

Emotion in Politics: Envy, Jealousy, and Rulership in Archaic and Classical Greece

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the association between the emotions of envy and jealousy and the figure of the sole ruler, which is discernible in even the oldest ancient Greek literary texts. These emotions—most easily identified by the Greek words *phthonos* and *zêlos*, but in many cases left unnamed on account of an enduring social stigma—are overwhelmingly negative and often dangerous in the works of Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus, and this is especially true when a ruler is involved. When a ruler acts out of envy or jealousy, there are never direct positive effects for others, and the only instance in which envy or jealousy aimed at a ruler can be considered to produce a societal benefit is when it originates from the divine realm. In such circumstances, it reestablishes proper order by punishing the overly arrogant. There are various scenarios in which envy, jealousy, and rulership appear in combination, and the widening range of permutations in the literature of the fifth century B.C. (and beyond) reflects a heightened anxiety about the precariousness of one-man rule. Already in the works of Homer and Hesiod, it is readily apparent that envy and jealousy typically relate to issues of honor. Accordingly, many rulers attract the envy of their subjects (particularly of potential rivals), and conversely, many rulers exhibit jealousy in their attempts to maintain their position or their status. In the classical period, arguments about why specific individuals do not and why people in general should not envy rulers become increasingly prevalent, as does the idea that overly powerful individuals provoke the jealousy of the gods. There are also depictions of rulers who internalize the commonplace that they are wont to incur envy to such a degree that they either become

excessively cautious and fearful or they dismiss any opposition on the grounds that it stems from envy. In the world of epic, while envy and jealousy were already regarded as untoward and potentially destabilizing emotions, monarchy was still a perfectly acceptable and widespread form of rule. Over time, however, with the Athenians' hatred of tyranny burgeoning and their influence growing, the association between the emotions of envy and jealousy and rulership was invoked more and more frequently, as democrats and oligarchs alike could use it to justify their distrust of tyranny, and thus the increasingly negative perceptions of tyranny contributed in turn to the further vilification of envy and jealousy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

To date, there have been no in-depth studies of the relationship between envy and jealousy and the figure of the sole ruler in ancient Greek literature. Greek authors commonly depicted tyrants and kings as jealous individuals who were often simultaneously the object of envy among their constituents.¹ In many instances, these emotions relate to issues of honor and reputation. Thus we can see why the Greeks believed that envy and jealousy played a significant role in shaping the actions and behavior of rulers, since they were often characterized as being especially preoccupied with their image and status. Although the Greeks recognized that envy and jealousy could bring about positive effects in select situations, they focused on the potential and tendency of these emotions to be detrimental and even dangerous. The association between sole rulers and the emotions of envy and jealousy predated the widespread antagonism toward tyranny that developed toward the end of the archaic period, but as their antagonism increased, the Greeks had this association at their disposal to help justify their position.

1. Historical background

Tyranny in ancient Greece played a significant role both in shaping the history of the archaic period and in influencing political thought throughout the classical period and beyond. Many city-states experienced tyranny firsthand in the archaic period, but even after it had faded to the peripheries of mainland Greece, it nevertheless remained prominent in political discourse

¹ For the similarities and differences between envy and jealousy (as we understand them in English), see p. 22-28.

as a theoretical alternate to democracy and oligarchy. The phenomenon of tyranny thus provides an excellent opportunity to explore what the ancient Greeks thought about the nature of one-man rule, the nature of political power more generally, and even the very nature of man.

The origins of the words *turannos* and *turannis* are not Greek. They first entered the Greek language sometime in the seventh century, and the earliest extant use appears in the poetry of Archilochus, who presents tyranny as something upon which most men look favorably or covetously, rather than with contempt.² Although one might acquire a tyranny by violent measures, Archilochus nevertheless depicts it as a source of prestige for the man who succeeds in attaining one.³ Not until Solon's poetry, written in the first half of the sixth century, do we encounter these words being used in an obviously negative context. Like Archilochus, Solon indicates awareness that many men desire to be tyrant, but he sternly cautions against this, depicting tyranny as a catalyst for ruin.⁴ In the works of the Athenian tragedians of the fifth century, *turannos* often simply means "king," although the playwrights do seem to recognize the negative connotations the word is capable of carrying, and they occasionally exploit this meaning.⁵ Similarly, Herodotus too is familiar with the word's negative associations. He uses *turannos* and *basileus* more or less interchangeably in some cases, but notably, *turann-* words appear in the speeches of Otanes and Socles as they argue against one-man rule.⁶ Evidently, the terms were not yet unequivocally and universally negative, but authors in the fifth century could easily utilize their pejorative sense if and when they wanted to.

² Parker (1998), 150-52. For a discussion of the fragment in which *turannis* first appears, see p. 5-6. All dates referring to the events or literature of ancient Greece are B.C. unless noted otherwise.

³ Anderson (2005), 204.

⁴ Parker (1998), 156.

⁵ Idem, 160.

⁶ Idem, 164.

The shift in the meaning of *turann-* words from neutral to negative was induced by the changing political milieu: the decades leading up to and following the Persian Wars effected a most notable change in attitudes and thus in semantics as well. In the 540s, more tyrants began looking abroad to Persia for support, rather than to their own city-states (or networks of elites in other nearby city-states), and this detachment bred a certain amount of resentment at home.⁷ Hippias of Athens forged a strong enough connection with the Persian court that after the Spartans deposed him from Athens, he eventually made his way to Persia and subsequently led Darius' men to Marathon in 490. Especially given Hippias' role in matters, the Persian Wars were bound to affect the Athenians' attitudes toward tyranny, as many of them viewed their success in resisting the Persians as a validation of the institution of democracy over that of autocracy.⁸

The Persian Wars not only had an impact on how tyranny was regarded moving forward in time, but they influenced how the Greeks thought about and represented tyrannies in the past as well.⁹ For example, the Athenians were eager to show themselves as staunchly opposed to tyranny, despite the fact that they had acquiesced to living under one for several decades. At some point before the Persian Wars, they commissioned a statue group to be placed in the agora, glorifying Harmodius and Aristogeiton as tyrannicides, even though they neither killed the actual tyrant nor ended the tyranny.¹⁰ In 477/6, almost immediately after putting an end to the second invasion, the Athenians commissioned a replacement for the statue group, which Xerxes had seized and removed to Persia.¹¹ The original commission speaks to their dedication to revising Athenian history, but the alacrity with which they replaced the stolen statue indicates a dramatic

⁷ Anderson (2005), 211.

⁸ Lavelle (1993), 13.

⁹ Lewis (2009), 11-12.

¹⁰ The exact date of the statue group by Antenor is debated. See Taylor (1981), 34-36.

¹¹ Idem, 37.

and even more vehement imperative: it was crucial that they have a tangible symbol of their anti-tyranny ideology and that they represent Harmodius and Aristogeiton (and thus the *dêmos* itself) as the city's liberators.¹²

In addition to events relating to the Persians, around the same time (ca. 525-480) there was an increase in civic awareness in the city-states of mainland Greece, and this too contributed to a general shift in attitudes toward tyranny.¹³ Although it is unlikely that archaic tyrants viewed themselves as genuine and deliberate champions of the people, in order to stay in power, many had begun to pay more attention to the needs of the people, thus inadvertently paving the way to a more democratic form of government.¹⁴ While previously, the masses typically had few to no political rights, under tyrants they grew accustomed to having slightly more influence. Naturally, over time they began agitating for more, and this desire factored into the changing political environment and a shift in how they viewed tyranny.

Despite the fact that tyranny was not prevalent in the classical period except on the fringes of mainland Greece and many city-states were oligarchic throughout, there was a continuing preoccupation with and anxiety about tyranny, particularly in Athens, where pro-democracy and anti-tyranny sentiments were intimately entwined. It is not difficult to find evidence of this anxiety. In addition to erecting the two statue groups honoring the tyrannicides, the Athenians granted to their descendants the privileges of *sitêsis* (meals in the Prytaneion, paid for at public expense), *ateleia* (freedom from taxes), and *prohedria* (special seating at public events).¹⁵ Before meetings of the assembly began, a curse was uttered against aspiring tyrants, and if a man was found guilty for attempted tyranny or for treason, he could be put to death or

¹² Lavelle (1993), 58; Ober (2003), 217.

¹³ Anderson (2005), 211.

¹⁴ Lewis (2009), 27.

¹⁵ Raaflaub (2003), 66.

permanently banished along with his family.¹⁶ We find further evidence of continued ruminations about tyranny in the literary constitutional debates in Herodotus' *Histories* and Euripides' *Suppliants*, which focus on the dichotomy between tyranny and democracy, despite the fact that democracy and oligarchy were the more viable alternates in the fifth century.

Sara Forsdyke outlines three main factors that help account for the continuing prominence of tyranny in fifth-century political thought. First, the anti-tyranny rhetoric used by the elites of the archaic period was appropriated by supporters of democracy, as they found the negative stereotypes of tyranny useful in articulating the positive qualities of democracy; decades after the Peisistratids were expelled from Athens, Athenians continued to dwell upon tyranny, largely on account of its usefulness as an ideological foil to democracy. Second, dislike and distrust of tyranny was shared by democrats and oligarchs alike (yet they managed to adapt arguments relating to tyranny to disparate ends). Third, conflict with the Persians prompted authors such as Aeschylus and Herodotus to cast events as a clash of political convictions.¹⁷ Throughout the fifth century, various individuals as well as the city of Athens itself were compared to tyrants, demonstrating both the versatility of tyranny as a concept and the fact that tyranny still occupied a place in the forefront of many Greeks' minds.

As mentioned above, the earliest extant use of a *turann-* word appears in the poetry of Archilochus. The narrator writes:

οὐ μοι τὰ Γύγεω τοῦ πολυχρύσου μέλει,
οὐδ' εἶλε πῶ με ζῆλος, οὐδ' ἀγαίομαι
θεῶν ἔργα, μεγάλης δ' οὐκ ἔρέω τυραννίδος·
ἀπόπροθεν γάρ ἐστιν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν.

"I do not care for the things of Gyges, rich in gold, and envy has not yet seized me, and I do not wish to emulate the deeds of the gods, and I do not love a great tyranny: for that is far from my eyes." (Fr. 19 West)

¹⁶ Idem, 70.

¹⁷ Forsdyke (2009), 237.

The fact that the first instance of *turannis* appears in conjunction with words related to envy (*zēlos*, *agaasthai*) indicates that tyranny was associated with what David Konstan and N. Keith Rutter have termed “rivalrous emotions” from very early on.¹⁸ The speaker is emphatic about denying that he desires riches or tyranny, which points to the idea that, generally speaking, they are intrinsically worthy of envy. Moreover, the use of the verb *erân*, which connotes powerful desire, suggests that tyranny is something that naturally evokes strong emotions—even in the case of the speaker, whose choice of verbs crescendos from dispassionate impartiality with a negated form of *melein* to passionate disavowal with a negated form of *erân*.

In the classical period, authors such as Herodotus and Plato continued to expand upon the relationship between sole rulers and envy. A second passage that clearly illustrates the connection between tyranny and *phthonos* comes from Herodotus’ constitutional debate. After protesting that monarchy is a fundamentally flawed institution on the grounds that a monarch is not held accountable to anyone, Otanes identifies *hubris* and *phthonos* as the root of the tyrant’s evil deeds:

καὶ γὰρ ἂν τὸν ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν πάντων στάντα ἐς ταύτην τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐωθότων νοημάτων στήσειε. ἐγγίνεται μὲν γὰρ οἱ ὕβρις ὑπὸ τῶν παρεόντων ἀγαθῶν, φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῇθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ. δύο δ’ ἔχων ταῦτα ἔχει πᾶσαν κακότητα· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὕβρι κεκορημένος ἔρδει πολλά καὶ ἀτάσθαλα, τὰ δὲ φθόνῳ· καίτοι ἄνδρα γε τύραννον ἄφθονον ἔδει εἶναι, ἔχοντά γε πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ· τὸ δὲ ὑπεναντίον τούτου ἐς τοὺς πολίτας πέφυκε. φθονέει γὰρ τοῖσι ἀρίστοισι περιεοῦσί τε καὶ ζώουσι, χαίρει δὲ τοῖσι κακίστοις τῶν ἀστῶν, διαβολὰς δὲ ἄριστος ἐνδέκεσθαι.

“Putting even the best of all men into this rule would push him beyond his accustomed thoughts. For *hubris* is bred in him from the good things at hand, while *phthonos* grows in man from the start. Having these two [traits], he has every evil: for he does many wicked things, some, having been filled with *hubris*, and others, having been filled with *phthonos*. And yet a tyrant ought to be a man free from *phthonos*, since he has all good things, but he becomes by nature the opposite of this against the citizens. For he feels *phthonos* toward the best men because they excel and [even] exist, and he delights in the worst of the citizens, and is the best at giving ear to slander.” (3.80.3-4)

¹⁸ For Homer’s use of *agaasthai* in conjunction with envy and jealousy, see p. 44-45.

Whereas Archilochus' fragment suggests that the tyrant's position is one envied by many, in Otanes' view, the tyrant himself feels *phthonos* toward others, and this drives him to commit outrages against his people.¹⁹ Otanes presents *phthonos* as something innate among all men, yet especially prominent in the figure of the tyrant.

In the *Republic*, Plato makes clear once again that the tyrant is by nature an envious man. Socrates asks, ἀποδώσομεν τῷ ἀνδρὶ καὶ ἃ τὸ πρότερον εἶπομεν, ὅτι ἀνάγκη καὶ εἶναι καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον γίγνεσθαι αὐτῷ ἢ πρότερον διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν φθονερῷ, ἀπίστῳ, ἀδίκῳ, ἀφίλῳ, ἀνοσίῳ καὶ πάσης κακίας πανδοκεῖ τε καὶ τροφεῖ (“Shall we also attribute to [the tyrant] what we said before, that he is necessarily *phthoneros*, untrustworthy, unjust, friendless, unholy, and a host and nurse of every evil, and that he becomes more so than before, on account of his rule?” *Resp.* 580a). His interlocutor, Glaucon, responds that no intelligent person would contradict him in saying so. The placement of *phthoneros* at the beginning of Socrates' long list of adjectives emphasizes its importance: the tyrant is many things, but being envious and/or jealous is first and foremost among those qualities.²⁰

The aim of the present study is to determine the range of ways in which envy and jealousy manifest themselves in relation to the figure of the sole ruler in ancient Greek literature. It will examine Greek attitudes toward these emotions, specifically in political and civic contexts; in what ways and in what circumstances people exhibited them (and with what consequences); and how authors utilized them in characterizing various figures or conveying political agendas. Owing to the constraints of time and space, I have chosen to focus primarily on the texts of Homer (including the *Homeric Hymns*), Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus, since these represent a variety of genres from different points in time that complement one another

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this passage, see p. 115-17.

