamemnon “rhetorically” exaggerates his love for Chryseis so as to make his sacrifice for the benefit of the Greek army seem all the more significant; Odysseus “rhetorically” tries to provoke Achilles to anger in *Iliad* 9, by saying that the Trojans are so bold as to set up their encampment close to the Greek walls and intend to attack the ships soon; in *Iliad* 14 Hera “rhetorically” prepares Hypnos for her request to help her plot against Zeus by reminding him of a favour he did her in the past *without* mentioning the punishment Hypnos suffered as a result of it.<sup>37</sup> The art of rhetoric, then, is the art of effective speech, in which speaking the truth at times is less important than achieving one's goal—provided it is a noble one. Nestor's praiseworthy falsehood mentioned before and the good hypocrisy of ancient actors indicate rhetorical cleverness and are examples of effective rhetoric in service of the greater good, whether the greater good of the Greek cause in the Trojan war or the ethical instruction of the Athenian theatre-goer.

---

<sup>36</sup> Throughout his Homeric commentaries, Eustathios repeatedly argues that an ‘excellent’ (σπουδαῖος) or ‘prudent’ (φρόνιμος) man would not hesitate to use falsehoods or deceptions when necessary. See e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad* 186.11–13 (on *Iliad* 2.108); 653.19–20 (on *Iliad* 6.432–437); 1145.45–49 (on *Iliad* 18.326).

<sup>37</sup> Agamemnon: Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 61.9–10 (on *Iliad* 1.109–117); Odysseus: 749.42–45 (on *Iliad* 9.232–235); Hera: 982.3–5 (on *Iliad* 14.232–441).

### III. The Plausibility of Rhetorical Invention in Homeric Myth

Like his heroes, the poet himself also employs falsehoods at times. In the proem of the *Commentary on the Odyssey*, Eustathios responds to accusations of Homer being a liar: some people, so he writes, contend that Homeric poetry consists of lies or falsehoods only. In response, Eustathios repeats that it is necessary to use falsehoods at times, ‘not without reason but by necessity, and this should not be blamed, at least not by the intelligent’ (μη μαριδιῶς ἀλλ’ ἐν δέοντι ψεύσασθαι ἐπιτηδευτέον ποτὲ καὶ οὐ ψεκτέον τοῖς γε ἐχέφροσι). Moreover, Homer himself proves the truth of this statement by presenting his protagonist Odysseus as a liar and by mixing falsehoods into the historical truth of the Trojan War in his own work.<sup>38</sup> This is one of the main premises underlying Eustathios’ interpretation of Homeric poetry: in his view, poetry is a mixture of history and myth, of truth and falsehood. It has a historical core to which the poet, according to poetic custom, adds falsehoods or inventions.<sup>39</sup>

The Homeric falsehoods consist first and foremost of the many myths of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which in Eustathios’ view serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand, the enchanting mythical narrative seduces the less educated among the audience to take their first steps on the path of philosophy. As ‘shadows or veils of noble thoughts’ (ἐννοιῶν εὐγενῶν σκιαί εἰσιν ἢ παραπετάσματα),<sup>40</sup> they give the reader a first taste of truth and provide them with philosophical lessons, to be revealed by means of allegorical interpretation. As such, myths allow poetry to serve didactic purposes, so that ‘for this reason, the ancients thought his poetry to be a certain primary philosophy, introducing them, as they say, to life from their youth and teaching character, emotions, and actions with pleasure’.<sup>41</sup> This twofold function of myths—the false, mythical nar-

---

<sup>38</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Odyssey* 1379.33–40 Cullhed; the quotation is from 1379.35.

<sup>39</sup> Eustathios’ views on history and myth in Homer are indebted to Strabo and Polybius; see Pontani 2000, 14–15.

<sup>40</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1.37.

