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Contents

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Rhythm for Situational Contexts: The Case of Ancient Greek Epic Performance

Abstract

In this article[1] I will discuss rhythm's contribution to the performance of ancient Greek epic like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in terms of phonostylistics, the branch of phonetics that studies the use of phonetic means which are restricted to specific contexts. Hartmann and Storck (1972: 175) aptly define phonostylistics as "that branch of stylistics which investigates the expressive function of sounds". I will apply observations from recent studies on phonostylistics in order to account for the rhythmical effect of the so-called heroic meter. It will be my aim to classify the rhythm of the dactylic hexameter as a function: a deliberate influence on stylistic variation. As such, rhythm may be compared to other stylistic functions like the tempo of speech. The rhythm of heroic meter is a conscious deviation from everyday unplanned spoken language. Its appliance creates a 'situational context', i.e. a particular linguistic environment that is conditioned by a fixed set of extra-linguistic factors: in this case, the performative environment. My perspective on the performance of ancient Greek epic will be limited, though, to this single aspect of prosody, rhythm, with only little regard for other issues such as the how and when of performance. Contemporary durational performances of the Homeric epic provide an intuition for epic performance as a particular linguistic environment. In this contribution, I will first discuss the prosody of ancient Greek epic performance with a focus on rhythm. In subsequent sections, I will analyse the performance of ancient Greek epic as a situational context under the influence of the rhythm of heroic meter: this phonetic feature is restricted to the context of epic performance. In the final section of this article, I will pay special attention to the way modern audiences perceive the 'otherness' and the repetitiveness of heroic rhythm.

Keywords: performance; Greek epic; heroic rhythm; situational context; phonostylistics

Introduction: The Prosody of Ancient Greek Epic Performance

Ancient Greek texts are broadly accepted as performed, or at least performable, texts. The well-known epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, attributed to the legendary poet Homer, were products of a long tradition that originated in

[1] I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Skenè. JTDS* for the valuable comments and suggestions. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Greek are mine.

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orally composed and transmitted narratives. Having been performed for centuries, they were eventually written down, possibly in a version that differed considerably from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as they are known today. 'Dictation theory' (West 2001, 2011; Ready 2015) holds that at a certain moment (the end of the eighth century BC or little later), the 'monumental poet' dictated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to a scribe at a festival (Jensen 2011: 244 claims that this single recording took place in 522 BC). Up until this first 'material fixation' or writing-down, both epics supposedly changed with every performance: the composing poet had, and took, the opportunity to add and remove word groups, whole lines, and passages. West (2011: 28-37) envisages the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in this phase as resembling *epyllia*, self-contained episodes that might or might not be understood to have a definite place in a larger context. In his view, there is every reason to suppose that the *epyllion* was what an epic singer commonly or even usually performed – much like the performance of two songs of the Trojan War by Demodocus in the *Odyssey* (8.75-82; 8.499-520) –, the monumental poet being the exception to the rule. Frequency and occasion of performances remain a matter of guesswork, both for the period before and immediately after the first material fixation. Alternatively, Nagy's "evolutionary model" (1996: 29-63) describes the development of the monumental *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not as a historical accident, but as a gradual process: with the aid of writing as an equivalent to performance, existing transcripts of particularly successful performances served as the basis for re-composition. From their first material fixation, the narrative of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* continued to expand thanks to the interaction of orality and literacy: the Homeric epic kept being orally performed, while the performers' reliance on writing enabled them to keep composing (such composing performers are known as *aoidoi* 'singers') and re-composing with the aid of material which had been already written. Thus, the recurrence of distinctive words, word groups, or items, sometimes thousands of lines apart, becomes a matter of deliberate re-use, rather than "independent withdrawals from the great oral credit bank" (West 2011: 50). Bakker (2013: 157-69) shows how the re-use of word groups and formulas was exploited by the composing performer in order to create conscious allusions and motives to help structure the expanding narrative. The interaction between orality and literacy during the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries BC resulted in the monumental *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the most important redaction, under Peisistratus at the end of the sixth century BC, produced a text that was probably very similar to the text we know today. By that time, performers of the Homeric narrative were no longer composers: as reciting performers at major festivals they were known as *rhapsoidoi*, i.e. 'song-stitchers'. Their performance of episodes from the *Iliad* and the

Odyssey relied on the knowledge of the written text. González (2013) argues that the rhapsodic delivery of episodes from the Homeric narrative resembled that of tragic texts by actors, and of well-prepared material by speakers in the democratic assembly: the lines had been learned by heart, and delivery only allowed for little leeway for improvisation. 'Recomposition' had been brought down to the insertion or deletion of whole lines. Yet some fluidity of the text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* remained. Ancient scholars felt free to add, criticize, and remove lines well into the second century BC. Evidence from papyri (Bird 2010) shows that the written text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reflects variants in performance until the first century BC.

Performance implies, among other features, a deliberate and thoughtful use of the range and modulations of the voice. In the study of performative features of ancient Greek texts, delivery has been treated as an aspect of style. Style is then understood to encompass prosody, the study of the production and perception of phonation, or 'sound'. In the discussion concerning style and language in ancient Greek, the issues of style/register and prosody have both been treated, even though as separate topics, in Willi 2010 and Nagy 2010, and, more recently, in, amongst others, De Jonge 2014, Staab 2014, and Goldstein 2014.

Nagy's evolutionary model implies special restraints for the delivery of epic in performance as it presupposes that Homer's formulaic diction and its specific prosodic features developed together and in close connection (1996). The most conspicuous prosodic feature of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is meter. The language of formulas brought the dactylic hexameter with it, and, in turn, the hexameter provided the format for newly developed and flexible formulas. The dactylic verse of Homeric narrative is a rather strict format; the hexametric line features a minimum of twelve syllables, and never more than seventeen syllables, as the dactylic hexameter consists of six feet that allow for only little variation. Built as a regular patterning of two types of syllable structures, 'long' (–) and 'short' (∪), a metrical foot is either trisyllabic (dactylic) *long-short-short* or disyllabic (spondaic) *long-long* (West 1982). Even the verse-final foot is disyllabic despite the indeterminacy of its second element:

1		2		3		4		5		6	
	–		–		–		–		–		–
–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	X

Holodactylic and holospondaic lines do occur, but a typical Homeric line shows some variance in the tri- and disyllabic feet:

ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων (*Od.* 1.5)
– ∪ ∪ | – – | – – | – – | – ∪ ∪ | – –
striving to save his own life and the safe return of his comrades

The origin of the hexameter, a verse form based on a regular patterning of two types of syllable structures in a frequency ratio 1:2, remains the subject of scholarly debate; what is important for the study of performative aspects of prosodic features is that the dactylic hexameter itself seems to be ill-suited for delivery in a language whose distribution of the two syllable types is closer to a frequency ratio 1:1. If we presume that dactylic meter reflects rhythm (substituting 'long' for 'heavy', and 'short' for 'light'), dactylic rhythm is tied to the metrical phrase of the hexameter, and deviates considerably from the rhythm of unplanned ancient Greek speech, which, as Aristotle informs us, is iambic. I will show that dactylic meter is not the equivalent of its rhythm, but that meter merely reflects rhythm to a certain extent. Its close tie with formulaic language makes dactylic rhythm a recognizable and useful vehicle for managing audiences' expectation in performance.