²⁰ For more about tyrants in Plato's *Republic*, see p. 160-62.

especially well. Epic poetry reveals a great deal about the values and ideals of Greek society, as it showcases the world of heroes and the immortal realm. Although Hesiod's *Works and Days* focuses largely on the more mundane lives of working men in the Age of Iron, it too has a didactic purpose: to educate Perses (and whoever else encounters the poem) not only about agriculture but also about morality, including the motivational and detrimental effects of envy. Like epic, tragedy draws from the world of myth, but it also provides insight into less official attitudes, such as those of women and other politically marginalized individuals.²¹ Sophocles in particular among the Athenian tragedians was interested in exploring human psychology through his characters, making his plays a rich study in emotional experience. Whereas both epic and tragedy deal with legendary figures, set in a mythical past, historiography deals with historical figures: Herodotus describes real people, real events, and the real world (or at least as his own understanding of these).²² The subject of his work also presents ample opportunity to reflect on the nature and examples of one-man rule.²³ Thus, by bringing together material from the works of Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus, this study will provide a cross-section of and a window into the complexity of Greek views about envy, jealousy, and rulership.

2. Why should we study emotions?

There has been an increasing focus on the study of ancient emotions among classicists in recent years, and this is paralleled by the trend among historians to consider more seriously the influence of emotions on human motivation and activity. Prior to this movement, which began with Lucien Febvre in the mid-twentieth century but which picked up momentum in the United

²¹ Konstan (2005), 48-49.

²² Sternberg (2005b), 17.

²³ While envy and jealousy at times enter into Thucydides' narrative, in general the subject matter does not so easily lend itself to discussions of sole rulers, making Herodotus a better choice for this study.

States in the 1980s, emotions were typically relegated to the sidelines of historical study or even dismissed as immaterial.²⁴ This neglect is somewhat understandable, in light of the various difficulties inherent in the study of emotions (to be discussed in section 4 below), but the benefit we stand to gain by considering emotions as part of our exploration of the history and culture of a civilization surely outweighs those challenges. A society is made up of individuals and each person experiences emotions; although it would be far-fetched to argue that the average person's emotions have a discernible effect on his or her society, the emotions of the people in sum (as well as the emotions of prominent individuals) can at times serve as an intense and powerful force, and denying this leaves us with a somewhat inadequate explanation of human history.

For example, scholars who study capitalism have demonstrated that emotions have a tangible effect on people's economic choices.²⁵ The expansion of the modern American consumer economy depended in large part on changing attitudes toward envy in the early twentieth century.²⁶ Whereas before, the prevailing belief was that envy was a grave sin and that people should be content with their assigned lot in life, in the 1910s and 1920s, increasing secularism and a rise in mass-produced goods gave way to the view that envy was an acceptable and sometimes even beneficial emotion.²⁷ This view in turn enabled the growth in consumerism that we have witnessed over the past century in America, and envy continues to be a driving force for the spending habits of many Americans today.

We can also observe the power of emotions in the field of law: in criminal trials, where relatives of murder victims make statements about the impact the crime has had on their lives; in criminal codes, where the defendant's state of mind can at times mitigate or intensify the gravity

²⁴ Matt and Stearns (2014), 3-4.

²⁵ *Idem*, 9.

²⁶ Matt (2003), 7.

²⁷ *Idem*, 4-5.

of the crime; or in civil law, where legislators must decide what sorts of conduct the law should govern.²⁸ In fact, at the very beginning of her introduction to the first anthology concerning emotions and the law, *The Passions of Law*, Susan Bandes states unequivocally, “Emotion pervades the law.”²⁹ The essays in her collection focus not on *whether* emotions ought to play any role in the law, but rather on the questions of *which* emotions should be privileged and taken into consideration in which legal contexts.³⁰ Indeed, it is not by accident that the fullest discussion of emotions in Aristotle’s works occurs in the *Rhetoric*, since he conceives of emotions as useful tools that a skilled orator ought to understand. If emotions contribute to decisions within the economic and legal realms, for example, our inclusion of them in the study of a civilization’s history and culture will only expand and enrich our understanding.

Historically, one of the most fundamental debates in the study of emotions is whether they are universal. Charles Darwin believed that certain expressive features had basic communicative value and thus were innate and universal.³¹ Following in his footsteps, Paul Ekman argues that the same facial expressions are associated with the same emotions everywhere, and that this constitutes evidence of universality.³² One of the main objections raised in response to Ekman’s theory, however, is that he does not give enough consideration to the eliciting conditions of these emotions. While the facial expressions of people from different societies may reveal a striking similarity, the circumstances prompting them to make those expressions can vary widely from individual to individual and from society to society.³³ Moreover, Anna Wierzbicka takes issue with Ekman’s use and privileging of English

²⁸ Bandes (1999), 3-6.

²⁹ Idem, 1.

³⁰ Idem, 7.

³¹ Konstan (2006), 9.

³² Ekman (1973), 219.

³³ Cairns and Fulkerson (2015), 3; Konstan (2006), 18.

terminology to label what he argues are universal emotions. She contends that speakers of different languages do not necessarily understand or describe emotions in the same ways; in her view, Ekman's use of English terms is therefore reductive and inadequate.³⁴ In order to minimize the interference of our own cultural biases and associations with particular terms, Wierzbicka advocates for the use of emotional scripts. Scripts lessen our dependence on specific terminology by describing in basic terms the assessment of a scenario from the point of view of the person feeling the emotion.³⁵ I shall return to and expand upon the merits of a script-based approach in my subsequent discussion of the difficulties of studying emotions (section 4).

At this point in time, most scholars who study emotions—psychologists, anthropologists, historians, etc.—agree that emotions are not universal, but that they are socially and culturally conditioned.³⁶ According to appraisal theory (which refers to a category of separate but related theories, rather than one particular theory), emotions involve a cognitive component, which is susceptible to cultural influence.³⁷ The idea that eliciting conditions and people's appraisals for any given emotion can vary from one culture to the next gives us all the more reason to pay attention to emotions as we examine the history and literature of different civilizations: we cannot simply assume that our own society's emotional norms and experiences are identical to those of societies located elsewhere in space or time.

3. What *are* emotions?

The issues of defining precisely what we mean by the term “emotion” and of delineating between emotions and other related phenomena have sparked an ongoing debate among scholars

³⁴ Wierzbicka (1999), 169.

³⁵ Idem, 272.

³⁶ Matt and Stearns (2014), 2; Sanders (2014), 3.

³⁷ Konstan (2006), 22-24; Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 49-58.

of various disciplines. In fact, there is such a lack of consensus about the meaning of the term that some are in favor of eliminating the word from psychology entirely.³⁸ In a similar vein, philosopher Paul Griffiths argues that “the general concept of emotion is unlikely to be a useful concept in psychological theory,” explaining that emotions do not have enough in common with each other to help us differentiate between emotions and other psychological phenomena.³⁹

The word “emotion” entered into the English language in the seventeenth century as a term denoting physical agitation, but it gradually became established as a term that could refer to mental states in the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it gained currency as a technical term in the fields of psychology, medicine, sociology, and anthropology.⁴¹ The issue is not that we cannot come up with a definition for the term “emotion”; the issue is that, with definitions abounding, we cannot *agree* on one, and this is not entirely surprising if we take into account the evolution of the word. Douglas Cairns and Laurel Fulkerson advise, however, that we not focus too much energy on this lack of consensus:

The absence of a single and definitive set of criteria for membership of the category “emotion” is a significant feature of the phenomena under investigation, not something to be eliminated through redefinition...All the problems with the definition of “emotion” in English...are inherent in the enterprise of studying phenomena of this type. It is important that “emotion” cannot be essentialized; the answer is not to redefine it until it can.⁴²

In light of these words of caution, it seems to me imprudent to attempt my own definition of the term “emotion,” but instead I will offer several put forward by others, to illustrate the diversity of approaches.⁴³ In antiquity, Aristotle defined emotions (*pathê*) in the following way: ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη δι’ ὅσα μεταβάλλοντες διαφέρουσι πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις οἷς ἔπεται λύπη καὶ ἡδονή, οἷον ὀργή

³⁸ Dixon (2012), 338.

³⁹ Griffiths (1997), 14.

⁴⁰ Dixon (2012), 343.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Cairns and Fulkerson (2015), 7-8.

⁴³ I will, however, discuss basic working definitions of envy and jealousy below (see p. 23).

ἔλεος φόβος καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα, καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἐναντία (The emotions are the things on account of which men change and differ in their judgments [and] that are accompanied by pain and pleasure, such as anger, pity, fear, and all other such things, as well as their opposites, *Rh.* 1378a19-22).⁴⁴ In his (modern) philosophical study, Peter Goldie defines an emotion as “a complex state, relatively more enduring than an emotional episode, which itself includes various past episodes of emotional experience, as well as various sorts of disposition to think, feel, and act, all of which can dynamically interweave and interact.”⁴⁵ Psychologists Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer conclude that “emotional states may be considered a function of a state of physiological arousal and of a cognition appropriate to this state of arousal.”⁴⁶

The bipartite nature of Schachter and Singer’s definition in particular points to yet another reason why scholars have been unable to agree on a definition: emotions can be studied on a variety of different levels, and accordingly, it is difficult to incorporate all of these approaches into a single definition. On the biological level, emotions have to do with the limbic system and the amygdala in particular, but we do not need a scientific background to observe the physiological side of emotions, such as a racing heart, rapid breathing, sweating, or flushed cheeks. On the psychological level, emotions involve cognition and evaluation, and on the sociological, the norms and expectations of the society around us. This study will be more concerned with the psychological and sociological aspects of envy and jealousy, although I certainly do not intend to suggest that other approaches are less useful. It would simply be impossible in a study of this sort to do justice to them all, especially given the nature of the evidence we have from the ancient world.

⁴⁴ The importance of cognition to Aristotle’s definition will be discussed below (p. 16-17).

⁴⁵ Goldie (2000), 11.

⁴⁶ Schachter and Singer (1962), 20.

William James advanced one of the earliest modern theories of emotion in 1884, when he published an article entitled “What is an emotion?” Although quickly rebutted, it established a firm stance against which others could react, and in doing so, it indirectly laid the foundations for appraisal theory. James, who trained to be a physician but later became a philosopher, argued that emotions and the perception of the physiological disturbances resulting from our awareness of an “exciting fact” in our surrounding environment are one and the same.⁴⁷ Thus we feel sad because we cry; we do not cry because we are sad. Moreover, James posited that every living creature is predisposed or essentially programmed to react in predictable ways to certain stimuli, which suggests that he believed emotions to be universal. For example, he wrote, “No woman can see a handsome little naked baby without delight.”⁴⁸ James later collaborated with a Danish psychologist, C. G. Lange, whose work was similar, and the theory became known as the James-Lange theory.⁴⁹ Criticism was swift and diverse in the following years: it did not clearly delineate between emotions and non-emotions, it failed to explain how to distinguish among and identify emotions (an accelerated pulse, for example, is not specific to only one emotion), it overlooked the role of cognition, etc.⁵⁰ While the James-Lange theory certainly has significant issues, parts of it, such as the idea that emotions have a certain basis in physiology, have continued to influence modern theories.⁵¹

In contrast to the James-Lange theory of emotion, appraisal theory, which increased in prominence starting in the 1960s with the work of Magda Arnold, holds that emotions are typically elicited by an appraisal or evaluation. These appraisals need not be prolonged or even

⁴⁷ James (1884), 128.

⁴⁸ Idem, 130.

⁴⁹ Calhoun and Solomon (1984), 125.

⁵⁰ Dixon (2012), 342.

⁵¹ Cf. Schachter and Singer’s definition above, p. 13.

deliberate; in fact, in many cases, they are instantaneous and subconscious.⁵² One of the most significant advantages of appraisal theory is its ability to explain variations among collective cultural responses and among individual responses to the same event (as well as variations among a particular person's responses to a given event but at different points in time) by pointing to different underlying appraisals of the event.⁵³ Whereas James believed that humans (and in fact, all creatures) tend to respond to stimuli in predictable ways, appraisal theory maintains that it is our evaluation of events rather than events themselves that prompt emotional responses, and because evaluations can vary widely (based on value systems, personal experiences, etc.), there are very few one-to-one correspondences by which we can anticipate an exact emotional response from a given situation.⁵⁴ Moreover, it is important to note that appraisals can happen on both automatic, unconscious levels and on deliberate, conscious levels. Multiple appraisals can occur simultaneously, and it is sometimes the case that when a person's emotional response seems maladaptive or irrational, multiple conflicting appraisals are at work.⁵⁵ In this way, appraisal theory also has an advantage over motivational theories of emotion, which posit that emotions are designed to further a person's interests and therefore can be started and stopped at will, but which cannot satisfactorily explain the erratic or compulsory aspects of emotions.⁵⁶

There is a general consensus among modern proponents of appraisal theory that appraisal-emotion relationships are universal: if a person interprets a situation in a certain way, he or she will feel the emotion that is universally associated with that interpretation.⁵⁷ This does not, however, mean that emotions themselves are universal (as discussed above), since the same

⁵² Eidinow (2016), 87.

⁵³ Roseman and Smith (2001), 4.

⁵⁴ Idem, 6.

⁵⁵ Idem, 9.

⁵⁶ Idem, 5.

⁵⁷ Idem, 18.

set of eliciting conditions will not necessarily trigger the same emotion(s) in peoples of all cultures and times. Just as different situations can lead to the same appraisal (e.g., many different situations can prompt us to feel that we have been slighted), different people can have different appraisals of the same situation (e.g., one person may feel slighted in a given situation, while another may not). The relationship between the appraisal and the emotion is predictable (e.g., if we consider ourselves slighted, we typically experience anger), but the relationship between the situation and the appraisal is less predictable. Thus, while appraisal theory expects appraisal-emotion relationships, it allows for and helps explain cultural and personal differences in emotional experience. For example, upon hearing news of the passing of a loved one, individuals may experience emotions in different combinations or to a different degree based on their own or their society's beliefs (i.e. their evaluations) about death and the afterlife. Death is universal, but beliefs about and reactions to it are not.⁵⁸

While appraisal theory has gained momentum over the past few decades, its origins far predate the twentieth century. Richard Lazarus, a leading psychologist who helped to advance appraisal theory in the second half of the twentieth century, described Aristotle's approach to emotions as more or less compatible with appraisal theory.⁵⁹ Aristotle viewed judgments and beliefs as fundamental to emotions, which he conceived of as responses to our own interpretations of the external world.⁶⁰ For example, according to Aristotle, anger is a longing for revenge on account of an insult that is undeserved, but if a man thinks he has been wronged justly, he does not feel anger (*Rh.* 1378a30-32; 1380b16-18). In order to distinguish whether the

⁵⁸ For a more comprehensive overview of the theories mentioned here, including the work of Darwin, Ekman, James, Arnold, and others, see Eidinow (2016), 80-101.