<sup>41</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 35.38–40: διὰ τοῦτο φιλοσοφία τις πρώτη ἐδόκει τοῖς πάλοι ἢ ποιήσις εισάγουσα, φασίν, εἰς τὸν βίον ἐκ νέων καὶ διδάσκουσα ἦθη καὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις μεθ’ ἡδονῆς. Eustathios quotes Strabo 1.2.3.



rative serves to enchant the audience, the allegorical meaning conveys true, philosophical lessons—resembles the twofold function of tragedy mentioned earlier (Section I): while the performance of the actor is a pretence, his moral lessons are entirely true.

In *On Hypocrisy* Eustathios identified “the plausibility of rhetorical invention” as imperative to the educational function of ancient tragedy. The same holds for Homer’s myths, which Eustathios considers ‘false’ (ψευδής) by definition, but which reflect truth through the ‘plausibility’ (πιθανότης) of their invention.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, as Eustathios argues in the proem of the *Commentary on the Iliad*, Homer is ‘such a technician in the plausible invention of myths that he serves as a teacher of this, too, for those who are fond of learning’.<sup>43</sup> In other words, by studying the plausibility of Homer’s myths, the Byzantine rhetorician can learn how to imbue his own writings with plausibility. In his Homeric commentaries Eustathios identifies many techniques that Homer uses to make his poems plausible, in both their historical and mythical parts. For him, plausibility is the quality of Homer’s discourse that makes it believable, persuasive, and trustworthy, regardless of its truth-value in absolute terms.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout the Homeric commentaries, Eustathios identifies correspondences to extratextual reality, i.e. the historical world of the Trojan War, as one of Homer’s techniques to lend plausibility to his myths. That is to say, in his view, plausibility is produced when the events of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are in accordance with historical events and ancient customs and Homeric characters and anthropomorphic gods behave as one would expect people to behave under certain circumstances. It is, for instance, plausible that Hera reveals the cause of the pestilence to Achilles in *Iliad* 1 because she holds a grudge against the Trojans after

---

<sup>42</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 3.25–26 (with discussion in Van den Berg 2016, 56–57; see also Cullhed 2016, 14\*). Eustathios transposes to the poetical μῦθοι of Homer the definition of the rhetorical μῦθοι (‘fables’) of the *progymnasmata*. See e.g. Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 1.1.

<sup>43</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 2.5–7: μεθοδευτῆς οὕτω τῆς τῶν μύθων πιθανῆς πλάσεως, ἵνα καὶ τούτου τοῖς φιλομαθέσιν (...) καθηγῆσθαι.

<sup>44</sup> For a fuller discussion of Eustathios’ analysis of Homeric plausibility, see Van den Berg 2016, 133–188.

Paris' judgement and needs the Greeks to be safe so as to bring the Trojans destruction; it is plausible that Paris boastfully addresses Menelaus in *Iliad* 3 since he wants to impress Helen; Helen's presence on the wall of Troy in the same book is plausible because it is in accordance with ancient customs.<sup>45</sup>

Some more marvellous events clearly do not correspond to reality and, thus, may seem implausible. Eustathios explains that Homer lends plausibility to such events by means of parallels or precedents within the microcosm of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or the world of older, 'pre-Homeric' mythology. In his commentary on *Iliad* 20, for instance, he argues that it is plausible that Poseidon saves Aeneas from imminent doom at the hands of Achilles because it is not uncommon in the *Iliad* that gods intervene to save heroes from death. As parallels he lists Apollo's interventions to save Aeneas in *Iliad* 5 (5.344–346; 431–446) and Hector later on in *Iliad* 20 (20.443–444).<sup>46</sup> A precedent in the mythological world outside the *Iliad* lends plausibility for instance to Hypnos' willingness to assist Hera in plotting against Zeus in *Iliad* 14. Eustathios explains the poetic strategy at work:

Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτοις, ὅτι θεραπεία τοῦ ἐν τοῖς μύθοις ψεύδους οὐ μόνον πιθανότης πλάσματος εἰκονίζουσά τι ἀληθές, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁμοιοτήτων παράθεσις, ἣν ἀλλαγῶ μεθοδεύει ὁ ποιητῆς καὶ ἐν οἷς δὲ κεῖται τὸ «πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ ἔτλημεν ἐξ ἀνδρῶν χαλεπὰ ἄλγεα· ἔτλη μὲν Ἄρης, ἔτλη δὲ ἠ΄ Ἥρη, ἔτλη δὲ Ἴδιος», καὶ ὅπου δὲ ἡ Καλυψὼ ζήλημονας ὡς καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτῇ, οὕτω καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέροις λέγει τοὺς θεοὺς. Οὕτως οὖν κἀνταῦθα τὸν Ὑπνον πλάττων ἐπιβουλεύειν μέλλοντα τῷ Διὶ θεραπεία τοῦ τοῦ λόγου ἀπίθανον, ἀναφέρων τοῦτον εἰς ὁμοιότητα μύθου παλαιοῦ, ὡς ἂν μὴ εἶη τὸ ἐνταῦθα πλάσμα μονῆρες. ἦν δὲ ὁ παλαιὸς μῦθος, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλοτε τὸν Δία ἐκοίμησεν ἐπὶ τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 982.15–20)

Notice also in this passage that a remedy of the falsehood in myths is not only plausibility of invention by representing something true, but also juxtaposition of similarities, a method that the poet also em-

<sup>45</sup> Hera: *Commentary on the Iliad* 45.13–35 (on *Iliad* 1.53–56); Paris: 432.20–21 (on *Iliad* 3.430–431); Helen: 394.14–16 (on *Iliad* 3.139–145).

<sup>46</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1210.14–18.

ploy elsewhere, in the passages where it is said ‘for many suffered fierce pains from men: Ares suffered, and Hera suffered, and Hades suffered’ [*Iliad* 5.383–395], and where Calypso says that just as they envy her, in the same way the gods [envy] others, too [*Odyssey* 5.118–129]. In this way, then, he [sc. the poet] also here, inventing Hypnos about to plot against Zeus, remedies the implausibility of the story by bringing it back to the similarity of an old myth, in order that the present invention is not singular. The old myth was that he put Zeus to sleep at another time, too, in connection with Heracles.

Eustathios does not make explicit why the Homeric inventions in question are potentially problematic, although a common-sense idea about the divine world seems to underlie his observations: it may be considered extraordinary that mortals are capable of wounding gods, implausible that gods lower themselves to feeling envy, and unlikely that Hypnos ventures to plot against the supreme deity—once again. Such seemingly extravagant fictions are plausible through ‘the juxtaposition of similarities’: by indicating that his inventions are not unique, that they are internally consistent within the world of mythology, Homer lends plausibility to events that could seem implausible.<sup>47</sup>

At the core of Eustathios’ allegorical approach to myths lies the idea that the allegorical meaning of myth is purposefully constructed by its author, whether this is Homer or the inventors of pre-Homeric myths.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, he starts from the assumption that mythical narrative and allegorical meaning are inextricably connected. How both layers of myth relate is evident from Eustathios’ interpretation of *Iliad* 5, where Diomedes wounds Ares and Aphrodite, but not Apollo:

---

<sup>47</sup> A similar idea is expressed in *Commentary on the Iliad* 559.39–40: Homer ‘artfully’ (τεχνικῶς) protects himself against possible objections to his invention by mentioning similar, older myths. See also 564.1–2, 635.21–23, and 1002.51–55. Eustathios seems to get quite close to a concept of fiction, in which plausibility is an important means to enable the audience to suspend their disbelief. His conception of plausibility, therefore, undermines the “paradox of plausibility” that Kaldellis has formulated for the Byzantine twelfth century (see Kaldellis 2014, esp. 120).