1. Prosody Performed

How should we interpret the performative impact of dactylic meter? Two approaches stand out, and have done so since antiquity: the durational analysis and the approach of metrical rhythm as the timing mechanism of speech. The former takes its cue from the syllable denominations 'long' and 'short', and Aristides Quintilianus' (c. 300 AD) remarks on the vowel's duration in musical realisation (West 1992: 130-2). These remarks enabled metricians to establish a key for computing syllable durations, based on the number of vowels and consonants in the syllable's rhyme. Metricians count consonants in the syllable's rhyme as ½, short vowels as 1, and long vowels/diphthongs as two *morae*. The *mora* is the smallest unit of time in musical scaling. Even silence or pause may be computed this way: the ancient Greek scholar Nicanor (early second century AD), nicknamed *stigmatias* ('punctuator'), created a system of punctuation that involved pauses of up to four *morae*. From a phonological perspective, this approach of rhythmical prominence in performance as 'quantitative accent' appears to be very useful. The written texts of ancient Greek allow such syllable computations; poetic texts like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* prove to be very consistent in their written representation of syllable structures (West 1992: 135-7). Once the metrical phrase has been determined, performers may read out loud by making an audible distinction between the syllables with 'long' duration, and those with 'short' dura-

tion: 'long' syllables are then pronounced with roughly twice the duration of 'short' syllables.[1]

Such realization of metrical rhythm, however, seems to lack rhythm's most important quality: the perception of regularity. Homer's dactylic hexameter, for example, allows for the replacement of the double short (∪ ∪) by a single *longum* (–) in the first four feet, but hardly ever in the fifth. This avoidance of a sequence of two *longa* (– –) in the fifth foot shows that the verse in performance is sensitive to disruption in delivery, not as a result of duration (as ∪ ∪ presumably equals –), but rather of another prosodic quality that is tied to location within the line. Devine and Stephens (1984) argue that the preference for resolution of the second element of the fifth foot is tied to the location of word end: line-internal spondaic word end is generally avoided in epic meter (as in iambic trimeter) as it evokes untimely rhythmical disruption. In other metrical phrase types, like iambic, trochaic, or dochmiacs, the problem with counting quantities becomes even more visible, as single ∪ may be replaced by – which in turn may be replaced by ∪ ∪ or even ∪ ∪ ∪ (West 1992: 137-40). I argue that the ease with which *mora*-count ½ is replaced with *mora*-count 1 (and more disruptive replacements can be found in the texts) makes it very unlikely that the regularity of metrical rhythm stems from the performance of 'durations'.[2] Attempts to allow for more, variable durations – for the anceps element, for example, somewhere between long and short (Dale 1969), or for up to seven or more different durations (West 1982, 1992) – have provided scholars with a means to maintain the rhythmic regularity, but at the cost of the 'quantitative accent': rhythmical requirements like periodicity and isochrony cannot be attained from an approach based on absolute time values (Allen 1973, 1987; Devine and Stephens 1994; Nespor and Vogel 1986; Gussenhoven 2004; Gussenhoven and Jacobs 2011). Also, the durational approach does not account for similar syllable structures on different rhythmical elements.

A different interpretation of the performative impact of metrical text was suggested by Allen (1973), who preferred an alternative approach, later followed by, as mentioned above, Devine and Stephens. Their starting point is not the visible surface structure of meter, but the universal periodicity of rhythm. Instead of distilling rhythmical regularity from the metrical structure, this method assumes rhythmical regularity, and only then starts looking for its visible remnants in the surface structure, that is, in meter. In other

[1] For example in the pieces of poetry read by Stephen Daitz on www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOvVWiDsPWQ, (last access 2 May 2017) and, with regard for the pitch accent, by Stefan Hagel on www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/sh/ (last access 2 May 2017) and, for Latin, by Brooks 2007 on the CD that comes with the book

[2] Golston and Riad (2000) note that, with the exception of anapaests, all metrical rhythms lack periodicity in a durational approach.

words: meter is not rhythm, but it merely reflects rhythm to a certain extent. To a limited degree, the rhythm of ancient Greek prose, non-metrical text is equally reflected in its surface structure, despite the obvious lack of regular patterning in its scansion. Still, both text types, metrical and non-metrical, are seen as an alternation of rhythmically prominent elements (theses) and rhythmically less-prominent elements (arses), much like the pattern of dynamic stress accent.

What does this mean with regard to the performance of Homer's hexameter? The metrical hexameter may then vary in the number of syllables (I) as two light syllables may be contracted into a single heavy syllable, the rhythmical hexameter (II) is a flawless example of the universal rhythmical principle of 'counting by two':

(I) – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – X
(II) [TA] [TA] [TA] [TA] [TA] [TA] (T = Thesis; A = Arsis)

Devine and Stephens (1994) argue that the thesis-arsis alternation primarily functions as the timing mechanism of speech. Speech production is timed internally by the regular temporal intervals between prominent stimuli: a sort of beat which is the result of acoustic prominence every so many milliseconds. In natural unplanned speech, speakers automatically and unknowingly produce their utterances in accordance with such a beat. Sometimes this means that tempo of speech increases as there are so many rhythmically less prominent syllables in a row that they need to be compressed in pronunciation. At other times, tempo of speech slows down as there are three or four consecutive prominent syllables: the time in between is then accounted for by prolongation of the prominent syllables or by silence. In many cases, syllables either lose or gain (some) prominence in order to maintain the speaker's rhythmical regularity. What sets Greek poetry, i.e. metrical text, apart from non-metrical prose is the severe restriction on the abovementioned rhythmical adjustments in composition and performance. There is a limit to the number of either prominent or less prominent syllables in a sequence, and prominence cannot be strengthened or weakened as easily as in non-metrical speech. The rhythmical regularity of ancient Greek texts is thus reminiscent of the dynamic accent, and Devine and Stephens interpret the metrical evidence in order to reconstruct a stress-accented rhythm for Greek speech – both because of Aristotle's remark (*Rh.* 3.8, 1408b) that "all utterances, metrical and non-metrical, are rhythmical" and because of rhythmical periodicity as a linguistic universal, for metrical and non-metrical utterances alike. The strong correspondence between ancient Greek meter and phonology, however, forces scholars to allow for variety in durations, beyond the simple dichotomy of 'long' and 'short'. As mentioned above, metricians came up with up to sev-

en or even twenty different syllable durations. Devine and Stephens refuse to resort to absolute syllable durations. Yet maintaining regular temporal intervals in speech production requires them to allow for considerable adjustment of *prima facie,* phonological syllable 'duration' by prolongation or shortening of syllables in phonation. Such adjustment, labelled 'submoraic', since it is not expressed in the phonological *mora* of syllable duration or accentuation, should be studied as a rule, or as a constraint that is typical for ancient Greek.