⁵⁹ Konstan (2006), 21.

⁶⁰ Idem, xii, 27.

insult is warranted, he must make a judgment; thus he cannot feel anger without judgment.⁶¹

Aristotle was not alone in antiquity in regarding mental processes as a key determinant of emotions. The Epicureans thought that *pathê* had a basis in one's beliefs, and that these beliefs could be true or false, personal or socially conditioned.⁶² Since the beliefs upon which these emotions were built could in fact be valid, the Epicureans admitted that some emotions in some cases could be appropriate.⁶³ The Stoics, however, rejected all emotions. They believed that *pathê* were impulses (*hormai*) to which people could choose to yield, but that once initiated, they tended to obscure reason.⁶⁴ In accordance with these ancient views regarding emotions and cognition, the present study is predicated upon the tenets of appraisal theory. Indeed, if emotions were as straightforward and predictable as James' argument about predispositions indicates that they are, studying the emotions of another culture would be far less interesting, since they would be identical to our own.

4. Limits and difficulties of studying emotions

In addition to the difficulties introduced by the lack of an agreed-upon definition of the term "emotion" and the history of various competing theories, there are several other factors that complicate the study of emotions (both ancient and modern) in general and the study of envy and jealousy in particular that deserve mention and consideration. First, we do not have any unfiltered or unmediated material, and this is true for the study of emotions in any given time period. Even in firsthand accounts such as diaries or autobiographies, authors shape the expression of their feelings in accordance with (or at least with awareness of) cultural norms and

⁶¹ Fortenbaugh (1975), 14.

⁶² Konstan (2006), 32.

⁶³ Caston (2012), 8.

⁶⁴ Idem, 7; Konstan (2006), 69.

personal ideas about how they want to represent themselves, and they may be doing this subconsciously, if not consciously.⁶⁵ But such firsthand accounts are relatively uncommon in ancient Greek literature, and what we do have should be treated with just as much care and caution as firsthand accounts, if not more. For example, certain texts may be prescriptive rather than descriptive: they set out the emotional ideals or rules of a society, which do not necessarily reflect the actual emotional experiences of the people within that society.⁶⁶ This is particularly important to keep in mind when studying Plato and Aristotle, whose writings have great value for those studying ancient Greek emotions, but whose views at times seem to diverge from those of their contemporaries and/or predecessors.⁶⁷

Another difficulty of studying emotions that affects scholars of antiquity and modernity alike is the tendency of emotions to occur in clusters rather than individually, which complicates the identification of the various emotions at work.⁶⁸ A perfect example of this is Achilles' feud with Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. We should not expect a conflict that spans the better part of an entire epic poem to boil down to a single emotion, and indeed it involves many: jealousy (after Agamemnon threatens to take Briseis but before he follows through), envy (after he does), pride, anger, contempt, etc.⁶⁹ In some instances, it may be beyond our reach to identify the precise combination of emotions that someone is experiencing. This clustering tendency does, however, enable us to study constellations of related emotions and to learn to look for one where its associates appear.

⁶⁵ Cairns and Fulkerson (2015), 8; Matt (2014), 44.

⁶⁶ Matt (2014), 45.

⁶⁷ Konstan (2006), xi. Aristotle's beliefs about envy, jealousy, and tyranny will be discussed in Chapter 5 (see p. 165-82).

⁶⁸ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 4.

⁶⁹ For more about the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, see p. 48-50).

Envy and jealousy in particular can also be challenging to identify on account of the social taboo surrounding them. As we will see, many instances of envy and jealousy do not contain any mention of these emotions by name. As an argument from silence, this fact alone cannot prove that the ancient Greeks were reluctant to admit to feelings of envy and jealousy, but when coupled with evidence from Attic oratory, a clear picture of this stigma emerges. Roughly seventy percent of *phthon*- words in the extant speeches of Athenian orators can be classified as accusations, repudiations, or exhortations against *phthonos*.⁷⁰ The ancient Greeks considered these emotions detrimental and potentially dangerous, as well as just plain unbecoming. As for the idea of being unbecoming, we need only look to our society. In modern times, the idea exists that individuals who are prone to envy and jealousy are insecure, which is generally agreed to be a negative attribute. While psychological research has not been able to prove that there is a substantial positive correlation between these emotions and low self-esteem, the belief persists, reinforced especially in works of fiction.⁷¹ On account of such associations, people typically do not confess feelings of envy and jealousy readily, and sometimes they are even slow to admit to themselves that what they are feeling might be envy or jealousy.

The negative characterization of envy and jealousy helps explain why there are so few firsthand admissions of such sentiments in Greek literature, and this paucity highlights a crucial reason why scholars who are interested in studying these emotions must go beyond a purely lexical approach. If we were to pay attention only to the instances in which words such as *phthonos* or *zêlos* appear, we would pass over many scenarios in which these emotions are clearly described but not explicitly named, and we would emerge with a very limited view of

⁷⁰ More specifically, ninety-eight out of 139 appearances are accusations, repudiations, or exhortations against *phthonos* (Sanders 2014, 82).

⁷¹ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 286-87. Indeed, it is not necessarily true that a jealous person must also be insecure. While some feel jealousy because they are insecure, others feel it simply because it feels good to be recognized as being special in some way (i.e. by having a special relationship with another person) (Farrell 1980, 552).

ancient Greeks' attitudes toward and experiences with envy and jealousy. Lexical studies are indeed helpful as a starting point, and they can also provide us with interesting statistical information (such as the classification of *phthon*- words in oratory, mentioned above), but we cannot rely on them alone if we wish to gain the fullest possible understanding.

We must also be careful not to take the absence or relative scarcity of a word to mean that the concept itself was unknown or foreign, a conclusion to which a lexical approach can sometimes contribute. For example, Konstan has explained the lack of a Greek word corresponding to our notion of pride, namely, pleasure in one's accomplishments (or the accomplishments of one's close friends or family), by arguing that the ancient Greeks did not have such a sentiment.⁷² Cairns agrees that no such term exists, but he argues that the phenomenon itself did, pointing to the example of Achilles' ghost in the *Odyssey*, who delights in Odysseus' report of his son's deeds at Troy (11.538-40).⁷³ Another illustration of why we should not expect the existence of a term to prove the existence of a concept is that of *schadenfreude*. Originally a German word, it has been absorbed into multiple other languages precisely because speakers of those languages recognized it as a familiar phenomenon. Thus it would be inaccurate to say that prior to the introduction of the word into their own language, non-German speakers had no concept of taking pleasure in another's misfortune.

In contrast to a purely lexical approach, which would cause us to pass over many cases in which specific terms are not present, a script-based approach enables us to see more clearly the range of emotional experiences that appear in the texts of other languages. Scripts are simply descriptions of situations that are commonly associated with a particular term.⁷⁴ Since these descriptions consist of general appraisals of situations, they are inherently cognitive in nature,

⁷² Konstan (2006), 90.

⁷³ Cairns (2008), 56-57.

⁷⁴ Idem, 46.

which is in keeping with the emphasis that appraisal theory places on cognition.⁷⁵ For the present study, I have employed a lexical approach in the initial stages of examining texts, but overall, I rely more extensively on scripts (which have in turn been generated by analyzing examples that contain specific emotion terms).

As mentioned above, another advantage of using a script-based approach is that it helps us minimize the transfer of our own culture's associations with a particular term.⁷⁶ There are few (if any) emotions for which there is a perfect one-to-one correspondence between our English terms and ancient Greek terms (or in fact, terms in any other language).⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it is only natural to impart our own connotations of an English word to a word in another language that appears to be more or less equivalent, but this can be misleading. For example, the prototypical scenario for jealousy among modern English speakers is one of romantic or sexual jealousy, but obviously not every case of jealousy is of this nature.⁷⁸ Someone who is upset at the prospect of losing his or her dominance in a given field to an up-and-coming colleague can be described as jealous, and by referring to the appropriate script ("jealous of my position"), we can avoid confusion regarding the nature of the case at hand and clarify that there is no romantic or sexual element involved.⁷⁹

Despite the challenges and caveats of studying emotions, there is still much that we can learn, and these difficulties can actually function as somewhat of a roadmap, helping to keep us going in the right direction. The fact that we have no raw, unfiltered data serves as a reminder to think critically about expressions of emotion and to explore the possibility of ulterior motives or attempts at self-fashioning. The tendency of emotions to occur in clusters means that we can

⁷⁵ Kaster (2005), 8-9.

⁷⁶ Wierzbicka (1999) 272.

⁷⁷ Kaster (2005), 7; Konstan (2006), 16.

⁷⁸ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 290.

⁷⁹ "Jealous of my position" is one of the scripts identified by Sanders (2014, 39).

identify families or related groups of emotions; then, when one of these emotions appears, we will be prepared to discern others, even if not referred to by name. The reluctance to admit to feeling certain negative emotions highlights the inadequacy of the lexical approach, thus encouraging us to dig deeper. Mixing together the study of emotions and the study of literature may not be the most straightforward endeavor, but it will assuredly enrich our understanding of ancient Greek society.

5. Envy and jealousy

Before going into more detail about the nature of envy and jealousy, I would like to address briefly the idea that emotions constitute prototypical categories, rather than binary ones. As we have already seen, there is no simple definition of what an emotion is, and similarly, there is no simple definition of any particular emotion, although that is precisely what I will attempt to provide in what follows. What we refer to as “happiness,” “anger,” or “grief” has any number of different appearances and manifestations, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to boil all of those down into a single description or set of diagnostic criteria. Certain categories are binary, or all-or-nothing: for instance, either you are a first-born child or you are not a first-born child, either you are Rh positive or Rh negative, either you are a college graduate or you are not a college graduate, etc. Emotions, however, represent prototypical categories, which are far more flexible, and membership is determined by the degree of similarity to a central (or prototypical) case.⁸⁰ For this reason, in my general treatment of the nature of envy and jealousy, I will make abundant use of words such as “typically,” “usually,” and “often.” We will undoubtedly encounter cases that do not fit our basic working definitions but that fall under the headings of envy or jealousy nevertheless.

⁸⁰ Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 6-9.

In everyday speech, many people use the English terms “envy” and “jealousy” more or less synonymously.⁸¹ My usage of these terms, however, denotes two different (albeit closely related) emotions, and I adhere to the basic definitions set out in Ed Sanders’ *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach*. Sanders identifies three requisite conditions for each. Envy occurs when a person judges that 1) someone else has a certain possession or quality; 2) the person him or herself does not have this same possession or quality; and 3) this situation is wrong.⁸² Jealousy occurs when a person judges that 1) he or she has an exclusive relationship with a certain other person or possession; 2) he or she is at risk of losing either that exclusivity or the entire relationship; and 3) that risk stems from the existence (or perceived existence) of a rival for that other person or possession.⁸³

A few additional notes about the nature of envy and the nature of jealousy are necessary. Envy is rooted in social comparison.⁸⁴ People are more likely to envy those whom they consider peers or to whom they are in some way similar, because social comparison arises more naturally with them and they are of greater emotional significance.⁸⁵ Of course, it is possible to feel envy toward anyone, especially since envy arises on account of the subject’s own perception of grounds for comparison between him or herself and the other person.⁸⁶ This social comparison and the involvement of another person are two of the primary factors that set envy apart from greed or covetousness: while greed and covetousness are focused on gaining something desirable,

⁸¹ Farrell (1980), 531.

⁸² Sanders (2014), 15.

⁸³ Idem, 26.

⁸⁴ Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 284.

⁸⁵ Idem, 285; Sanders (2014), 15.

⁸⁶ Indeed, the Greek commonplace that constituents feel envy toward their ruler shows that envy can transcend the limits of one’s peer group. This in turn suggests that such constituents may perceive an innate similarity among all humans that the elevation of an individual to the status of ruler cannot erase, and this similarity provides the grounds for comparison and thus for feeling envy. Along similar lines, Cairns notes that people can still feel a strong conviction that equality is possible, even when objectively, there is a significant disparity between themselves and the person toward whom their envy is directed (2003, 240).

envy necessarily involves a person who has something desirable.⁸⁷ We can, however, differentiate between two categories of envy, depending on whether one's ultimate goal is to acquire the desired possession or quality oneself or to deprive the person toward whom envy is directed of that possession or quality. Sanders calls the former scenario "covetous envy" and the latter "begrudging envy."⁸⁸ While helpful, these labels suggest more of a binary classification than a spectrum. I will at times make use of these labels for clarification purposes, but it is important to recognize both that these objectives (i.e. the desire to acquire and the desire to deprive another) can coexist and that in any given case, the English term "envy" on its own does not specify which (if either) objective is dominant.

An additional qualification about envy will again make clear the judiciousness of regarding emotions as representing prototypical rather than binary categories. If an uninvolved and unbiased third party should judge the situation and come to the same conclusion (i.e. that the disparity between the two people is wrong) as the person experiencing envy, it ceases to be (purely) envy, but rather, it shades into indignation.⁸⁹ In the modern sense of the word, indignation represents a sort of anger about the breach of social norms or values.⁹⁰ This goes back to Aristotle's distinction between indignation (*to nemesan*) and envy (*phthonos*): according to Aristotle, indignation is the pain we feel at seeing someone succeed who does not deserve it (*Rh.* 1386b9-11), whereas envy has no regard for issues of merit (*Rh.* 1386b16-20).⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 285.

⁸⁸ Sanders (2014), 16.

⁸⁹ Idem, 23.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Konstan believes that the two terms are more closely related than Aristotle leads us to believe (2006, 111-13). See also p. 166.

In the modern English understanding of jealousy, the focus is typically animate: a person is concerned about the possibility of losing a special relationship with another person.⁹² It is, however, entirely possible to be jealous over inanimate entities as well, and this is not uncommon in Greek literature. In the example mentioned above in which someone is “jealous of my position” and fears losing his or her dominance in a given field, the focus (namely, an exclusive reputation) is not animate.⁹³ Indeed, this is by far the most common type of jealousy that sole rulers exhibit in Greek literature. On the other hand, jealousy over a person does not need to be romantic or sexual in nature, although this is precisely the type of jealousy that many English speakers imagine when they come across the word “jealousy.”⁹⁴ It is also important to emphasize that the rival party, the third requisite condition for jealousy, can be real, imagined, or hypothetical.⁹⁵ The crux of the matter is whether an individual is concerned about and afraid of losing something or someone to a possible rival. A person may feel jealous if he or she suspects that his or her spouse has been unfaithful; the feeling of jealousy is real, regardless of whether that romantic rival is. Conversely, if a person’s spouse is having an affair but he or she is completely unaware of it, he or she will not feel jealousy. Jealousy involves a rival of some sort, but that rival does not need to be real or specific. Even the focus in jealousy need not be real: a person can easily imagine that he or she has a special relationship with someone (or that he or she has a special reputation, etc.) that is objectively nonexistent.⁹⁶

⁹² Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 291. I am using the term “focus” to mean the desirable thing or person concerning which envy or jealousy arises, but not the person toward whom envy is directed or who is perceived as the rival in a case of jealousy (for which I will use the term “object”).