<sup>48</sup> On the role of authorial intention in Eustathios’ allegorical method, see Cullhed 2016, 31\*–33\*. On plausibility and myth, see also Van den Berg 2016, 147–151; 239–251.

Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ὅτι καλῶς Ὅμηρος οὐ ποιεῖ τὸν Διομήδην ἀριστεύοντα κατὰ τοῦ Απόλλωνος, ἵνα μὴ πάνυ ἀπίθανα λέγη καὶ εἰς ἀλληγορίαν μὴ βάπτοντα. Διὰ τοῦτο θρασύνεται μὲν πως κατ' αὐτοῦ, ὡς καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἰμαρμένον ἀριστεύων, καθὰ καὶ προεῖρηται, οὐ μὴν καὶ τρωᾶσαι αὐτὸν δύναται. Ἀφροδίτης μὲν γὰρ καὶ Ἄρεος δυνατὸν περιγενέσθαι τινὰ ἠθικῶς ὡς ἀλόγων παθῶν, Απόλλωνος δὲ οὐκ ἂν τις ὅπως οὖν περιγένοιτο, εἴτε ὡς ἥλιόν τις λαμβάνει αὐτόν, καθ' οὗ βάλλειν οὐκ ἔστι, εἴτε καὶ ὡς εἰμαρμένην τινά, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ Ἀφροδίτη οὐδὲ Ἄρης τρωθήσεται, ὅτε φυσικῶς ἀλληγορούμενοι ὡς ἀστέρες λαμβάνονται, εἰ μὴ τις ἀναλληγορήτοις θέλων ἐγχειρεῖν κατ' οὐρανοῦ τοξεύειν ὥσπερ βούλεται. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 570.46–571.8)

Also notice that Homer nicely does not make Diomedes prevail against Apollo, in order not to say things that are very implausible and that do not dip into allegory. Therefore, he [sc. Diomedes] in some way behaves boldly against him [sc. Apollo], as if prevailing contrary to fate, as has also been said earlier,<sup>49</sup> but he is certainly not able to wound him, too. For it is possible that someone prevails over Aphrodite and Ares in an ethical sense as irrational emotions, yet in no way whatsoever could someone prevail over Apollo, whether someone understands him as the sun, at which it is impossible to throw [a missile], or as some fate, just as neither Aphrodite nor Ares will be wounded, when in terms of natural allegory they are understood as stars, unless someone wishing to attack them while they are not allegorised wants to shoot, as it were, an arrow against heaven.<sup>50</sup>

Whether one explains Apollo with natural allegory as the sun or with ethical allegory as fate, Homer rightly did not make Diomedes wound Apollo since one cannot prevail over either the sun or fate.<sup>51</sup> Ares and Aphrodite, on the other hand, can be attacked since it *is* possible to prevail over irrational emotions.<sup>52</sup> The working of myth, then, resembles

---

<sup>49</sup> Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 568.45–569.1.

<sup>50</sup> ‘To shoot an arrow against heaven’ is a proverbial expression referring to someone who stubbornly attempts something in vain (see *Suda* εἰ 300).

<sup>51</sup> On Apollo as the sun in ancient allegorical exegesis, see Buffière 1956, 187–200. On Apollo as fate, see *Iliad* 16.849 with scholion bT on *Iliad* 16.850b.

<sup>52</sup> See Buffière 1956, 297–306 on Ares and Aphrodite as irrational emotions in ancient allegorical exegesis. In a similar vein, Athena as the rational part of the mind stops

the working of the tragic performance: though false by definition, the mythical narrative is plausible since it corresponds to its allegorical meaning and, thus, reflects—and teaches, so we may assume—a more universal truth on a deeper level.