Thus, meter and rhythm share different roles in the prosody of epic narrative, both in its composition and in performance. Meter serves as the framing structure for the compositional unit of the verse. It determines the mapping of disyllabic and trisyllabic feet on a twelve- to seventeen-syllables phrase.

The realization of feet as either tri- or disyllabic does not seem to have anything to do with the semantics of the words, nor does it suggest any meaningful regularization of patterning within or between the lines. The choice between two or three syllables per foot merely enables the composer to locate differently shaped words (O'Neill 1942). Contrary to metrical phrases, which are organized externally in distiches or stanzas, dactylic hexameters are grouped in series without any obvious restriction as regards the number of lines. In performance, metrical 'length' does not automatically function as an audible feature; the notion that syllable structures like 'long' and 'short' represent absolute syllable durations has been generally recognized as untenable (Allen 1973, 1987; Devine and Stephens 1994; Golston and Riad 2000). The regular coincidence of verse end and clause end in Homeric poetry has led to the observation that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not only initially composed per verse (Parry 1971), but also recited with a pause at every verse end (Daitz 1991; Nagy 2000). The mismatch of verse end and clause end has been analysed as enjambment (Higbie 1990; Clark 1997) and considered an instance of emphasis (Edwards 2002).

As happens with meter, rhythm concerns both the composition and the performance of epic poetry. Its role in the latter is taken for granted, because rhythm is a feature of spoken language, and it is the organizing principle behind the 'chunks' into which spoken language naturally divides (Allen 1987; Devine and Stephens 1994; Bakker 1997; Goldstein 2014; Blankenborg 2016). As a compositional motivator, dactylic rhythm provides the *cola*, the building blocks for the hexameter: the positions of frequent word end (caesurae and diereses) show that the relatively long hexametric line developed in two to four *cola*, themselves internally organized through formulas, rather than in six feet (Porter 1951; Kirk 1966; Clark 2004; Edwards in Finkelberg 2011). Into two hemistichs:

στέμματ’ ἔχων ἐν χερσὶν : ἑκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος (*Il.* 1.14)

[Holding the ribbons in his hand of far-shooting Apollo]

Into four *cola*:

εἶκε Διὸς : θύγατερ : πολέμου : καὶ δηϊοτῆτος (*Il.* 5.348)

[Remove yourself, Zeus’ daughter, from the war and the fighting]

ὣς ἔφαθ’, : ἡνίοχος : δ’ ἴμασεν : καλλίτριχας ἵππους (*Il.* 11.280)

[Thus he spoke and his charioteer put the whip on the horses with beautiful manes]

Into three *cola* (Kirk’s “rising threefolder”):

διογενὲς : Λαερτιάδη : πολυμήχαν’ Ὀδυσσεῦ (*Il.* 2.173)

[Descendant of Zeus, son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus]

Together with intonation, rhythm also contributes to the coherence of the phonological phrase, keeping *cola* together in a clause even over the verse-end (Goldstein 2014; Blankenborg 2015, 2016). An example like *Il.* 6.509b-10a shows that the phrasal contours created by rhythm are not similar to those created by meter:

ἀμφὶ δὲ χαῖται
ὤμοις ἀΐσσονται (*Il.* 6.509b-10a)

[On both sides his manes spring out on the shoulders]

There is a scholarly tendency to use meter and rhythm almost as synonyms and to understand the regular recurrence and patterning of heavy and light syllables as the regular recurrence and patterning of rhythmically prominent and less-prominent elements (Dale 1969; Halporn, Ostwald, and Rosenmeyer 1980; West 1982; Silva Barris 2011; Staab 2014). However, the ‘quantitative rhythm’ (or ‘metrical rhythm’) of Greek metrical texts cannot be taken to mean that rhythm was the product of the regular distribution of ‘long’ and ‘short’ syllables, appealing to the listeners’ ability to distinguish between two durational categories. Indeed, as mentioned above, Devine and Stephens (1994) relied on Allen’s (1973, 1987) observations on Greek dynamic accent in order to reconstruct a rhythmical grid, analogous to his approach of reconstructed stress patterning. They describe metrical (similar to non-metrical) rhythm as the regular recurrence of more prominent auditory stimuli into a timing mechanism for the production of speech. They consider the differences in syllable ‘length’ on the basis of syllable structure

as not significant in the performance of Greek poetry: audible differences in syllable duration may arise from the speaker's personal preferences, or merely indicate an artificiality in the shortening and prolongation of vowels which emphasize the status of the speaker. As the structural marker of ancient Greek poetry, syllable 'length' is reminiscent of dynamic stress-accent patterns. Thus 'dactylic' rhythm, that is, a series of feet, each consisting of a rhythmically prominent thesis ('*DUM*') and a less-prominent arsis ('*diddy*' or *'dum'*), stems from 'dactylic' meter (– ∪ ∪). The series of feet ends in rhythmical disruption: an anceps element (printed X) which is metrically indeterminate (so either – or ∪) and rhythmically indifferent. Thus, the rhythm of a single dactylic hexameter ('six-footer'), the metrical phrase of ancient Greek epic like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, runs like this:

1		2		3		4		5		6	
	–		–		–		–		–		–
–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	∪ ∪	–	X
	↑				↑		↑				↑
metron/foot				thesis			arsis				anceps
	-dum		*-dum*		*-dum*		*-dum*		*-dum*		
DUM-diddy		*DUM-diddy*		*DUM-diddy*		*DUM-diddy*		*DUM-diddy*		*DUM-dum*	

As I pointed out above, a single hexametric line is not the domain of rhythm, as rhythm keeps words, word groups and phonological phrases together in *cola*, or series of *cola*, sometimes over the verse end. Dactylic rhythm is thus better studied in the word group, the *colon*, or a cluster of verses. A typical cluster of Homeric lines may then create the following rhythmical profile (for reasons of perspicuity the metrical verse end is marked with | in the rhythmical rendering):

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν·
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὣς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἱέμενός περ·
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο
ἤσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.
τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν.
(*Od.* 1.1-10)

[Tell me about the man, Muse, of many ways, who for a very long time /

wandered, after he destroyed Troy's sacred citadel. / He saw the cities of many men and got to know their attitude. / Many woes he suffered at sea in his heart, / striving to save his own life and the safe return of his comrades. / But as much as he wanted to, he could not protect them this way: / because of their own stupid mistakes, they perished, / fools, who ate the cows of the Sun god, son of Hyperion; / he, in turn, took from them the day of their safe return home. / Start from any point in these events, Goddess, daughter of Zeus, to inform us as well.]