⁹³ Sanders (2014), 39. Ben-Ze’ev calls “professional jealousy” a borderline case that spans both envy and jealousy (2000, 299), but what is important for my purposes here is that the inanimate nature of the focus does not disqualify the emotion from being considered jealousy.

⁹⁴ Goldie (2000), 224; Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 290.

⁹⁵ Goldie (2000), 225.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

As mentioned above, envy has an element of social comparison at its core. Even so, envy does not necessarily involve actual competition.⁹⁷ For example, people may envy a king for his riches, but they cannot hope to contend with him in any concrete way. Jealousy, on the other hand, is concerned with competition and the fear of loss to a rival; in many cases, it is an emotion felt more personally or more intensely than envy.⁹⁸ While people may envy a king for his riches, they will not take it personally when they (inevitably) fail to acquire equal riches or to deprive the king of his wealth. If, however, a king takes an interest in someone's significant other, it will most likely affect him or her in a very personal way, giving rise to jealousy. Such was the case for Aristogeiton after Hipparchus, brother of the tyrant Hippias, made known his interest in Harmodius, according to Thucydides (6.54.2-3).⁹⁹

Moreover, envy and jealousy often differ in terms of the specificity of the focus. With envy (and especially with covetous envy), the issue at hand is the perception of our relative inferiority to another; our concern is often less about the specifics of the focus in question, since in many cases, we would be content if we should acquire something comparable, even if we do not acquire that particular one.¹⁰⁰ For example, if a man envies his neighbor for the new car he bought, he does not necessarily want his neighbor's car, but rather, a comparable car of his own. With jealousy, however, our concern is very much about a particular focus, and in many cases, we would not be wholly satisfied with a replacement. If a woman is jealous because she suspects that her beloved husband is having an affair with another woman, she will not likely be appeased by the introduction of a new man who pays special attention to her.

⁹⁷ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 284.

⁹⁸ Sanders (2014), 26; Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 290.

⁹⁹ Thucydides uses a form of the more general verb *perialgein* rather than *phthonein*, but he adds that Aristogeiton was afraid that Hipparchus' power would enable him to take Harmodius by force (φοβηθεὶς τὴν Ἱππάρχου δύναμιν μὴ βίᾳ προσαγάγηται αὐτόν, 6.54.3). This scenario thus accords with our definition of jealousy, as well as with Aristotle's description of *phthonos* (*Rh.* 1387b28-30, discussed on p. 172).

¹⁰⁰ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 282.

Another commonly cited difference between envy and jealousy is the number of involved parties: envy is a typically two-party emotion (A envies B), whereas jealousy is typically a three-party emotion (A is jealous because A is concerned about losing B to C).¹⁰¹ This characterization breaks down somewhat in various cases; for example, do we still consider jealousy a three-party emotion if B is not an actual person? In such a case, perhaps it would be more accurate to describe it simply as a triangular relationship.¹⁰² Moreover, as stated above, the rival (and sometimes even the relationship with the focus) in jealousy can be imagined, and it is for this reason that Goldie prefers to view jealousy as “directed towards a narrative—a sequence of events—which can be perceived, remembered, or imagined by the jealous person, and which includes lover and rival, and possibly the jealous person as well.”¹⁰³ The distinction between the two emotions based on the number of involved parties is not entirely dependable, but it does nevertheless illustrate an obvious difference between prototypical cases. While it is possible to feel envy *toward* a person *because of* another person (perhaps, for example, you envy your friend because he or she has a significant other and you do not) and it is possible to feel jealousy over something inanimate, the prototypical case of envy has something inanimate as its focus and the prototypical case of jealousy has a person as its focus. As mentioned above, however, given the nature of this study and its focus on the political realm, most of the cases of jealousy that we will see can be categorized as “jealous of my position,” and as such, the focus is inanimate (and abstract): power or rule.

While envy and jealousy differ in these ways, they are nevertheless more similar than dissimilar. Both are considered complex or blended emotions, and although scholars disagree

¹⁰¹ Idem, 289; Farrell (1980), 530; Caston (2012), 9.

¹⁰² Sanders (2014), 28.

¹⁰³ Goldie (2000), 225. Goldie uses the term “lover” where I would use the term “focus”; this is in large part because Goldie’s discussion centers on sexual jealousy, which assumes a human focus.

about the exact components, there is a significant amount of overlap in the suggestions for each, including covetousness, admiration, hostility, anger, and resentment.¹⁰⁴ Envy and jealousy both point to a similar emotional state, namely, an elevated concern about what one has, especially in relation to what others have, focused either on the desire for gain (or for another's loss, in the case of begrudging envy) or the fear of loss.¹⁰⁵ It is in part on account of their similarities and their ability to occur simultaneously that English speakers often conflate the terms, using them as synonyms. The close association between the two is hardly unique among English speakers; for instance, *phthonos* too can be used to indicate envy in one context and jealousy in another, or even a blend of the two.

6. Existing scholarship

The three most extensive treatments of envy and jealousy in Greek literature are Peter Walcot's *Envy and the Greeks: A Study of Human Behavior* (1978), David Konstan and N. Keith Rutter's *Envy, Spite and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions* (2003), and Ed Sanders' *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach* (2014). Walcot provides an overview of envy in Greek literature that spans over a millennium, from Homer to Boethius, and sheds light on many important points about envy, such as that the Greeks believed that men were naturally envious and that envy is inextricably linked to honor.¹⁰⁶ With over a millennium to cover in just over one hundred pages, however, Walcot's study does not go into as much detail as one might hope. For instance, he does not include quotations in the original language. Moreover, his explanation that *phthonos* is typically translated as "envy" and *zêlos* as "jealousy" and that the two function in more or less the same way that their English counterparts do is appealing yet

¹⁰⁴ Sanders (2014), 15, 27.

¹⁰⁵ Idem, 29; Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 281.

¹⁰⁶ Walcot (1978), 11, 21.

ultimately too simplistic.¹⁰⁷ Subsequent scholarship has emphasized that it is a rare case indeed when two emotion terms in different languages map precisely onto one another.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Walcot's work identifies key passages and astutely calls attention to the central role envy plays in the social interactions of the ancient Greeks.

Originating from a conference in 2001, Konstan and Rutter's edited volume explores the "rivalrous emotions" of envy, spite, and jealousy in mostly author-based and genre-based studies. As is the case with many edited volumes, this volume has no central thesis and there are certain differences in approach, but it nevertheless represents a substantial advancement in our understanding of these emotions in Greek literature. Most significant for the present study are Simon Goldhill and Thomas Harrison's contributions on tragedy and Herodotus, respectively. Goldhill finds that while envy and jealousy often enter into the rhetoric of explaining other characters' actions in tragedy, they do not drive the plot or pervade the action.¹⁰⁹ In contrast, Harrison argues that envy is the principal motivating force of historical action in Herodotus' *Histories*, when interpreted to include both the desire for tyranny and imperial expansion as well as the more routine agonistic rivalry of the Athenians.¹¹⁰ Homer is almost entirely absent from this volume, however, and one contributor even comments on the dearth of references to envy in Homer's works.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, Homer's epics have much to tell us about the range of scenarios involving envy and jealousy in ancient Greece. We ought not to let the relative scarcity of explicit terminology denoting envy and jealousy in Homeric texts convince us otherwise.

Sanders' *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach* relies heavily on the use of scripts to remedy the limitations of a lexical approach. He identifies twelve

¹⁰⁷ Idem, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Kaster (2005), 7; Konstan (2006), 16.

¹⁰⁹ Goldhill (2003), 169.

¹¹⁰ Harrison (2003), 157.

¹¹¹ Most (2003), 128.

different scripts for *phthonos* and five for *zêlos*, concluding that *phthonos* represents nearly all the English scripts for both envy and jealousy and is thus by far the most important Greek emotion term corresponding to English envy and jealousy.¹¹² While certainly illuminating, this level of complexity and differentiation can, however, become more of a hindrance than a help. In some cases, I believe it is counterproductive to try to identify one particular script as the “correct” one, since envy and jealousy are complex emotions and it seems likely that many situations involve more than one of these scripts. Sanders’ contribution to our understanding of how the ancient Greeks experienced these emotions is undoubtedly significant—his observation that envy and jealousy are not only often suppressed but also transmuted and disguised is especially striking—but by limiting his focus to Athenian authors of the classical period (and by not including a conclusion), he provides ample opportunity for others to build upon his work.¹¹³

Numerous other books have laid a foundation for and called attention to the study of ancient emotions, both in general and regarding particular emotions. N. R. E. Fisher’s *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame* (1992) and Douglas Cairns’ *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (1993) are prime examples of in-depth terminological-based studies focused on concepts of emotional import; as the titles emphasize, both of these concepts are intimately entwined with honor (and dishonor), with which envy and jealousy also have a close relationship. Shortly after editing the volume on rivalrous emotions, Konstan published *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Greek Literature* (2006), which remains the most comprehensive treatment of ancient Greek emotions thus far. Konstan provides an overview of the development of various theories of emotion, including Darwin’s initial claim that certain expressions were universal and functioned

¹¹² Sanders (2014), 46.

¹¹³ For the idea that these emotions are often passed off as others, see Sanders (2014), 18, 24.

to communicate with other members of one's community, Ekman's expansion upon Darwin's work, Wierzbicka's critique of Ekman's theories, and the emergence of modern appraisal theory.¹¹⁴ Taking Aristotle as his starting point for discussion of each emotion, Konstan acknowledges where Aristotle's definitions diverge from his predecessors and contemporaries. One may wonder, however, whether it is prudent to assume a later author's texts as a benchmark against which to measure those of earlier authors, thus allowing them to influence our interpretation of earlier works, or whether it might be better to proceed chronologically and then evaluate the question of consistency between earlier and later writers afterward.

On the Roman side, Robert Kaster's *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (2005) is innovative in its application of the script-based approach within the field of classics, pointing out once again the shortcomings of a purely lexical approach. Ruth Caston's *The Elegiac Passion: Jealousy in Roman Love Elegy* (2012) examines jealousy in a very different context than the one the present study aims to explore, but her methodology and her findings about elegiac jealousy are nevertheless relevant and instructive. For instance, she too cautions against adopting an exclusively lexical approach and she suggests that we instead pay close attention to references to related emotions, since jealousy has a tendency to go unnamed, especially in the early stages before it has been fully recognized.¹¹⁵

7. Outline of chapters

This chapter has laid the groundwork for the subsequent examination of primary source material by providing an overview of the study of emotions as it relates to the ancient Greek world. In sum, the present work is predicated upon the idea that emotions are not universal but

¹¹⁴ Konstan (2006), 3-40.

¹¹⁵ Caston (2012), 5.

are culturally and socially conditioned, which appraisal theory both accommodates and explains. Moreover, we cannot assume that our modern English terms “envy” and “jealousy” correspond precisely to the ancient Greek terms *phthonos* and *zêlos*, and so in order to minimize cultural interference, I will make use of various scripts. My overall approach, however, is a combination of lexical and script-based approaches, which I believe will enable us to maximize our understanding of Greek attitudes toward envy, jealousy, and rulership, despite the inherent challenges of studying emotions.

The second chapter surveys passages in the texts of Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, and Hesiod that relate to envy and jealousy, both with and without the involvement of ruling figures. In epic, envy and jealousy are depicted as primarily negative emotions that can have damaging consequences for both those who feel them and those toward whom they are directed, although in his discussion of the two types of *Eris*, Hesiod makes an unusual case for the potential benefits of envy in the economic sphere. These authors also shed light on the intimate relationship between envy, jealousy, and honor, as well as the fact that anyone can succumb to these emotions: gods, goddesses, men, women, etc. The third chapter covers the tragedies of Sophocles, with special emphasis on the power struggles and perceived threats to rulership seen in the Theban plays. Envy and jealousy may not constitute the primary catalyst for action, but they certainly influence the direction the tragedies take. These emotions contribute in a significant way to the characterization of several rulers; moreover, they at times account for their behavior at critical junctures. The fourth chapter examines envy, jealousy, and one-man rule in Herodotus’ *Histories*, which is replete with accounts of sole rulers (both Greek and non-Greek) and their actions, often paired with assessments of motivation and intent. Taken in sum together with Otanes’ speech in the constitutional debate, which lays bare the association between *phthonos*

and tyranny, the examples of kings and tyrants who act out of envy or jealousy issue a somber warning about the volatility and dangers inherent in one-man rule. Herodotus also provides a striking picture of divine *phthonos*, which can function as an agent for reestablishing justice in the case of especially arrogant individuals, but which is also known to strike at random, thus serving as a reminder of human vulnerability. The final chapter assesses how Plato and Aristotle's fourth-century depictions of envy and jealousy compare with those found in earlier texts, in addition to drawing conclusions from the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER 2: HOMER AND HESIOD

Our exploration of the relationships between the emotions of envy and jealousy and sole rulership begins, as many studies do, with Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, and Hesiod. At the estimated time of the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the second half of the eighth century, the word *turannos* (and cognates) had not yet entered the Greek language, as the first known occurrence appears in the poetry of Archilochus in the middle of the seventh century.¹ Nevertheless, Homer's texts offer insight into the diversity of scenarios in which envy and/or jealousy emerge, both in relation to ruling figures and in general. By casting a wide net (i.e. going beyond the political realm) in this early material, we will gain a fuller understanding of the range of these emotions' eliciting conditions, involved parties, and manners of expression (including commonly associated words), which will facilitate a more fruitful study of later material.

As we will see in the texts of Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, and Hesiod, envy and jealousy are far-reaching emotions that affect mortals and immortals alike. Mortals feel these emotions toward other mortals, immortals feel them toward other immortals, and immortals also feel them toward mortals, yet we do not find expressions of mortal envy or jealousy directed toward immortals, likely because these would be construed as acts of *hubris*. Significantly, none of the instances that we will examine in this chapter contain personal admissions of feeling envy or jealousy, but the poets nonetheless alert us to their presence in subtle ways. This absence of

¹ For the fragment in which *turannis* first appears, see p. 5.

personal admissions reinforces the idea that ancient Greeks generally considered these emotions to be disgraceful or even dangerous, which we can also see in various instances of anti-envy rhetoric. While Hesiod acknowledges that envy can be productive or beneficial in certain circumstances, he simultaneously hints at its potential for causing conflict. Thus the overall presentation of these emotions is a negative one.