## Conclusion

Gorgias' famous statement on tragedy—that the one who deceives is more just than the one who does not, and the one who is deceived is wiser than the one who is not—sums up nicely Eustathios' views on the hypocrisy involved in ancient poetry.<sup>53</sup> In Eustathios' view, poetry, whether tragic or epic, is rhetoric and rhetoric is the art of effective speech. To be effective, deception—a (slight) distortion of the truth or a clever presentation of the facts—is acceptable and even praiseworthy if used in service of a greater good. The deception of ancient actors, or “hypocrites”, is an example of such praiseworthy deception as it aims at the moral instruction of the audience. To be effective, moreover, the narrative does not have to follow the truth, but may present probable matters, rhetorically invented with plausibility. Eustathios' analysis of plausibility in Homeric poetry indicates that, for him, plausibility results from both correspondence to extratextual reality and consistency within the microcosm of the *Iliad* and the world of Greek mythology in general.

Ancient tragedy and Homeric poetry are largely fictional or semi-historical at most, despite the true ethical lessons they convey. Eustathios' “flexible” attitude towards deception and narrative truth, however, may extend to other types of rhetorical composition, too, including those that, from a modern point of view, would be associated with truth, such as historiography. After all, ancient actors are ‘living and speaking *history* books’ (βιβλίον ιστορίας ζῶν καὶ λαλοῦν) and Homer shares with historians ‘the capability of pleasing ears, of educating souls, of spurring

---

Ares, its irrational impulses, from revenging the death of his son (*Commentary on the Iliad* 1008.58–61 on *Iliad* 15.142).

<sup>53</sup> Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 15D.

toward virtue’ (τοῦ τὰς ἀκοῶς ἠδύνειν, τοῦ τὰς ψυχὰς παιδεύειν, τοῦ εἰς ἀρετὴν ἐπαίρειν).<sup>54</sup> It is not truth, but hypocrisy and plausibility—the quality that makes a narrative persuasive, trustworthy, and believable, regardless of its truth-value in absolute terms—that rhetorical handbooks define as the core of the art of rhetoric, whether this is the rhetoric of Homer, an ancient actor, or a Byzantine author.

## Bibliography

### Primary literature

Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad*. Ed. M.H.A.L.H van der Valk, *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, 4 vols. Leiden 1971–1987.

Eustathios, *Commentary on the Odyssey*. Ed. E. Cullhed, *Eustathios of Thessalonike, Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey. Vol. 1: On Rhapsodies α-β*. Uppsala 2016.

Eustathios, *On Hypocrisy* (= *Opusculum 13*). Ed. T.L.F. Tafel, *Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opuscula*. Amsterdam 1832.

*Iliad; Odyssey*. Eds. T.W. Allen & D.B. Monro, *Homeri Opera*, 5 vols. Oxford 1902–1912.

Scholia in Dionysius Thrax’ *Art of Grammar*. Ed. A. Hilgard, *Grammatici Graeci* vol. 1.3. Leipzig 1901.

### Secondary literature

Agapitos, P.A. 1998. “Narrative, Rhetoric, and ‘Drama’ Rediscovered: Scholars and Poets in Byzantium Interpret Heliodorus.” In R.L. Hunter (ed.), *Studies in Heliodorus*, 125–156. Cambridge.

Agapitos, P.A. 2015. “Literary Haute Cuisine and Its Dangers: Eustathios of Thessalonike on Schedography and Everyday Language.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69: 225–241.

---

<sup>54</sup> Eustathios, *Opusculum 13*, 89.32. Commentary on the Iliad 1.34-35.