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη,
DUM-diddy DUM-diddy, DUM-di, di-DUM-diddy, DUM-diddy DUM-dum, | *DUM-di,*
ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν·
di-DUM dum-DUM diddy-DUM diddy-DUM-di di-DUM-dum:
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ'
DUM-dum DUM-dum-DUM diddy DUM-diddy DUM diddy DUM-dum, | *Dum-di di-*
ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν, ἀρνύμενος
DUM-dum-DUM diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy-DUM-dum, | *DUM-diddy-DUM*
ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων. ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὣς ἑτάρους
dum-DUM-dum-DUM dum DUM-di di-DUM-dum. | *DUM dum DUM diddy-DUM*
ἐρρύσατο, ἱέμενός περ· αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν
dum-DUM-diddy DUM-diddy-DUM-dum: | *DUM-dum DUM diddy-DUM-di*
ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο, νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς
di-DUM-diddy-DUM-di di-DUM-dum | *DUM-diddy, DUM-diddy DUM*
Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο ἤσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν
diddy-DUM-diddy DUM-diddy-DUM-dum | *DUM-diddy*: *DUM-di di DUM-di*
ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ. τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ
di-DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-dum. | *DUM diddy-DUM-di, di-DUM, diddy-DUM*
Διός, εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν.
diddy, DUM-di di DUM-dum. |

Epic is characterized by, and recognizable from, its specific prosodic phrasing, both in composition and in performance. Other genres are equally identifiable as such or as text types because of their distinctive prosodic patterning: the spoken passages in tragedy are in iambic trimeter ('three-footer' based on *di-DUM di-DUM*), those in comedy in trochaic tetrameter ('four-footer' based on *DUM-di DUM-dum*), lyric poetry uses dozens of intricate and often hard-to-identify metrical forms. The rhythmical profile of many different instances of metrical Greek texts differs considerably from the rhythm of ancient Greek unplanned speech. Aristotle informs us (*Rh.* 3.8, 1408b) that unplanned Greek speech is iambic: *di-DUM di-DUM*. Little could he know that iambic rhythm appears to be a prosodic universal! In this respect, ancient Greek apparently falls in with most languages known today.

2. Epic as Situational Context: The Appeal of Rhythm in Performance

In performance, the rhythm of metrical texts must have made a distinctive impression on the listening audience. An aberrant rhythmical foot would not have attracted the audience's attention (and yet it would have in case of a metrical phrase in non-metrical delivery), but a sequence of lines consistently built from aberrant feet would definitely have caught the spectators' ears. Line after line, the listening audience would have got used to the specific rhythm. It is the rhythm itself that creates expectations: the audience expect it to keep repeating itself either on a smaller or larger scale. Dactylic, iambic, and trochaic verses are highly repetitive within the line, and the lines are repetitive in their sequencing, while choral and lyric meters are less repetitive line-internally and on a larger scale only recur as couplets, stanzas, and strophes. Still, the effect of metrical rhythm, as of rhythm in general, is based on the perception of some kind of iteration.

Once accepted as perceptible and aberrant, the effect of rhythm in performance may as well be approached from the reverse angle. As the distinction between the different rhythms and genres shows, rhythm is tied to the contents of the single line, of the poem as a whole, as well as to the context of the performance. While the aesthetic and emotional relationship between rhythm and the single line has been discussed in recent scholarship,[3] its connection with performance as a context remains relatively uncovered. I therefore propose to describe the performance of epic poetry as a situational context, and by 'situational context' I intend a particular linguistic environment that is conditioned by a fixed set of extra-linguistic factors. The close tie between a performative context and an aberrant rhythm evokes, as I will argue, a specific communicative situation in which the unusual and the expected blend. The performance of metrical text creates a situational context that is recognizable both from its form and its content: hexametric poetry deals with the stories or wisdom of old, as iambs and trochees are reminiscent of everyday speech, and lyric poetry reflects on the emotional ups and downs of life. The aberrant rhythm suits the content's specificity, and, in due course, performers will adapt their delivery to the prominence pattern of the situational context rhythm (Nagy's 'evolutionary model' suggested a similar progress for the Homeric bard, and recent scholarship shows that, in everyday situations, performers will bend the rhythm of their enunciation to both content and context. Speakers adjust their delivery and level of speech formality to the performative rep-

[3] Dale (1969: 254), for example, considers dochmiacs (*di-DUM DUM di-DUM*) as carrying "an inherent emotional expression" and Edwards (2002: 96) ascribes "terrifying qualities" to paeons (*di-diddy-DUM*).

etition, causing regularity to become even more regular, and allowing for deviations to become even more deviant. One may observe how this phenomenon, that is, the almost unavoidable and, as far as the performer is concerned, often hardly noticed aberration of the rhythm of speech, conforms to the rhythm that becomes the situational context. We may take as examples common everyday 'performances' such as the pre-flight safety demonstration on an airplane before take-off, or the announcement of a train delay while you are impatiently waiting on a windy platform. The performer's routine creates the situational context and the wording, the content is identifiable by specific prosodic features alone.

The ability of dactylic rhythm to create a specific performative context is reminiscent of the way phonetic processes, like tempo of speech, create situational contexts. This dactylic rhythm enters the realm of phonostylistics, the branch of phonetics that studies the use of phonetic means which are restricted to specific contexts. I will focus on dactylic rhythm in performance as such: as the usage of an aberrant, almost extra-linguistic phonetic means that is largely restricted to the context of epic performance. Trubetzkoy (1969) briefly discussed phonostylistic issues in the introduction of his *Principles of Phonology*, but this quality of phonology and phonetics has been mostly neglected ever since. Trubetzkoy defined phonostylistics as a "branch" of phonology and phonetics that can "be subdivided into stylistics of expression and stylistics of appeal on the one hand, and stylistics of phonetics and stylistics of phonology on the other. In the phonological description of a language one must take into account the stylistics of phonology . . . . However, the proper object of such a description must remain the phonological study of the 'plane of representation'. In this way, phonology need not be divided into a phonology of expression, a phonology of appeal, and a phonology of representation. The term "phonology", as before, can remain restricted to the study of sound pertaining to the representational plane of the system of language, while 'stylistics of phonology', which in itself is only part of "phonostylistics", focuses on the expressive and conative phonic means of the system of language" (24-5). The 'representational plane' of dactylic rhythm as a phonostylistic means may well be gauged: it is reflected in the metrical phrasing of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and motivated the analysis of the narrative as a stichic text. The meter of the written text is supposed to serve as a clue for the appreciation of the stylistics of expression and appeal, but has largely failed to do so: ancient and modern studies on Homeric performance have been unable properly to account for the performative impact of the epic's prosody. I therefore intend to take a first step towards a proper account, and to attempt a reconstruction of different aspects of the epic's 'phonology of expression'. I will approach epic rhythm's 'otherness' as the 'phonology of appeal', that is, a phonetic means

that is restricted to a specific context and accountable for conditioning a particular linguistic environment.