Part I: Homer (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*)

1. *Phthonein*: envy- and jealousy-free cases?

The first definition of *phthonein* listed in the LSJ is “[to] bear ill-will or malice, grudge, be envious or jealous.” The verb also has a secondary meaning of “[to] refuse from feelings of envy or ill-will, grudge,” as well as simply “[to] grudge, refuse to grant a thing.”² Various scholars have favored this last definition in translating Homeric uses of the verb, noting that they have little, if any, connection to envy. *Phthonein* appears twice in the *Iliad* and seven times in the *Odyssey*, with one additional use of *epiphthonein* in the latter. A. F. Garvie cites these statistics and then states unequivocally that the verb has “nothing to do with envy in Homer.”³ Indeed, some instances of the verb are used with negation to indicate that someone does not object to something, but even in these cases, the appearance of *phthonein* nonetheless suggests that envy, jealousy, or ill-will of a related kind is a plausible reaction, albeit one that those specific characters do not feel.

In *Odyssey* 6, Nausicaa asks her father to prepare a wagon for her so that she can go to the river to wash her clothes. The narrator indicates that she is too shy to name her impending marriage as a motive for wanting to launder her clothes, but Alcinous nevertheless understands

² LSJ s.v. II.1, II.2.

³ Garvie (1994), 99. See also Steiner (2010), 159.

and replies, Οὔτε τοι ἡμιόνων φθονέω, τέκος, οὔτε τευ ἄλλου (“I do not deny you mules, my child, or anything else,” *Od.* 6.68).⁴ Alcinous is not envious of his daughter, since she does not have a possession or quality that he wants for himself. Moreover, he is not a jealous father; he is not overly possessive of his daughter or reluctant to see her married, which we see quite clearly in his later interactions with Odysseus. Alcinous’ response does not even suggest begrudging refusal (i.e. denying someone something on the grounds that it is in some way contrary to one’s own interests), given that he has plenty of resources and thus no logistical reason to deny his daughter’s request.⁵ He uses a negated form of *phthonein* to emphasize his kindness and open-mindedness, showing that he has no reason to begrudge Nausicaa’s request, but this verb choice nonetheless serves as a reminder that others in his place might in fact have an emotional response that could lead them to object.

When Odysseus later comes to Alcinous’ palace, he tells of his travels, but eventually he pauses and expresses his wish to retire for the evening. Alcinous urges him to continue, to which Odysseus responds, εἰ δ’ ἔτ’ ἀκουέμεναί γε λιλαίαι, οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ γε / τούτων σοι φθονέοιμι καὶ οἰκτρότερ’ ἄλλ’ ἀγορεύσαι, / κήδε’ ἐμῶν ἐτάρων (“but if you desire to hear still more, I would not refuse to tell you also of other, more pitiful troubles than these, those of my companions,” *Od.* 11.380-82).⁶ Although it is possible in this case to imagine that Odysseus might exhibit begrudging refusal—he is, after all, weary from his trials and tribulations—he is nothing but polite to his host, knowing full well that the Phaeacians have much to offer him in the way of gifts and transport. Odysseus uses a negated form of *phthonein* like Alcinous does in *Odyssey* 6, showing that he does not begrudge what is asked of him. Both of these are examples of litotes;

⁴ This is one of the examples cited in the LSJ as meaning “[to] grudge, refuse to grant a thing” (s.v. II.2).

⁵ Begrudging refusal is one of the scripts identified by Sanders (2014, 37-38).

⁶ This is the first example cited in the LSJ as meaning “[to] refuse from feelings of envy or ill-will, grudge” (s.v. II.1).

by negating the opposite of their present frame of mind, they are emphasizing their generosity of spirit. We ought not to characterize these situations as disassociated from envy, jealousy, or ill-will altogether, but rather, as emphatic denials of any such sentiments.

The compound verb *epiphthonein* appears in *Odyssey* 11, and its context appears to be unrelated to any emotion at first glance. The ghost of Teiresias advises Odysseus, ὅν τινα μὲν κεν ἔῃς νεκῶν κατατεθνηώτων / αἵματος ἄσπον ἵμεν, ὁ δέ τοι νημερτὲς ἐνιψει· / ὃ δέ κ' ἐπιφθονέοις, ὁ δέ τοι πάλιν εἴσιν ὀπίσσω (“Whoever of the dead corpses you allow to go near the blood, he will speak unerringly: but whomever you deny, he will go back again,” *Od.* 11.147-49). *Epiphthonein* is used here as an antonym to *ean*, a verb with no obvious emotional component, and so we might expect that *epiphthonein* is not intended to imply any sort of emotional investment in this scenario either. Clearly, however, the act of initially denying certain ghosts *is* emotionally fraught for Odysseus, especially when it comes to his mother (*Od.* 11.87-89). He does not exhibit typical signs of envy, jealousy, or ill-will, but Teiresias’ use of the verb *epiphthonein* at the very least acknowledges the possibility that deciding among the ghosts could be more emotionally taxing than *ean* alone suggests. Moreover, while this is not a traditional case of jealousy, it does present the basic components of jealousy. Odysseus possesses a limited amount of sacrificial blood that will enable him to converse with ghosts. We can consider this opportunity to communicate to be a kind of relationship. There is a finite amount of sacrificial blood and there are presumably more ghosts wishing to speak to Odysseus than he can initially permit to drink the blood. Thus we can consider the subset of ghosts whom Odysseus prevents from drinking to be a rival party that poses a threat to his ability to establish a relationship with the privileged ghosts, and above all with Teiresias, whose advice he has come to seek.

These three examples contain the strongest possible evidence for the argument that *phthonein* in Homer is devoid of any association with envy and jealousy. Even in these cases, however, we can still discern the potential for an element of emotion. Alcinous and Odysseus both couple their use of *phthonein* with a negation, but in doing so, they are acknowledging the possibility that another person in their place could easily feel and act differently. Alcinous does not stand in the way of his daughter's preparation for marriage, but a more possessive father might; a father could also object because he does not want anyone else to handle his mules or simply because he wants them to be available at any moment for his own use. Odysseus perseveres through his weariness to continue his tale in order to please his host, but a less disciplined man might not put another's desires ahead of his own. In the case of Odysseus' journey through the underworld, *phthonein* still retains a kernel of the underlying sense of jealousy: when someone is jealous, he or she wants to keep and guard what is his or her own. The sacrificial blood is a limited resource and Odysseus cannot give it out unsparingly; his initial stinginess is motivated by necessity, but his outward behavior (i.e. holding the ghosts at bay with his sword, *Od.* 11.48-50) does bear resemblance to how a jealous person might act. Thus even in these seemingly neutral examples of *phthonein*, we can see that its presence suggests that an emotional stance is possible, despite the fact that the characters in question do not personally exhibit envy or jealousy. Various scholars translate negated forms of *phthonein* in Homeric texts as "to not object" or "to not mind," but I do not believe we should be so quick to divorce the root meaning of the verb.

2. *Phthonein*: discernible envy and jealousy

In other instances of *phthonein*, it is difficult to deny the possibility of envy or jealousy. The two appearances of *phthonein* in the *Iliad* occur in the exchange between Hera and Zeus in Book 4. In the aftermath of Paris and Menelaus' duel, Zeus suggests that Menelaus might take back Helen and depart with the Greeks, with Troy left unharmed. When Hera protests, Zeus cautions her that Troy is dear to him, so if Troy is to be demolished, she should not object in the future if he destroys a city she cherishes. Hera responds that there are three cities she holds dear and that Zeus can sack them if they incur his hatred. She continues, τάων οὐ τοι ἐγὼ πρόσθ' ἴσταμαι οὐδὲ μεγαίρω. / εἴ περ γὰρ φθονέω τε καὶ οὐκ εἰῶ διαπέρσαι, / οὐκ ἄνύω φθονέουσ', ἐπεὶ ἧ πολὺν φέρτερός ἐσσι ("I do not stand in defense of these cities and I do not begrudge [you]. For if I bear ill-will and do not allow you to sack them, I gain nothing by bearing ill-will, since you are far stronger," *Il.* 4.54-56). The *phthonos* that Hera claims she will not feel toward Zeus if he sacks these cities is closer to jealousy (as it relates to Hera's potential loss of something dear), but it seems likely that she already feels another sort of *phthonos* toward him, one that is closer to envy: she envies his power and influence over how events transpire. She goes on to insist that it would not be right if her efforts to aid the Greeks amounted to nothing, because she too is a god of the same pedigree as Zeus, and in addition, she is his wife (*Il.* 4.57-61). As noted previously, envy stems from social comparison.⁷ Hera is clearly engaging in a comparison of Zeus and herself: while she acknowledges that he is stronger (φέρτερός, 4.56), she points out they have the same lineage, which she evidently feels entitles her to a certain amount of power and prestige. The fact remains, however, that Zeus is preeminent among immortals, and Hera faces the possibility that his most beloved city may emerge triumphant, despite her best efforts.

⁷ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 284; Sanders (2014), 15.

Hera's speech suggests that she feels unfairly disadvantaged (in terms of authority), which is in keeping with the requisite conditions of envy outlined previously.⁸

Several other points in the exchange between Hera and Zeus deserve mention as well. First, Hera expands upon her statement that she does not hold a grudge (οὐδὲ μεγαίρω, 4.54) by explaining that she will not gain anything by bearing ill-will (οὐκ ἀνύω φθονέουσ', 4.56). As she uses them, the verbs *megairein* and *phthonein* function more or less synonymously. *Megairein* derives from *megas* and thus the LSJ lists as the verb's first definition "[to] regard as too great," from which it is easy to see how the verb came to indicate the possibility of envy ("[to] grudge one a thing as too great for him").⁹ This verb appears more frequently in Homer's works than in later literature, but it is nevertheless important to be aware of its connotations of envy in order to evaluate its appearances with a more critical eye.¹⁰ Second, we can see the beginning of an association between *phthonos* and strife words. In the lines leading up to Hera's response (quoted above), Zeus says, ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις· μὴ τοῦτό γε νεῖκος ὀπίσσω / σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ μέγ' ἔρισμα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται ("Do as you wish: may this quarrel not become a cause of strife between us later," *Il.* 4.37-38).¹¹ He then issues his warning about destroying cities dear to each of them. As we will see, words relating to *eris* are frequently suggestive of *phthonos*.

In the *Odyssey*, *phthonein* appears several times in scenarios involving the suitors and Odysseus in his beggar's disguise. In *Odyssey* 17, the suitor Antinous reproaches the swineherd for bringing Odysseus to the feast. Telemachus responds to Antinous by encouraging him to be generous and emphasizing that he does not begrudge the beggar (οὐ τοι φθονέω, *Od.* 17.400). In this interaction, *phthonein* is surely intended to make a point about jealousy. It is not unlikely

⁸ See p. 23.

⁹ LSJ s.v. I.

¹⁰ Sanders (2014), 49-50.

¹¹ It appears that the difference between *neikos* and *erisma* here is a matter of the intensity of feelings (Hogan 1981, 29 note 13).

that the man of the house might balk at feeding another mouth, especially when his household is already strained by the presence of many guests. Telemachus' use of *ou phthonein* puts this idea to rest: he is not jealously guarding his resources to avoid losing them to an unwanted third party. He welcomes the beggar, who is not unwanted in his view, and thus he does not begrudge him.

More significantly, Odysseus uses *phthonein* twice in his response to provocation by Irus, an actual beggar. Irus orders Odysseus to leave before he is dragged out from the house in disgrace, threatening, ἀλλ' ἄνα, μὴ τάχα νῶϊν ἔρις καὶ χερσὶ γένηται ("But get up, lest a quarrel arise quickly between us and our hands," *Od.* 18.13). Irus' language contains parallels to Zeus' words to Hera in *Iliad* 4 (quoted above): both use negative purpose clauses and the verb *gignesthai*, and both focus on strife-related nouns (*eris* or *erisma*) in the nominative. Moreover, in both cases, the interlocutor's response contains a form of *phthonein*. Odysseus answers Irus:

δαιμόνι', οὔτε τί σε ῥέζω κακὸν οὔτ' ἀγορεύω,
οὔτε τινὰ φθονέω δόμεναι καὶ πόλλ' ἀνελόντα.
οὐδὸς δ' ἀμφοτέρους ὅδε χεῖσεται, οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ
ἀλλοτρίων φθονέειν· δοκέεις δέ μοι εἶναι ἀλήτης
ὥς περ ἐγών, ὄλβον δὲ θεοὶ μέλλουσιν ὀπάζειν.

"Sir, I do not do or say anything bad to you, and I do not begrudge someone taking even a lot and giving it to you. This threshold will accommodate both of us, and there is no need for you to envy what another has: you seem to me a wanderer, like me, and the gods are the ones who grant prosperity." (*Od.* 18.15-19)

It would not be inappropriate to translate οὔτε...φθονέω (18.16) as simply "I do not object."¹² In all likelihood, however, its appearance here does relate to envy. Odysseus uses it with a negation to demonstrate that he does not feel envy, while simultaneously insinuating that a lesser man might feel differently: he is describing the prospect of a beggar watching another beggar receive a generous portion, a situation that would naturally prompt comparison and negative feelings of being treated unequally. The use of *ou phthonein* is deliberate: while Odysseus himself does not

¹² Steiner (2010), 159. Similarly, Lombardo translates, "I don't mind" (2000, 276).

feel envy, his expressed lack of envy serves to highlight the fact that Irus does feel envy, thus characterizing him in a negative light.¹³ The second appearance of *phthonein* in this passage (οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ / ἀλλοτρίων φθονέειν, 18.17-18) is clearly associated with an emotional state. Irus is a greedy and selfish figure in whose behavior we can see an overlap of jealousy and envy: he is jealous in the sense that he feels entitled to exclusive begging rights at the suitors' feasts, and when Odysseus' appearance in beggarly disguise puts an end to that exclusivity, Irus feels envy toward Odysseus for the share he has received. While Odysseus comments that there is no need for Irus to feel *phthonos* at the prospect of sharing his turf with another beggar, Irus obviously does, at least in Odysseus' reading of the situation. In sum, while it is not entirely incorrect to translate most instances of *ou phthonein* as "to not object," there are several places where the question of envy or jealousy does enter into the equation, making "to not envy" or "to not begrudge" a more accurate rendering. In turn, such examples once again raise the question of whether it is advisable elsewhere to excise the root meaning of the word so completely.