- Angold, M. 1995. *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261*. Cambridge.
- Barnes, T. 2010. “Christians and the Theater.” In I. Gildenhard & M. Revermann (eds.), *Beyond the Fifth Century: Interactions with Greek Tragedy from the Fourth Century BCE to the Middle Ages*, 315–334. Berlin.
- van den Berg, B. 2016. *Homer and Rhetoric in Byzantium: Eustathios of Thessalonike on the Composition of the Iliad*. Dissertation, University of Amsterdam.
- Buffière, F. 1956. *Les mythes d’Homère et la pensée grecque*. Paris.
- Croally, N. 2005. “Tragedy’s Teaching.” In J. Gregory (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, 55–70. Malden/Oxford.
- Cullhed, E. 2016. *Eustathios of Thessalonike, Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey. Vol. 1: On Rhapsodies α-β*. Uppsala.
- Destrée, P. & F.G. Herrmann (eds.) 2011. *Plato and the Poets*. Leiden/Boston.
- Gill, C. 1993. “Plato on Falsehood—not Fiction.” In C. Gill & T.P. Wiseman (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, 38–87. Exeter.
- Halliwell, S. 2002. *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton, NJ/Oxford.
- Hunter, R.L. 2015. *The Rhetorical Criticism of Homer*. In F. Montanari, S. Matthaios, A. Rengakos (eds.), *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 673–705. Leiden/Boston.
- Kaldellis, A. 2014. “The Emergence of Literary Fiction in Byzantium and the Paradox of Plausibility.” In P. Roilos (ed.), *Medieval Greek Storytelling: Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium*, 115–126. Wiesbaden.
- Katsaros, V. 2002. “Η ρητορική ως ‘θεωρία λογοτεχνίας’ των Βυζαντινών.” In P. Odorico & P.A. Agapitos (eds.), *Pour une ‘nouvelle’ histoire de la littérature Byzantine*. Actes du colloque international philologique, Nicosie, 25–28 mai 2000, 95–106. Paris.
- Magdalino, P. 1997. “Eustathios and Thessalonica.” In C.N. Constantinides, N.M. Panagiotakes, E.M. Jeffreys, A.D. Angeous (eds.), *ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, 225–238. Venice.
- Marciniak, P. 2009. “A Dramatic Afterlife: The Byzantines on Ancient Drama and its Authors.” *Classica et Mediaevalia* 60, 311–326.

- Marciniak, P. 2013. "The Undead in Byzantium. Some Notes on the Reception of Ancient Literature in Twelfth-Century Byzantium." *Troianalexandrina* 13, 95–111.
- Marciniak, P. 2016. "It Is Not What It Appears to Be: A Note on Theodore Prodromos' *Against a Lustful Old Woman*." *Eos* 103, 109–115.
- Mazzucchi, C.M. 2004. "Ambrosianus C 222 inf. (*Graecus* 886): il codice e il suo autore. Parte seconda: l'autore." *Aevum* 78.2, 411–440.
- Murray, A.T. & W.F. Wyatt. 1999. *Homer: The Iliad*, 2 vols. Cambridge, MA.
- Nünlist, R. 2012. "Homer as a Blueprint for Speechwriters: Eustathius' Commentaries and Rhetoric." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 52.3, 493–509.
- Page, C. 1991. "The Truth about Lies in Plato's *Republic*." *Ancient Philosophy* 11, 1–33.
- Pontani, F. 2000. "Il proemio al *Commento all'Odissea* di Eustazio di Tessalonica." *Bollettino dei Classici* 21, 5–58.
- Pontani, F. 2016. "Inimitable Sources: Canonical Texts and Rhetorical Theory in the Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Traditions." In A. Grafton & G.W. Most (eds.), *Canonical Texts and Editorial Practices: A Global Comparative Approach*, 224–252. Cambridge.
- Pratt, L.H. 1993. *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar: Falsehood and Deception in Archaic Greek Poetics*. Ann Arbor.
- Schönauer, S. 2005. "Flucht vor den Gläubigen? Abenteuerliches aus dem Leben des Eustathios von Thessalonike." In L. Hoffmann (ed.), *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, 705–717. Wiesbaden.
- Szabados, B. & E. Soifer. *Hypocrisy: Ethical Investigations*. New York.
- Webb, R. 2008. *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA.
- Worman, N. 1999. "Odysseus Panourgos: The Liar's Style in Tragedy and Oratory." *Helios* 26.1, 35–68.