As pointed out above, hexametric poetry, like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, features a rhythmical profile that differs considerably – and consciously so – from everyday language. What then is its appeal in performance? Is it the mere perception of deviant rhythm being strengthened by its nearly 'endless' (the *Iliad* counts more than 15,000 lines, the *Odyssey* close to 12,000) repetition? The earliest extant works on poetic aesthetics in performance do not go into details with regard to the performative appeal. In the *Odyssey* itself we find a single characterization of it: the legendary Phaeacians, who have rescued and entertained Odysseus after a shipwreck, are "captured by his spell" (κηληθμῷ δ' ἔσχοντο, 11.334) at his autobiographical narrative of the past ten years. Similarly, in her famous poem *The gods' equal* (no. 5), Sappho (sixth century BC) describes her physical reaction when listening to one of her young female students speaking – although this cannot be considered as a real performance and therefore as an amorous rather than a performative appeal. In his dialogue *Ion* (c. 380 BC), Plato introduces his mentor, Socrates, involved in a debate with a Homeric rhapsode, Ion, who just won a prize in a performance competition. Unfortunately, their discussion focuses on content rather than on form, depriving us of a unique opportunity to learn first-hand about the effect of poetry in performance. Aristotle has been mentioned before: his remark on the rhythm of ordinary speech ("iambic") is important as it provides us with the certainty that ancient Greek speakers perceived a distinction between normal rhythm and 'other than normal'. Valuable information with regard to performative appeal might have been found in Aristides Quintilianus' *De musica* (third century AD) but only fragments of his work have survived (D'Angour 2015). It allegedly accounted for two important developments in metrical-rhythmical theory in the fourth and third century BC. First, there had been a paradigm shift in the approach of the relation between music and wording in the fourth century, the so-called New Music. Much remains unclear concerning this development, but it appears to have implied a change in the way music and wording reinforced each another. The New Music performers apparently tried to align the rhythm of spoken language with the musical accompaniment that was common in the performance of poetry. If language's rhythm – and its regularity – had been the performer's guide until then, now music took over, and the measurements of music with it. Language's rhythm became of secondary importance, much like it happens to lyrics in modern popular music. Due to the loss of crucial theoretical work of ancient Greek scholars, we do not know if this paradigm shift was in the end successful. We cannot even draw any conclusion on whether performance of Greek epic took the form of recited poetry (Daitz

1991; Nagy 2000) or song (Beck 2012). We can detect this shift, however, in the results of a debate that took place roughly around the same time. From the time of Aristotle and his pupil Aristoxenos, ancient scholars on prosody considered themselves either 'metricians' or 'rhythmicians'. The former group, already mentioned in section 2 above, considered syllable durations as equivalents of musical measurements, an approach that seems similar to that of New Music. The rhythmicians, on the other hand, maintained language's rhythm as the key to the performance of poetry. Again, as with the remarks on New Music, the crucial theoretical works from the period when this development took place (especially Aristoxenus') are no longer extant or have been preserved in a very fragmentary way.

Especially interesting are the observations of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (second century AD), who comments on the appeal of performance as seen through the eyes of a rhythmician. His comments on the *ethos*, or 'character', of the poetic form, provide a clue for the appreciation of rhythm's 'otherness' and appeal. In the fourth chapter of his work *On Composition* (*De compositione verborum*), he states that the effects that metrical rhythm may attain are considered to be partly inherent to the language itself, more or less as in prose composition. In modern terminology, we may summarize Dionysius' observation in chapter 11 of *On Composition* by stating that rhythm in stress-timed languages conditions various forms of adjustment, in order to maintain rhythmical regularity: syllables may be either compressed or prolongated in delivery. Dionysius speaks of phonetic reduction, a form of submoraic adjustment involving the compression of syllables. He also notes that metrical composition strives to avoid hiatus, the clashing of vowels when a word ends in a vowel and the next word starts with one. He further discusses vowel elision and shortening, which are both forms of submoraic adjustment. Dionysius' account is of paramount importance for us as he also pays attention to the taste and the talent of poets and of performers. With regard to the latter, Dionysius points at the speeding up of the tempo of speech through a preponderance of long syllables. In relation to this particular point, let us compare a holospondaic line like *Od.* 21.15 (there are only six more: *Il.* 2.544, 11.130, 23.221, and *Od.* 15.334, 22.175, and 22.192), to the verses 16-17:

τὼ δ' ἐν Μεσσήνῃ ξυμβλήτην ἀλλήλοιϊν
DUM dum-DUM-dum-DUM dum-DUM-dum DUM-dum-DUM-dum

[The two of them met once in Messene]

οἴκῳ ἐν Ὀρτιλόχοιο δαΐφρονος. ἦ τοι Ὀδυσσεὺς
DUM-di di-DUM-diddy-DUM-di di-DUM-diddy, DUM di di-DUM-dum

[in the house of war minded Ortolochus; at that time, Odysseus]

ἦλθε μετὰ χρεῖος, τό ῥά οἱ πᾶς δῆμος ὄφελλε
DUM-di di-DUM dum-DUM, diddy DUM dum DUM-di di-DUM-dum

[came to collect a debt, that the whole community owed him]
(*Od.* 21.15-17)

In a holospondaic line, the number of syllables pronounced is reduced when compared to the application of resolution, the replacement of a long syllable (*dum*) by a double-short (*diddy*). At first it may come as a surprise that, in Dionysius' view, a preponderance of short syllables, as it is found in *Od.* 21.16 above, also results in a speeding-up of the tempo of speech, as compared to the steady movement of an utterance in spondees. Dionysius apparently discusses two different perceptions of this process of acceleration: in a verse with many long syllables, the temporal intervals between prominent syllables are filled with only one syllable; in verses with many double-shorts the intervals are perceived as shortened due to the compression of the syllables. Still, the verse-type with many double-short elements is considered to be "slower" than the one with many long syllables. Dionysius comments explicitly on Sisyphus' slow and "shameless" boulder in *Od.* 11.598: a holodactylic verse that describes the unstoppable run down the slope of the large stone that Sisyphus worked so hard to push up the hill:

αὖτις ἔπειτα πέδονδε κυλίνδετο λᾶας ἀναιδής
DUM-di di-DUM-di di-DUM-di di-DUM-diddy DUM-di di-DUM-dum