3. Beyond the lexical approach: envy, jealousy, and the gods

With only ten appearances, *phthonein* is a relatively uncommon verb in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. We would be mistaken, however, to take the small number of appearances to mean that envy and jealousy were not emotions with which Homeric characters were intimately familiar. One of the main reasons we do not find more *phthon*- words in Homer's works (and in Greek literature in general) is that it was by and large socially unacceptable to admit to feeling *phthonos*, despite the agonistic nature of ancient Greek society.¹⁴ Accordingly, examples of people accusing others of exhibiting *phthonos* are far more common than examples of people admitting

¹³ For a further discussion of the negative characterization of Irus and the parallels between his behavior and that of the suitors, see Levine (1982), 200-4.

¹⁴ Sanders (2014), 5.

to feeling it themselves.¹⁵ Moreover, on account of the complex nature of envy and jealousy, individuals are sometimes slow to realize and identify that what they are feeling is, in fact, envy or jealousy.¹⁶ For these reasons, we must go beyond a lexical study in order to gain a fuller understanding. In what follows, I shall survey key passages that seem to me to contain overt notes of envy or jealousy but that do not have *phthon*- words; some of these include words that are often associated with *phthonos*, while others reveal no particular verbal clues.

Let us begin with the gods. In *Odyssey* 5, Calypso gives several examples of immortals feeling jealousy toward other immortals. When Hermes brings a message to Calypso from Zeus, bidding her to send Odysseus on his way, she responds:

Σχέτλιοί ἐστε, θεοί, ζηλήμονες ἔξοχον ἄλλων,
οἳ τε θεαῖς ἀγάσθε παρ' ἀνδράσιν εὐνάζεσθαι
ἀμφοδίην, ἣν τίς τε φίλον ποιήσεται ἀκοίτην.
ὥς μὲν ὅτ' Ὀρίων' ἔλετο ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως,
τόφρα οἱ ἠγάσθε θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζῶοντες,
ἦος ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή
οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιομένη κατέπεφνε.
ὥς δ' ὅπ' Ἰασίωνι εὐπλόκαμος Δημήτηρ,
ὧ θυμῷ εἷξασα, μίγη φιλότῃ καὶ εὐνῇ
νειῶ ἐνι τριπόλῳ· οὐδὲ δὴν ἦεν ἄπυστος
Ζεὺς, ὅς μιν κατέπεφνε βαλὼν ἀργῇτι κεραυνῷ.
ὥς δ' αὖ νῦν μοι ἀγασθε, θεοί, βροτὸν ἄνδρα παρεῖναι.

“You are cruel, gods, jealous beyond others, you who begrudge goddesses for openly sleeping beside men, if she makes one her dear lover. Just as when rosy-fingered Dawn chose Orion, at that time you gods who live easy begrudged her, until, in Ortygia, pure, golden-throned Artemis attacked and slew him with gentle arrows. And just as when fair-haired Demeter, having yielded to her desire, slept with Iasion in love and lay with him in a thrice-plowed field: Zeus was not without knowledge of this for long, who struck with a bright thunderbolt and slew him. So now you begrudge me, gods, for admitting a mortal man.” (*Od.* 5.118-29)

¹⁵ Idem, 35.

¹⁶ Caston (2012), 12. Caston has suggested that this is true of jealousy in the context of Latin literature. Given that there is significant overlap between the emotions of envy and jealousy, I find this idea convincing in relation to Greek envy as well.

Calypso uses forms of the verb *agaasthai* three times in this passage to refer to the male gods' resentment of female goddesses sleeping with mortal men (5.119, 5.122, 5.129); in addition, she calls the gods *zêlêmônes* (5.118). It is difficult to find an appropriate English equivalent for *agaasthai* here, because Calypso does not actually describe what she perceives to be the exact motivations of the male gods for their behavior. Nevertheless, while there are various ways to render her use of *agaasthai* into English, there seems to be a general consensus that the best translation for *zêlêmônes* is "jealous."¹⁷ Moreover, the LSJ provides only one definition for *zêlêmôn* ("jealous"), citing as an example this passage from the *Odyssey*.¹⁸ Indeed, the male gods should not be envious of the female goddesses for their relations with mortals, since the male gods have had plenty of their own trysts with mortals. Rather, they seem to feel that it is inappropriate for immortals to develop actual relationships with mortals, and perhaps they feel slighted in such cases because they themselves have been overlooked. In other words, the male gods may feel that it is their exclusive right to form relationships with the female goddesses, and in the examples Calypso cites, that exclusivity is being threatened, and so what they are feeling is jealousy. In reality, Calypso is exaggerating by comparing her situation to that of Dawn and Demeter, since her lover is in no danger of being killed by the gods.¹⁹ Regardless, her interpretation of all three scenarios sufficiently indicates that the gods are capable of (and perhaps even prone to) feeling jealousy toward each other.

The gods experience envy and jealousy not only in relation to other immortals, but also in relation to mortals, who make occasional references to this in passing. When Telemachus visits

¹⁷ For comparative purposes (italics all my own): Lattimore translates, "You are hard-hearted, you gods, and *jealous* beyond all creatures beside, when *you are resentful* toward the goddess for sleeping openly with such men" (2007, 91). Fagles translates, "You unrivaled lords of *jealousy*—*scandalized* when goddesses sleep with mortals" (1997, 156). Lombardo translates, "You gods are the most *jealous* bastards in the universe—*persecuting* any goddess who ever openly takes a mortal lover" (2000, 73).

¹⁸ LSJ s.v. ζηλημοσύνη.

¹⁹ de Jong (2001), 132.

Sparta, Menelaus laments that he would have built a home in Argos for Odysseus after his return from Troy and they would have been close friends through old age, if not for a god's intervention: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν που μέλλεν ἀγάσσεσθαι θεὸς αὐτός, / ὃς κεῖνον δύστηνον ἀνόστιμον οἶον ἔθηκεν ("But I suppose a god himself must have begrudged him these things, who made only him wretched [and] without a homecoming," *Od.* 4.181-82). Penelope also uses a form of *agaasthai* in reference to the gods when she is reunited with Odysseus: θεοὶ δ' ὥπαζον οἴζυν, / οἷ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε / ἥβης ταρπῆναι καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἰκέσθαι ("But the gods gave us suffering, who begrudged us the ability to enjoy our youth and arrive at the threshold of old age, all the while remaining beside each other," *Od.* 23.210-12). In both of these cases, due to the lack of elaboration, it is difficult to categorize whether the characters perceive the gods to be feeling envy, jealousy, or some combination of the two. Nevertheless, mortals in Homer are aware of the potential for receiving negative attention from the gods on account of these emotions.

The most extended description of a Homeric god feeling envy or jealousy comes in *Iliad* 7, when Poseidon complains to Zeus about the wall the Greeks are constructing. Poseidon says:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἧ ῥά τίς ἐστι βροτῶν ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
 ὅς τις ἔτ' ἀθανάτοισι νόον καὶ μῆτιν ἐνίψει;
 οὐχ ὀράας ὅτι δ' αὖτε κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
 τεῖχος ἐτειχίσσαντο νεῶν ὕπερ, ἀμφὶ δὲ τάφρον
 ἤλασαν, οὐδὲ θεοῖσι δόσαν κλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας;
 τοῦ δ' ἦτοι κλέος ἔσται ὅσον τ' ἐπικίδνεται ἡώς·
 τοῦ δ' ἐπιλήσονται τὸ ἐγὼ καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
 ἥρω Λαομέδοντι πολίσσαμεν ἀθλήσαντε.²⁰

"Father Zeus, is there anyone among mortals on the boundless earth who still will tell their purpose and plan to the immortals? Do you not see that the long-haired Achaeans built a wall inland from the ships, drove a ditch around it, and did not give renowned

²⁰ It should be noted that Zenodotus, Aristophanes, and Aristarchus all considered this exchange between Poseidon and Zeus to be an interpolation. Kirk agrees that it was likely an addition by a follower of Homer (1990, 289). Even if this is the case, no objections have been made on the grounds that Poseidon's complaint is somehow unbefitting of a god, which suggests that such behavior would have struck the ancient Greek audience as entirely plausible.

hecatombs to the gods? Now surely the glory of this will reach as far as dawn spreads over [the earth]: but people will forget the one that Phoebus Apollo and I built, toiling for the hero Laomedon.” (*Il.* 7.446-53)

Poseidon begins by lamenting the alleged tendency of men to act without disclosing their motives to the gods, citing as an example the fact that the Greeks did not perform a sacrifice before beginning construction. In the ancient Greek world, the offering of sacrifices amounted to a signal that the involved parties did not intend to compete with the gods; in this way, they could avoid incurring their ill-will.²¹ Without this, Poseidon feels that the *kleos* of his and Apollo’s wall (and presumably his own *kleos* as well, by extension) is being threatened. Given that Poseidon ends his complaint by focusing on the renown of his wall, it seems possible that his objection about the lack of sacrifice could actually be an attempt to disguise the real crux of the issue: Poseidon views the situation as a zero-sum game and is jealous that the prominence of the Greeks’ wall might eclipse the fame of his own. Similar to the way in which Hera claims that she will not feel *phthonos* if Zeus destroys her beloved cities (although she probably already does envy him), Poseidon seems to be attempting to distance himself from being associated with jealousy, and he does so by starting off with an objection on the grounds of impiety.²²

Many of the scenarios involving envy or jealousy in Homer’s works derive from issues concerning honor, glory, and fame, which is in keeping with the fact that Homeric society was so agonistic and acutely preoccupied with reputation.²³ We have already seen one example of the connection between *phthonos* and honor in Hera’s interactions with Zeus in *Iliad* 4. Hera’s

²¹ Implicit in the concept of sacrifice is an acknowledgment of the hierarchy in which gods are superior to mortals. The act of sacrifice reaffirms this hierarchy and in doing so, indicates that mortals are aware of their place and do not aim to challenge that dynamic. One of the ways in which Hesiod marks the Age of Silver as inferior and remiss in their duties is by describing how they fail to serve the gods and make sacrifices: οὐδ’ ἀθανάτους θεραπεύειν / ἤθελον οὐδ’ ἔρδειν μακάρων ἱεροῖς ἐπὶ βωμοῖς, / ἧ θέμις ἀνθρώποις κατὰ ἥθεα (they were neither willing to serve the gods nor to make sacrifices on the holy altars of the blessed ones, as is right for men [to do] according to custom, *Op.* 135-37). This establishes Zeus’ justification for destroying them (*Op.* 138-39).

²² This is analogous to Sanders’ statement that envy is often misrepresented as a desire for justice (2014, 23).

²³ Scodel (2008), 6.

speech is unmarked by specific verbal cues relating to honor, but her emphasis on pedigree and her marriage to Zeus reveals that she is worried about her relative status: she can tolerate the idea of losing her favorite cities as long as Zeus loses his as well, but it would be an insult to her honor if his beloved Troy stands tall while her efforts to aid the Greeks amount to nothing. In the case of Poseidon in *Iliad* 7, the connection between jealousy and fame is clearer, as he complains about how the *kleos* of the Greeks' wall will obliterate the memory of his own. The prominence of honor, glory, and fame (indicated by words such as *timê*, *kleos*, and *kudos*) in situations of envy and jealousy will become more evident in the next section.

4. Beyond the lexical approach: envy, jealousy, and kings

Now that we have seen that Homer's gods are capable of feeling envy and jealousy both toward each other and toward mortals, let us move on to envy and jealousy among men—and specifically cases in which kings or leaders are involved.

In the *Iliad*, Thersites takes issue with kings and envies the perks of their positions. He infamously targets Agamemnon in *Iliad* 2, but the narrator also informs us that he has established a habit of quarreling (νεικείεσκε, *Il.* 2.221) with Achilles and Odysseus. Although Thersites briefly praises Achilles in his invective against Agamemnon, he does so only to further his point about the magnitude of Agamemnon's offenses; he then promptly turns on Achilles as well, criticizing him for his inaction.²⁴ The tipping point for Thersites' ire is the booty Agamemnon has amassed and how that has been made possible by the toil of other men (himself included). He calls out, πλεῖαί τοι χαλκοῦ κλισίαι, πολλαὶ δὲ γυναῖκες / εἰσὶν ἐνὶ κλισίῃς ἐξαίρετοι, ἅς τοι Ἀχαιοὶ / πρωτίστῳ δίδομεν, εὔτ' ἂν πτολίεθρον ἔλωμεν ("Your huts are full of bronze, and there are many choice women in your huts, whom we Achaeans give to you first of all whenever we

²⁴ Kirk (1985), 142.

seize a city,” *Il.* 2.226-28). Judging from this, we can safely infer that (at least part of) what Thersites is feeling is envy: Agamemnon has something, Thersites does not, and Thersites feels that the situation is wrong, on the grounds that he has expended effort and yet that effort has resulted only in the enrichment of another.

In his response to Thersites’ criticism, Odysseus warns him, ἴσχεο, μηδ’ ἔθελ’ οἷος ἐριζέμεναι βασιλεῦσιν (“Restrain yourself, and do not yearn to contend by yourself with kings,” *Il.* 2.247). In light of the association we have already seen between *eris* and situations relating to envy and jealousy, Odysseus’ use of the verb *erizein* suggests that he regards Thersites’ outburst as resulting from envy. The presence of *oios* is also interesting. While it is possible that Odysseus means that Thersites is outnumbered by the kings whom he insults, he could equally be trying to impress upon Thersites that Thersites is alone and unaided by the other soldiers, who do not share his disillusionment with kings or the wealth gap. The second possibility seems more likely, given that Odysseus elsewhere makes statements aimed at protecting kings’ positions.²⁵ Indeed, scholars have argued that the *Iliad* as a whole (as well as the *Odyssey*) can be read as an attempt to legitimize the rule of the elite.²⁶ Thus it is not surprising to find examples of rhetoric that discourages competing with or envying the rich and powerful, a topic to which I will return in section 5 below.

Some men, like Thersites, envy kings. Conversely, some kings feel envy and/or jealously guard their resources and prestige, and Achilles is one such king. The quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon involves a complex mixture of emotions—pride, anger, contempt, etc.—and it goes beyond the scope of the present study to examine and identify the precise role of each one

²⁵ Cf. *Il.* 2.203-6.

²⁶ Morris (1986), 125.

(if indeed such an identification is even possible).²⁷ It seems clear enough, however, that envy is one of the emotions at work. The quarrel is repeatedly referred to as an *eris*: the narrator names it as such as early as line 8 of the first book. Athena also calls it an *eris* (1.210), and Nestor warns Achilles not to *erizemenai* with Agamemnon (1.277). I am not suggesting that in every case where there is *eris*, there is envy or jealousy, but rivalry does frequently raise the question of these emotions.²⁸ Indeed, as we have seen, there are many cases in which *eris* words occur when envy or jealousy is present.

In addition to the fact that the clash between Achilles and Agamemnon carries the name of *eris*, *timê* is the central issue at stake—another concept frequently associated with envy and jealousy. Achilles points out that he did not come to Troy in order to take vengeance on any of the Trojans for wronging him personally, but in order for Agamemnon to win honor for himself and for Menelaus (ὄφρα σὺ χαίρης, / τιμὴν ἀρνύμενοι Μενελάῳ σοί τε, 1.158-59). Achilles, however, feels dishonored (*atimos*, 1.171), as he has done more than his fair share of the fighting, yet he always comes away with far lesser prizes than Agamemnon (1.163-68). The quickness with which Achilles recounts this inequality after the confrontation begins suggests not only that he has been engaging in the sort of social comparison in which envy is rooted, but also that this has been a source of bitterness for quite some time. Thus, while the seizure of Briseis pushes Achilles to the breaking point, from Achilles' perspective, it is only the crowning example of Agamemnon's established habit of taking more than what he deserves. Despite the fact that it was the norm for commanders to take a greater share when sacking cities, this has nevertheless caused Achilles to harbor long-standing resentful and envious feelings toward Agamemnon.²⁹

²⁷ For other treatments of the emotional stakes of the quarrel, see Cairns (1993), 98-103; Fisher (1992), 151-53.

²⁸ Sanders (2014), 54.

²⁹ Part of what Achilles is feeling can be categorized as indignation at Agamemnon's decision to seize Briseis (for the difference between envy and indignation, see p. 24). Indeed, Nestor must agree that Agamemnon's proposed

Achilles never says outright that he envies Agamemnon—which is not surprising, given how few figures in Greek literature make such confessions—but he exhibits trademark signs of envy. In Achilles’ prayer to his mother, he laments, ἦ γάρ μ’ Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων / ἠτίμησεν· ἐλὼν γὰρ ἔχει γέρας, αὐτὸς ἀπούρας (“For wide-ruling Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, dishonored me. For he seized and now holds my prize, having taken it himself,” 1.355-56).³⁰ What Achilles is feeling goes beyond simple envy, for the person he envies is the one who caused him to be without, but nevertheless, his words point to the very definition of envy: Agamemnon now has something Achilles does not, and Achilles feels that this situation is wrong. Moreover, he identifies the crux of the matter as one of honor, which is often a central issue in feelings of envy.³¹

Even aside from his interactions with Agamemnon, Achilles appears to be prone to jealousy. When he agrees to allow Patroclus to lead the Myrmidons into battle, he warns him, εἰ δέ κεν αὖ τοι / δώῃ κῦδος ἀρέσθαι ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης, / μὴ σύ γ’ ἄνευθεν ἐμεῖο λιλαίεσθαι πολεμίζειν / Τρωσὶ φιλοπτολέμοισιν· ἀτιμότερον δέ με θήσεις (“even if the loud-thundering spouse of Hera allows you to win glory, do not yearn to fight the war-loving Trojans without me: you will make me more dishonored,” *Il.* 16.87-90). The earlier part of these lines can be construed as a warning motivated by concern for Patroclus’ well-being, but the later part reveals that Achilles’ own reputation is weighing heavily upon his mind as well. This is clear from his use of both *kudos* and *atimotos*. He fears that if Patroclus gets carried away and goes beyond

action is out of line, as he urges him not to take Briseis (1.275-76). But Nestor also tells Achilles to calm down and to stop trying to contend with a king, since kings deserve a greater part of the spoils (1.277-79). The suggestion that Achilles’ reaction is excessive reveals that a Greek audience would have considered some amount of it to be motivated by envy, rather than by indignation alone.

³⁰ Interestingly, despite the fact that Achilles’ words are intended for Thetis alone and presumably no one else overhears, Thersites repeats line 1.356 in his abuse of Agamemnon at 2.240. Thersites is clearly envious, and we can perhaps take his repetition of Achilles’ words as another nod (albeit a subtle one) in favor of the idea that envy is a contributing factor in Achilles’ quarrel with Agamemnon.

³¹ It is difficult to deny the possibility that Achilles feels some amount of sexual jealousy over losing Briseis to Agamemnon. If present, however, this sexual jealousy certainly takes a backseat to his envy regarding honor.

warding off the immediate threat of Hector burning the ships, the glory Patroclus will obtain will come at the expense of his own, and he is jealous at the prospect of diminished glory. The situation is further complicated by the issue that if Patroclus should push the Trojans back well beyond the ships, this would signal to the Greeks that they no longer have such great need of Achilles.³² Achilles faces a number of complex considerations in deciding whether to allow Patroclus to fight, but nonetheless it seems likely that jealousy over Patroclus' glory relative to his own is an important contributing factor.

The prospect of glory again looms large as Achilles chases down Hector, and the narrator describes the situation: λαοῖσιν δ' ἀνένευε καρῆατι δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς, / οὐδ' ἔα ἰέμεναι ἐπὶ Ἑκτορι πικρὰ βέλεμνα, / μή τις κῦδος ἄροιτο βαλῶν, ὃ δὲ δεύτερος ἔλθοι (But god-like Achilles was shaking his head at the soldiers, and he would not allow them to hurl sharp javelins at Hector, lest someone win glory from his throw and Achilles come second, *Il.* 22.205-7).³³ Achilles feels that it is his exclusive right to do battle with and kill Hector, and he cannot tolerate a Greek rival for the glory attached to defeating Hector. Few would argue that Achilles' desire to avenge Patroclus by killing Hector personally is unjustified or inappropriate, but this instance nevertheless reinforces the idea that Achilles is widely and jealously preoccupied with his own glory. Together with Achilles' own words several hundred lines earlier, rebuking Apollo for robbing him of great glory by leading him away from the battle (ἐμὲ μὲν μέγα κῦδος ἀφείλεο, *Il.* 22.18), the narrator's observation that it is out of concern for his own glory that Achilles does not want anyone else to participate underscores the importance of glory in determining Achilles' actions. He genuinely cares for Patroclus, both while alive and after death, but at no point does regard for improving or safeguarding his own reputation leave Achilles' mind.

³² Scodel (2008), 18.

³³ de Jong (2012), 111.

In contrast to Achilles, Odysseus does not seem to exhibit particularly jealous or envious behavior, but he demonstrates awareness that kings are wont to incur the envy of others. Speaking among the Phaeacians, he describes how his companions thwarted their own homecoming after being assisted by Aeolus:

οἱ δ' ἔταροι ἐπέεσσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον,
καί μ' ἔφασαν χρυσόν τε καὶ ἄργυρον οἴκαδ' ἄγεσθαι,
δῶρα παρ' Αἰόλου μεγαλήτορος Ἴπποτάδαο·
ὧδε δέ τις εἶπεςκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον·
“ὦ πόποι, ὥς ὃδε πᾶσι φίλος καὶ τίμιός ἐστιν
ἀνθρώποις, ὅτεών τε πόλιν καὶ γαῖαν ἵκηται.
πολλὰ μὲν ἐκ Τροίης ἄγεται κειμήλια καλὰ
ληίδος· ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτὲ ὁμῆν ὁδὸν ἐκτελέσαντες
οἴκαδε νισσόμεθα κενεὰς σὺν χειράς ἔχοντες.
καὶ νῦν οἱ τάδ' ἔδωκε χαριζόμενος φιλότῃ
Αἴολος. ἀλλ' ἄγε θᾶσσον ἰδώμεθα ὅτι τάδ' ἐστίν,
ὅσος τις χρυσός τε καὶ ἄργυρος ἀσκῶ ἔνεστιν.”

“But my companions spoke with words among themselves, and they said that I was bringing gold and silver home, gifts from the great-hearted Aeolus, son of Hippotas. And someone would speak in this way, looking to another next to him, ‘Oh shame, that this man is dear to and honored by all men, whenever he comes to their city and land. He is bringing many beautiful treasures from the plunder of Troy, but we on the other hand, although having completed the same expedition, are coming home with empty hands. And now Aeolus, favoring him in friendship, gave these things to him. Come, quickly, let us see what these things are, how much gold and silver is in the bag.’” (*Od.* 10.34-45)

Like Thersites (and Achilles, to some degree), Odysseus’ companions allegedly take umbrage at the fact that they have undergone the same trials and tribulations, yet they are coming away without anything to show for it. Much of their speech focuses on material wealth, but they are also upset about the disparity in honor between Odysseus and themselves. This is clear from the beginning of their complaint, as they point out that Odysseus is honored (*timios*, 10.38) by all. Honor is marked in part by gifts of material goods, and thus the men (reasonably) equate their lack of gifts from hosts such as Aeolus with their lack of honor. The men are not necessarily upset by any unusual stinginess on Odysseus’ part—elsewhere, he is praised for his generosity

and fairness—but they find the whole gift exchange among kings upsetting, as they are left out of it.³⁴ Unlike the episode with Thersites, however, this scene is Odysseus’ own perception of what happened once he himself fell asleep, and there is no comment from the omniscient narrator. Even if we assume that he has embellished the account to portray himself in a flattering light (i.e. as a decorated and honored man), the idea that a king’s companions might envy his gifts needs to appear plausible to Odysseus’ Phaeacian audience, and indeed, there is nothing improbable about such a scene.³⁵ This passage is crucial in establishing the belief that a king may easily incur envy on account of his position and attendant privileges, regardless of his actual behavior and treatment of his constituents.

5. Beyond the lexical approach: anti-envy rhetoric

Odysseus is not the only one who is aware of the potential envy kings often invite. Throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we find numerous examples of what can be considered anti-envy rhetoric. For example, after the initial confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon, Nestor counsels Achilles, μήτε σὺ Πηλεΐδῃ ἔθελ’ ἐριζέμεναι βασιλῆϊ / ἀντιβίην, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποθ’ ὁμοίης ἔμμορε τιμῆς / σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, ὃν τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν (“You, son of Peleus, do not yearn to contend with a king, since a sceptered king does not ever have a similar share of honor, to whom Zeus gave glory,” *Il.* 1.277-79). There is a striking resemblance between the first quoted line of Nestor’s warning and that of Odysseus to Thersites in *Iliad* 2: both contain an imperative of *ethelein* in conjunction with *erizemenai*, with either the singular or plural of *basileus* as the dative object of *erizemenai*. This similarity reinforces the possibility that envy could be involved, at least from Nestor’s point of view. Moreover, we also see the appearance of

³⁴ de Jong (2001), 252. For accounts of Odysseus’ merits as a ruler, see *Od.* 4.687-91, 5.8-12.

³⁵ For the possibility that Odysseus is deliberately shaping the episode to show himself in a flattering light, see de Jong (2001), 252.

two words from the honor, glory, and fame category—*timê* and *kudos*—whose presence makes it all the more likely that Nestor perceives envy as playing a significant role in Achilles’ reaction.³⁶ Nestor’s insistence that one ought not to compare oneself with kings belongs to a group of conventional expressions about Zeus’ support of kings.³⁷ The primary aim of such statements is to legitimize and preserve a king’s control, but there may also be a second, related aim: to ward off envy. These goals are related, in that the security of a king’s position depends in part on minimizing the envy of his constituents and preventing that envy from prompting action. By reminding Achilles of Zeus’ support for Agamemnon, Nestor is trying to stop what he perceives as Achilles’ envy from upending the status quo in the Greek army.

In the *Odyssey*, Menelaus employs some skillful anti-envy rhetoric when Telemachus and Peisistratus arrive in Sparta. Telemachus marvels at the riches of the palace, suggesting that perhaps the halls of Zeus are similar. Menelaus begins his speech in response:

Τέκνα φίλ', ἥ τοι Ζηνὶ βροτῶν οὐκ ἄν τις ἐρίζοι·
 ἀθάνατοι γὰρ τοῦ γε δόμοι καὶ κτήματ' ἔασιν·
 ἀνδρῶν δ' ἥ κέν τις μοι ἐρίσσειται, ἥε καὶ οὐκί,
 κτήμασιν. ἥ γὰρ πολλὰ παθὼν καὶ πόλλ' ἐπαληθεὶς
 ἠγαγόμην ἐν νηυσὶ καὶ ὁγδοάτῳ ἔτει ἦλθον·

“Dear children, surely no one of mortals could contend with Zeus, for his houses and possessions are immortal. But of men, someone may contend with me in possessions, or not. For I brought them in ships and came in the eighth year, after suffering many things and wandering a great deal.” (*Od.* 4.78-82)

While at first glance it may seem that Menelaus is just trying to be modest, the repetition of forms of *erizein* at the beginning of his speech—one in reference to the gods and one in reference to men—hints that he is primarily concerned with avoiding envy, both immortal and

³⁶ The juxtaposition of *timê* and *kudos* indicates that they are related but distinct concepts. Zeus grants *kudos* (a divine favor of sorts) to the king, which then results in *timê* among men. For a more detailed treatment of the distinctions among *timê*, *kudos*, and *kleos* see Scodel (2008), 22-30.

³⁷ For other examples of the idea that Zeus is involved in appointing or otherwise endorsing kings, see *Il.* 2. 204-6, *Od.* 1.386-90.

mortal. Menelaus immediately addresses and dismisses Telemachus' comparison, in order to ward off divine envy; it would be dangerous to leave such a comment go unanswered, as it could be construed as a challenge to the gods.³⁸ He then continues in such a way as to dispel mortal envy as well. The strange construction of his statement that someone of men might be able to compete with him (but perhaps not) reveals a certain indifference. Menelaus has no desire to compete in this regard, and he emphasizes that his riches came to him at great personal cost: not only was he forced to wander on his way home, but his brother was killed in the meantime (4.91-92). He states pointedly, ὥς οὗτοι χαίρων τοῖσδε κτεάτεσσιν ἀνάσσω...ὅν ὄφελον τριτάτην περ ἔχων ἐν δώμασι μοῖραν / ναίειν, οἱ δ' ἄνδρες σοοὶ ἔμμεναι, οἱ τότε ὄλοντο / Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, ἐκὰς Ἄργεος ἱπποβότοιο ("So I am the owner of these possessions, although surely not rejoicing... Would that I lived in my house, having a third part of these things, and that those men were safe, who perished at that time in wide Troy, far from Argos, grazed by horses," *Od.* 4.93-99). At this point in his life, Menelaus just wants to avoid *phthonos* and *eris* entirely. After all, the last time someone envied him, he lost his wife and thus the Trojan War began.

6. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* summary

In sum, we have seen that *ou phthonein* in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* can at times be used to emphasize the absence of envy or jealousy, but that it would be inaccurate to say that there is no connection to envy or jealousy at all. In these cases, it functions to characterize certain individuals as generous and selfless. At other times, it indicates the possibility of envy or jealousy, such as when it occurs in relation to the suitors in the *Odyssey*. Given that *phthonein* and its compounds only appear ten times in these texts, however, it is highly beneficial to supplement a lexical study by paying attention to context and to semantically related terms.

³⁸ de Jong (2001), 94.