[then down again towards the plain rolled the shameless boulder]
(*Od.* 11.598)

In *Od.* 21.15-17, the holospondaic verse (15) would still take less time to be pronounced than the subsequent, holodactylic line (16). Verses with many long syllables are in turn considered "solemn" and it therefore comes as a surprise that the "heroic" (epic) rhythm is held to be endowed with solemnity of speech despite its preponderance of light syllables. It need not surprise us that both spondees and dactyls appear to increase the tempo of speech in performance. Compared to the metricians' approach, both verse types speed up language production, since language's rhythm takes the lead and musical accompaniment follows. The metricians' musical bars cause random syllables to become drawn-out, whereas the rhythmicians only allow for word- and phrase-final lengthening (indicated with . in the following example; Ruijgh 1989; Devine and Stephens 1994; Blankenborg 2015):

ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες, ὅσοι φύγον αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον,
οἵκοι ἔσαν, πόλεμόν τε πεφευγότες ἠδὲ θάλασσαν
(*Od.* 1.11-12)

[Then all others, in as far as they had escaped horrible destruction, / resided at home, safely returned from war and the sea.]

The metricians' approach:

ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες, ὅσοι φύγον αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον,
– – |– – |– ∪ ∪ |– ∪ ∪ | – ∪ ∪ | – X ||
οἶκοι ἔσαν, πόλεμόν τε πεφευγότες ἠδὲ θάλασσαν
– ∪ ∪ |–∪ ∪ |– ∪ ∪ |– ∪ ∪ | –∪ ∪ |– X ||

The rhythmicians' approach:

ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες, ὅσοι φύγον αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον,
– –|– –.|– ∪. ∪|– ∪ ∪.|– ∪. ∪|– X ||
οἶκοι ἔσαν, πόλεμόν τε πεφευγότες ἠδὲ θάλασσαν
– ∪. ∪|–. ∪ ∪|– ∪. ∪|– ∪ ∪.|– ∪ ∪|– X ||

In his discussion of metrical archetypes (for example dactyls, anapaests, iambs, and dochmiacs), Dionysius passes a moral and aesthetic judgement on the feet and rhythms they produce and represent (*De verb. comp.* 17, 25, 26 [on Simonides, fr. 37]; cf. *Demosthenes* 50, Aristotle, *Poetics* 23; Longinus, *De sublimate* 39.4): dactylic rhythm is heroic for a reason other than the solemnity of the words. Its appeal as 'heroic' stems from its distinctive 'otherness', and the way it appears to increase the tempo of speech.

3. The 'Impulse' of Rhythm in Delivery

Rhythm is prosody's most important aspect in the context of performance. In the performance of epic narrative, like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Hesiod's *Origin of the Gods* or his *Works and Days* (eighth century BC), or Apollonius' *Argonautica* (third century BC), the dactylic rhythm of the performance was a key for the audience to the interpretation of the content. Rhythm creates expectations and catches the audience's attention by keeping words and word groups together and being suggestive of units of understanding. In this section, I will show that these units of understanding and perception are quite different from the units suggested by meter on the representational plane. The rhythmical impulse that guides the understanding and expectations of the listening audience creates a patchwork of phrases of different shapes and sizes.

In current scholarship on epic rhythm and performance, rhythm is regularly studied as an aspect of style, in addition to being a reflection of emotional expression (see Dale's "passionate feeling of some kind", 1969: 254). The studies that discuss style and prosody together, mentioned in section 2 above, focus on the way stylistic issues are reflected in prosody. An ex-

ample concerning the Homeric epic is the discussion of emphasis (see § 1 above): specific words or word groups receive extra emphasis due to their position in the line or the verse, as explained in Edwards' *Sound, Sense, and Rhythm* (2002). Attention is drawn to instances of verses where the verse-end does not coincide with a break in syntax, making it look as if the developing clause runs over into the subsequent line. An example is the run-over clause ὄφρα καὶ ὑμεῖς εἴδετ' in *Od.* 9.16-17a:

> νῦν δ' ὄνομα πρῶτον μυθήσομαι, ὄφρα καὶ ὑμεῖς
> εἴδετ', ἐγὼ δ' ἄν ἔπειτα
> (*Od.* 9.16-17a)
>
> [Now I will first say my name, so that you too / know it, and I may then]

Such enjambment is remarkable in a work that was supposedly (cf. Parry 1971) composed by adding whole-line sentences into a sequence. Verse-end enjambment stands out as exceptional, as it indicates a mismatch of metrical-rhythmical and syntactical composition. Recent studies on enjambment in Homer (Kirk 1966; Clark 1997) have shown how the rearrangement of formulaic material allowed for the run-over of clauses: verse-final and verse-initial formulas and word groups teamed up to make clauses run over the verse end, or to make clauses start at the end of the previous line (a well-known example of the latter is the frequent clause start in verse-final αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα "but then"). Relying on Parry's observation that practically one in every two verses features verse-end enjambment, Higbie (1990) classified the various types of verse-end enjambment in seven categories, based on the level of grammatical expectation at verse end: verse-end enjambment may thus be merely "adding", "necessary", or, in case of a single *mot-en-rejet*, even "violent". Such terminology suggests that verse-end enjambment itself might be consciously exploited by the composer and the performing poet. In Edward's view, that is in no way unique, verse-end enjambment may be semantically strengthened by the verse end itself. The allowance for disruption of the ongoing clause by verse end highlights the (preferably) single *mot-en-rejet*, the awaited-for word(s) at the start of the subsequent line. An example of such strengthened semantics (with single *mot-en-rejet* in line 58) may then be found twice in an example like *Il.* 22.56-8a:

> ἀλλ' εἰσέρχεο τεῖχος, ἐμὸν τέκος, ὄφρα σαώσῃς
> Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳάς, μὴ δὲ μέγα κῦδος ὀρέξῃς
> Πηλείδῃ
>
> [Come on, retreat behind the city wall, lest you may rescue / the men and women of Troy, and not offer a chance to gain great honour / to the son of Peleus]

Edward's view is not merely concerned with stylistic matters since it supposes expectations on the part of the listening audience. As, among others, Blankenborg (2016) shows, any such expectations, which lie in the field of situational context, depend on the combined effects of *both* rhythmical and intonational phrasing. In an example like *Od.* 14.5b-6a, it is safe to assume that both the rhythmical impulse and the intonational phrasing kept the coherent run-over clause together in delivery. An attempt to highlight verse-final or verse-initial semantics through emphasis would remain unconvincing:

ἔνθα οἱ αὐλὴ
ὑψηλὴ δέδμητο

[where a courtyard / of considerable height had been constructed]

In her study on word order in tragic dialogue, Dik (2008) analyses verse-end enjambment in the iambic trimeter and reaches a similar conclusion, but she allows for the possibility for verse-end enjambment to evoke a slight hesitation in order to underline a *mot-en-rejet*, as in Sophocles' *Electra* (86-7a):

ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα χἠ πανώλεθρος
μήτηρ

[who killed my father together with that total disaster: / my mother]

I consider such emphasising hesitation also possible in a Homeric line like *Il.* 22.41:

ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτερός ἐστι
σχέτλιος
(*Il.* 22.40b-1a)

[since, obviously, he is much stronger, / this monster]

Examples concerning verse-end enjambment show what generally holds true for Homer's verses: metrical verses and rhythmical phrases may end differently. The phrases and clauses form a pattern that does not necessarily coincide with the verse-to-verse pattern constructed by meter. The notion that meter and rhythm strive towards the same level of temporal regularity does not mean that their patterning coincides – and indeed the two patterns partly overlap. Together with a third type, i.e. intonational phrasing, rhythm contributes to a patchwork of phrases. Its primary contribution is the short "spurt", or as Porter (1971) put it, the "rhythmical impulse" which drives the narrative forward towards the next (breathing) pause – although always keeping up a regular, if uncommon, pace. Even in its non-everyday dactylic form, rhythm remains "an alternation between elements that allow sylla-

bles to run their full course" (Trubetskoy 1969: 22) and syllables that are compressed in their phonation (Arvaniti 2009; Blankenborg 2015; Rathcke and Smith 2015). Deliberately alienating as dactylic rhythm may be perceived in performance, its concept is in line with the rhythm of all other utterances, including what Aristotle (*Rh.* 3.8, 1408b) considers the rhythm of Greek unplanned speech, that is, iambic.

Rather than constituting a by-product of meter in Homer's verses, rhythm's impulse in situational-context delivery may also be illustrated from a point of view that is different but nevertheless widely accepted. I am referring to the widespread notion that a preponderance of dactyls is an indicator of light, perhaps even festive content, whereas verses filled with spondees are meant to convey serious and possibly depressing matter (cf. Dionysius' observations in section 3 above), a notion purely based on their metrical profile. Needless to say, verses that do not tally with this observation are more numerous than the ones that do:

κὰδ δ' ἄρ' ἐπὶ στόμ' ἔωσε; πεσόντα δέ μιν λίπε θυμός
(*Il.* 16.410; holodactylic: festive?)

[he hit him with a spear in the mouth; as he fell his life left his body]

σίτου καὶ κρειῶν ἠδ' οἴνου βεβρίθασιν
(*Od.* 15.334; holospondaic: solemn? depressing?)

[(tables) that are laden with food, with meat, and with wine]

Of course, I do not intend to go over the same argument again. I moved from the alternative notion that the contribution of rhythm to a situational context does not derive from stylistic observations that are then acknowledged in prosody. I took a lead from the otherness of Homeric prosody itself, only to turn to phenomena that may be identified as conscious deviations from everyday speech and the performative quality of unplanned spoken ancient Greek.

4. Experiencing the Situational Context of 'Heroic' Rhythm

The realization of dactylic rhythm differs considerably from the rhythm of unplanned speech: the *DUM-diddy*, *DUM-diddy*, *DUM-dum* of dactylic rhythm in epic performance is quite different from the *di-DUM*, *di-DUM*, *dum-DUM* you were likely to hear had you been so fortunate to roam the streets of Pericles' Athens. However, it was never the intention of epic performance to make one feel as if he or she was simply taking a stroll around the city, engaging in discussions and conversations of, or with, others. The

close tie between meter and phonology shows that dactylic verse, the heroic rhythm, was meant to be experienced as an aberration of normal speech, that it was to an extent artificial and sensitive to specific situational contexts, i.e. the rendering of the past exploits of the legendary heroes in faraway lands and the compiling of gnome-like lists of wise sayings known as didactic poetry.

Both the rhythm of everyday ancient Greek unplanned speech and the dactylic rhythm of epic performance are not readily perceptible to modern-day audiences and scholars. The attempt (Devine and Stephens 1994) to reconstruct the rhythm of Greek speech as the timing mechanism of spoken language makes it plausible, however, that ancient Greek's rhythm was patterned on a grid that can be compared to the feet of the dynamic stress accent used in most modern languages. If their view is correct (and I think it is), the rhythm of unplanned everyday Greek speech may well be gauged; even the slightly stylized iambic rhythm of the tragic trimeter would then sound rather familiar to modern ears. Yet, dactylic rhythm would still sound as an aberrant phenomenon, possibly even as an extra-linguistic constraint on delivery. Nevertheless its effect and impact may, to an extent, be experienced by modern-day readers or spectators too.

The difference between aberrant and normal rhythm can be perceived by reading aloud rhythmical translations. Compare the following two passages, one in 'hexameters' and one in 'iambs':

> Speaking so, he hit Dryops, hit straight in the gullet by spearpoint;
> fallen he lay on the ground at his feet; and he left him to lie there;
> Demuchus then, Philetor's young heir – good fighter, gigantic –
> knee being struck with the spear – held fast was he, then to the next man,
> wounding him with his powerful sword he tore out his spirit.
> (*Il.* 20.455-9, trans. by Mark W. Edwards)

> Now again, you've escaped your death, you dog,
> but a good close brush with death it was, I'd say!
> Now again, your Phoebus Apollo pulls you through,
> the one you pray to, wading into our storm of spears.
> We'll fight again – I'll finish you off next time
> if one of the gods will only urge me on as well.
> But now I'll go for the others, anyone I can catch.
> (*Il.* 20.449-54, trans. by Robert Fagles)

In Homer's Greek, both passages share the same metrical format, and the same dactylic rhythm. A translation in iambs makes the poem sound more colloquial, whereas the 'hexameters' evoke grandeur and standoffishness. Translators feel encouraged to strengthen these effects: Fagles uses a tag like "I'd say!", while Edwards inserts dashes in order to imitate the word order

and the presentation of information that is characteristic of epic poetry. Like many situational contexts that are marked as such on the basis of prosodic contours, epic poetry has a particular way of presenting information. Homer's hexameters leave much room for unnecessary information, and for parentheses. This 'redundancy' of epic diction is reminiscent of the one we typically find in modern situational contexts like train station announcements or pre-flight safety instructions. The feeling of redundancy experienced by passengers is not caused by the irrelevance of the information (especially for those who hear it for the first time and for whom it may prove of vital importance!), but by the type of attention that the situational contexts themselves require from their audiences. The contexts whose specific character is the result of the repetition of prosodic characteristics risk losing their listeners' attention: the repetition itself, especially in an artificial and aberrant prosodic contour, distracts the listeners who concentrate on the aberrancy of the rhythm rather than on the content. Modern listeners go through something similar when they board a plane. Frequent flyers are, of course, familiar with the content of the pre-flight briefing and, in their case, it is the prosodic pattern, rather than the instructions themselves that makes them recognize the procedure. They therefore do not pay much attention to it. On the contrary, new passengers will be at first keen on the content of the demonstration, but will soon discover that a full comprehension of it is seriously hindered by the deviant prosodic pattern of the presentation. Deviance is actually strengthened by the repetitiveness of the presentation as experienced by the crew members. They adapt the prosody of their speech, especially the intonational pattern and rhythmical prominence, to the repetitiveness of their task. By doing this, they unintentionally create a mismatch between the presentation's prosodic contour and its informational value. For first-time passengers, this makes it harder to gauge the importance of the message, just as it entices frequent flyers to practically ignore what is being explained. In a similar way, all passengers waiting on the platform may recognize the start of a delay announcement, but will focus on what is actually being announced only when *their* destination is mentioned.

A comparison of the various situational contexts established by ancient Greek metrical rhythm strengthens the intuition that performances in heroic (dactylic) rhythm suffer from a comparable loss of informational value. In the metrical text that most closely resembles everyday speech (the spoken verses of Attic tragedy), each line offers the listeners pieces of information they need in order to follow the developments of the plot. Aeschylus', Sophocles' and Euripides' extant dramas may be compared to comprehensible screenplays, the audience cannot afford to be distracted. The plots of Sophocles' *Oedipus* or Euripides' *Medea* can only be fully understood and appreciated by an audience that has heard every spoken verse. Con-

trariwise, the performance of Greek epic does not require such a high level of attention. The verses of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* feature many "fillers" (Bakker 2005: 1-21): words and word groups that, although interesting in their own right, do not provide essential information for the audience – many contain contradictory or superfluous items of information and quite a few distract the audience allowing them to sidetrack from the main issue. Let us consider in this regard the following passage from the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2:

> The men of Argos and Tyrintha next,
> and of Hermione, that stands retired
> with Asine, within her spacious bay;
> of Epidaurus, crown'd with purple vines,
> and of Trœzena, with the Achaian youth
> of sea-begirt Ægina, and with thine,
> Maseta, and the dwellers on thy coast,
> wave-worn Eïonæ; these all obeyed
> the dauntless Hero Diomede, whom served
> Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, a Chief
> of deathless fame, his second in command,
> and godlike man, Euryalus, the son
> of King Mecisteus, Talaüs' son, his third.
> But Diomede controll'd them all, and him
> twice forty sable ships their leader own'd.
> Came Agamemnon with a hundred ships,
> exulting in his powers; more numerous they,
> and more illustrious far than other Chief
> could boast, whoever. Clad in burnish'd brass,
> and conscious of pre-eminence, he stood.
> He drew his host from cities far renown'd,
> Mycenæ, and Corinthus, seat of wealth,
> Orneia, and Cleonæ bulwark'd strong,
> and lovely Aræthyria; Sicyon, where
> his seat of royal power held at the first
> Adrastus: Hyperesia, and the heights
> of Gonoëssa; Ægium, with the towns
> that sprinkle all that far-extended coast,
> Pellene also and wide Helice
> with all their shores, were number'd in his train.
> (*Il.* 676-705, trans. in blank verse by William Cowper)

I suggest that this 'filling' is not merely a by-product of the oral origin and tradition of the Homeric epic (Parry 1971; Lord 2000), but can also be interpreted as a licence, if not a peculiar feature of the specific situation-

al context of the two poems. Their verses are so long, and their rhythmical profile is so aberrant and repetitive, that a listening audience would not have focused on single words, but rather on the salient details that entertained them and kept them under the narrator's spell.

5. Conclusion

By approaching the rhythm of ancient Greek epic performance as the motivator behind a situational context, I have ventured into the realm of phonostylistics, the study of stylistic implication of phonetic variation. Dactylic rhythm, as an "expressive function of sounds" (Hartman and Storck 1972: 175), was closely connected to the particular linguistic environment of the epic performance, and it could have permeated utterances from the performance of epic onwards. Expressive functions of sounds are known to do that (let us think, for example, of the deviant rhythmical and intonational patterns of (too) frequently used swearwords like 'OMG!', and 'WTF!').

The study of ancient Greek phonostylistics has only just begun and would require a closer analysis of all the various metrical and non-metrical texts and of their variants in writing in order to gauge the way performance explains the "permissible sound substitutes" (Trubetzkoy 1969: 22) that seem to run counter to the required phonological syllable structure.

In this article, I have focussed on the phonetics of deviant rhythm. Starting from universals concerning rhythm (cf. Arvaniti 2016; Lavidas 2014; Turk and Shattuck-Hufnagel 2014; Rathcke and Smith 2015), I have provided evidence in order to support my proposal to treat the rhythmical profile as a phonostylistic expression of appeal. Dactylic rhythm differs considerably and consciously from the iambic rhythm of unplanned Greek speech: its realization in performance evokes a context that predicts and offers a particular content, in addition to its aberrant and highly stylized delivery. I have therefore argued that the contribution of rhythm to situational context does not start from stylistic observations, like enjambment or emphasis, which are then acknowledged in prosody. In fact, I took a lead from the otherness of Homeric prosody itself, only to turn to phenomena that may be identified as conscious aberrations from everyday speech or as characteristics of epic diction that find their ontology in the rhythmical profile.

In addition to the examples I quoted in section 5 and in order to provide scholarship and the general public with a better reason to accept the otherness of epic Greek's rhythmical profile, I would like to point at the highly interesting contemporary experimental environments through which we may get closer to the performance of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The staging of Greek tragic plays and comedies already has a long tradition. Thea-

tre groups around the world, both professional and amateur, bring Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes to the stage, often in translation, but also in ancient Greek. Translations that copy the rhythm of the original, iambs for tragedy and trochees for the spoken passages of comedy, give the audience a sense of the repetitiveness of metrical rhythm, with its lack of rhythmical variation. Performances in ancient Greek suffer from the lack of proper and full understanding of the subtleties of Greek prosody, even though the performers' voices invariably adapt to its staccato-like rhythmical profile.

In the past few years there have been durational performances of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, i.e. readings of the entire text of the epics. On December 8 2016, the *Iliad* was read entirely in Dublin, by volunteers who responded to a call via social media. On March 24 2017 groups of reciters all over the world, taking turns, contributed to a durational performance of the *Odyssey*.[4] With so many contributors it seemed inevitable that many different and personal reading styles were heard. Yet, the various contributions had one thing in common: all the performers adapted their reading style, either consciously or not, to the otherness and repetitiveness of the metrical profile that deviates from the universal of rhythmical regularity of modern languages as well as from the one of unplanned spoken ancient Greek.

That, at least, provides us with a new and highly interesting universal: the otherness of epic Greek's rhythmical profile creates a distinctive situational context in performance. And from this, of course, comes the need to keep experimenting.

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