Certain words, such as *eris*, *erizein*, and *agaasthai* occur frequently in scenarios related to envy and jealousy and can thus serve as markers, but it is also possible for these emotions to be present without any particular verbal signs. It would be erroneous to take the relative absence of *phthonein* to mean that envy and jealousy did not play a notable role in the Homeric world, especially in light of the fact that there was a particular discomfort or shame surrounding them. Indeed, no one is immune to these emotions. Homeric gods feel envy and jealousy, both in relation to each other and to mortals. Likewise, men also exhibit these sentiments, with some of the most salient examples involving kings either on the experiencing or the receiving end. In both the divine and mortal realms, many (if not all) of the cases of envy and jealousy ultimately stem from concerns about honor and glory, with words such as *timê*, *kleos*, and *kudos* often alerting us to such concerns as the cause of tension. There is already an awareness of the tendency of kings to feel and to incur envy and/or jealousy, and we can identify rhetoric that was likely meant to help avert these potentially destructive emotions.

Part II: The Homeric Hymns

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have been dated to the second half of the eighth century on the basis of their language, while the *Homeric Hymns* likely belong somewhere between 700 and 500.³⁹ In spite of differences in date and authorship, the passages in the *Hymns* relating to envy and jealousy are thematically akin to those found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but there are slight variations in vocabulary.

As is the case in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the noun form *phthonos* does not appear in the *Hymns*. The verb *phthonein* is also absent in the *Hymns*, but there are three instances of the

³⁹ Janko (1982), 228-31; Richardson (2010), 1.

adjective *aphthonos*, which does not appear anywhere in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.⁴⁰ In the *Hymn to Apollo*, Apollo assures the Cretan men that sheep will be abundant (ἄφθονα, 536) at Delphi, despite the constant sacrifices. The adjective appears twice in the *Hymn to Earth*. The narrator first describes how the man whom Earth honors is blessed and possesses all things in abundance (τῷ τ' ἄφθονα πάντα πάρεστι, 8), and then addresses Earth as a generous deity (ἄφθονε δαῖμον, 16). In the last example, the fact that Earth is personified allows for the possibility of an emotional stance: the goddess could just as easily be withholding and jealously possessive of her resources, but she happens to be generous instead. None of these contexts indicates an acute relation to envy or jealousy, but a lingering connection is nevertheless embedded within the adjective itself: if there is an abundant supply of something, people are less likely to succumb to jealousy and more likely to share, because there is plenty to go around. *Aphthonos* should not be taken in these cases to mean something about the emotional state of the involved parties, but the linguistic relationship still implies that if the situations were reversed (e.g. if sheep were scarce), the emergence of *phthonos* would be a distinct possibility.

While the *Hymns* contain fewer *phthon-* words than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, they have a higher incidence of *zêl-* words. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, Metaneira's daughter promises the disguised Demeter that if she looks after Metaneira's infant son, she will receive gifts that will incite envy in other women (τίς σε ἰδοῦσα γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων / ζηλώσαι· τόσα κέν τοι ἀπὸ θρεπτήρια δοίη, 167-68), and Metaneira subsequently reiterates the offer (222-23). The enviable nature of the gifts is mentioned to underscore how much Metaneira cares for her son and wants to find a proper nurse; thus we can see a subtle nod toward a positive function of envy, namely to provide an indication of the worth of an item or of the honor that possessing the item signifies.

⁴⁰ *Aphthonos* appears at Hes. *Op.* 118, indicating that the word was in fact in existence in roughly the same time period as when the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed.

This is the only example in the texts examined thus far that involves mortal women and envy. It may not reveal much about female envy in isolation, but it does at least demonstrate that envy affects both men and women alike.

Another *zêl-* word appears in the *Hymn to Apollo*, when Leto is in the throes of labor. By Hera's design, Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, has not learned of Leto's condition:

Ἥρης...μιν ἔρυκε / ζηλοσύνη ὅ τ' ἄρ' υἱὸν ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε / Λητὼ τέξεσθαι
καλλιπλόκαμος τότε ἔμελλεν (Hera kept her away out of jealousy that fair-haired Leto was about to bring forth a blameless and mighty son at that time, 99-101).⁴¹ *Zêlosunê* appears only here in Greek literature.⁴² The LSJ entry for *zêlosunê* directs us to the entry for *zêlos*, the primary definition of which is "jealousy." I believe, however, that Hera's *zêlosunê* is a blend of envy and jealousy: envy over the fact that Leto is about to have a "blameless and mighty" son while Hera herself does not, and jealousy over the fact that she does not have the exclusive title of mother of all Zeus' children. At any rate, *zêlos* and *zêloun* are also absent in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The only *zêl-* words in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are *zêlêmôn*, which is the adjective that Calypso applies to the male gods (*Od.* 5.118), and *duszêlos*, which appears in Odysseus' explanation to Alcinous of why he did not come with Nausicaa to the palace (*Il.* 7.307).⁴³ It seems imprudent to draw general conclusions about the relatively higher occurrence of *phthon-* words in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the relatively higher occurrence of *zêl-* words in the *Hymns*, but it is interesting to note nonetheless. More significantly, the types of situations in which we find words from either group remain more or less constant among these texts.

⁴¹ Scholars have translated *zêlosunê* both ways. Evelyn-White translates as "envy" (1914, 331), while West translates as "jealousy" (2003, 79).

⁴² Richardson (2010), 97.

⁴³ Odysseus says that people are *duszêloi* in judgment. He seems to be suggesting that he did not wish to accompany Nausicaa to the palace because their appearance together in public would cause people (especially her suitors) to circulate rumors about them out of envy and/or sexual jealousy.

Let us now turn to the examples of envy and jealousy in the *Hymns* that are not marked by either *phthon-* or *zêl-* words. As we have just seen, Hera's envy and jealousy emerge early in the *Hymn to Apollo*, and they resurface later in the so-called "Pythian" part of the hymn (although the episode itself occurs at an earlier point in time).⁴⁴ Before establishing his sanctuary at Delphi, Apollo has to slay the serpent residing there, which once nursed Typhaon, Hera's monstrous offspring. Hera bore Typhaon after Zeus gave birth to Athena from his head, and Hera's speech on that occasion provides insight into her emotional state. She addresses the other immortals:

κέκλυτέ μευ πάντες τε θεοὶ πᾶσαί τε θεάιναι,
ὥς ἔμ' ἀτιμάζειν ἄρχει νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς
πρῶτος, ἐπεὶ μ' ἄλοχον ποιήσατο κέδν' εἰδυῖαν·
καὶ νῦν νόσφιν ἐμεῖο τέκε γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην,
ἥ πᾶσιν μακάρεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν·
αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἠπεδανὸς γέγονεν μετὰ πᾶσι θεοῖσι
παῖς ἐμὸς Ἥφαιστος ῥικνὸς πόδας ὄν τέκον αὐτῇ

"Listen to me, all you gods and goddesses, how cloud-gathering Zeus begins to dishonor me first, after he made me his wife, I who know my duties. And now, unaided by me, he has given birth to bright-eyed Athena, who is distinguished among all the blessed immortals. But my son, crooked-footed Hephaestus, whom I bore myself, has come to be a weakling among all the gods." (311-17)

Hera is upset in the immediate sense on account of the birth of Athena, but the broader issue in question is one of honor, which she makes clear through her use of *atimazein*. As is the case in the example above involving Leto and Eileithyia, both envy and jealousy are likely involved here. Hera is jealous because Zeus has procreated without her, proving that their relationship does not have the exclusivity she would like. Adding to her frustration is envy, on the grounds that Zeus has produced a child who is distinguished (*μεταπρέπει*, 315) while she herself has failed to produce a comparable child, and so she decides to try again. Hera likely regards the production

⁴⁴ Richardson (2010), 127.

of illustrious offspring as a reflection of one's own status and is thus fixated on what she perceives as her undeserved inferiority, an assessment that lies at the heart of envy.⁴⁵

The birth of gods and how they established their powers and spheres of influence are common themes in the *Hymns*, and accordingly, we sometimes see tension rising as gods struggle to find their niche. In the *Hymn to Apollo*, Apollo goes to Telphusa, at the foot of Mt. Helicon, and begins building the foundations for a temple. The nymph Telphusa advises him to build elsewhere, citing traffic noise as a reason to avoid that location. The narrator reveals, Ὡς εἰποῦσ' Ἐκάτου πέπιθε φρένας, ὄφρα οἱ αὐτῇ / Τελφούσῃ κλέος εἴῃ ἐπὶ χθονὶ μηδ' Ἐκάτοιο (Speaking in this way, she persuaded the mind of the Far-shooter, in order that Telphusa herself might have glory in the land, and not the Far-shooter, 275-76). Telphusa is jealous and therefore loathe to share her sanctuary with another deity, so she resorts to deception in order to maintain exclusive worship in the region. When Apollo returns, having realized her plan, he boldly stakes his claim. He asserts, ἐνθάδε δὴ καὶ ἐμὸν κλέος ἔσσεται, οὐδὲ σὸν οἷος ("Here my glory too will exist, not yours alone," 381). *Kleos* is Apollo's priority as well, and his reaction—covering Telphusa with stones and establishing his own altar—can be attributed in part to anger about being deceived, but it can also be attributed to envy. If anger had been the only emotion he felt, he could have stopped after covering her with stones. The placement of his altar, however, not only demotes Telphusa's status as the exclusive recipient of worship at that site, but it also promotes his own status, and this suggests that he is experiencing some amount of covetous envy in addition to anger.

We see another example of a deity struggling to establish his domain in the *Hymn to Hermes*. Hermes makes it known relatively early in the hymn that he aims to put himself on equal footing with Apollo, declaring to his mother, ἀμφὶ δὲ τιμῆς / κἀγὼ τῆς ὁσίης ἐπιβήσομαι ἥς

⁴⁵ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 282.

περ Ἀπόλλων (“As for honor, I too will achieve the rites that Apollo has,” 172-73).⁴⁶ He then grows agitated at the thought of being challenged, and he threatens that if “the son of very glorious Leto” (Λητοῦς ἐρικυδέος υἱός, 176) comes after him, he will plunder Apollo’s temple at Delphi (176-81).⁴⁷ The threat of sacrilege in conjunction with Hermes’ stated goal of achieving the same rites reveals Hermes’ heightened preoccupation with Apollo’s honor and glory: Hermes is only a baby and much younger than Apollo, but he is obviously envious of his older brother’s status. Nevertheless, after the matter of the stolen cows is settled, Hermes behaves charitably toward Apollo. When Apollo marvels at and asks about his lyre, Hermes responds, εἰρωτᾷς μ’ Ἐκάεργε περιφραδές· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σοι / τέχνης ἡμετέρης ἐπιβήμεναι οὐ τι μεγαίρω. / σήμερον εἰδήσεις (“You question me very carefully, Far-shooter, but I am not at all jealous of you entering into my skill. You will learn it today,” 464-66). While Hermes uses a negated form of *megarein* to mean that he does not begrudge Apollo’s interest in the lyre, the choice of this verb nonetheless indicates that this scenario could potentially trigger jealousy.⁴⁸ Accordingly, his denial of such a sentiment is intended to emphasize his kindness and generosity toward Apollo.

These passages once again demonstrate the connection between feelings of envy and jealousy and issues of honor and glory. In this way, they are thematically compatible with the ones discussed from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, although the vocabulary varies slightly. The *Hymns* reveal a possible preference for *zêl*- words over *phthon*- words, but we can still look to terms relating to *timê*, *kleos*, and *kudos* to help identify potential situations of envy and jealousy.

⁴⁶ Richardson (2010), 182.

⁴⁷ Some scholars have taken ἐρικυδέος as a transferred epithet that in sense applies to Apollo himself (Evelyn-White 1914, 377). Others have translated it as modifying Leto (West 2003, 127). Either way, this once again points to Hermes’ preoccupation with the superior status of Apollo and Leto relative to Hermes and his mother.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hera’s use of *megairein* at *Il.* 4.54 (see p. 39-40).

Part III: Hesiod

Thus far, we have seen examples of kings and gods who feel jealousy in relation to their honor and glory, but not explicitly in relation to the security of their position. Hesiod's *Theogony* presents the earliest clear examples of kings (here, in the immortal realm) jealously trying to solidify their control. Cronus swallows each of his children as they are born, and Hesiod explains his motive: ἵνα μή τις ἀγαυῶν Οὐρανίωνων / ἄλλος ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἔχοι βασιληίδα τιμήν (in order that no one else of the illustrious descendants of Uranus might hold kingly authority among the immortals, *Th.* 461-62). Cronus acts as he does because he is jealously protective of his status as king. Curiously, this is the first time that the fact of his kingship is stated explicitly.⁴⁹ Presumably, Hesiod's audience would have been aware of this already, but it seems significant that his kingship is first highlighted within a context of jealousy. Moreover, Hesiod uses a slightly more circuitous phrase (ἔχοι βασιληίδα τιμήν) rather than saying simply "in order that no one else might be king" or "in order that no one else might seize power." This once again points to the close association between jealousy and *timê*, now incorporating the element of kingship into the equation as well. While unusual, *basilêis timê* is not without precedent: in *Iliad* 6, Glaucus narrates the story of Bellerophon, in which a king gives Bellerophon his own daughter in marriage and half of his kingdom (τιμῆς βασιληίδος ἥμισυ πάσης, 6.193). While there is no trace of jealousy in the case of Bellerophon and his new father-in-law, the juxtaposition of the adjective *basileios* and *timê* nevertheless reinforces the idea that kings have *timê* by virtue of their position, and as we have seen previously, many situations involving envy and/or jealousy can be traced back to issues of *timê*.

Zeus in turn exhibits similar behavior after becoming king of the gods. Rather than swallowing his children after they are born, however, Zeus swallows his wife. Hesiod explains,

⁴⁹ West (1966), 295.

τὼς γάρ οἱ φρασάτην, ἵνα μὴ βασιληίδα τιμὴν / ἄλλος ἔχοι Διὸς ἀντὶ θεῶν αἰειγενετῶν ([Gaea and Uranus] advised him in this way, in order that no one else of the everlasting gods except Zeus might hold kingly authority, *Th.* 892-93). Many of the same words appear (ἵνα μὴ; βασιληίδα τιμὴν; ἄλλος ἔχοι), drawing a close parallel between Zeus' situation and his father's, once again indicating that Zeus acts as he does and follows Gaea and Uranus' advice out of fear of losing his privileged status. He is, in a word, jealous. Given the two examples of Cronus and Zeus, it seems likely that the desire to safeguard his primacy and the stability associated with it was also a key factor in Uranus' attempts to subdue his children, despite the lack of verbal cues (*Th.* 154-59).⁵⁰ At any rate, Cronus and Zeus together provide ample proof that gods are not immune to feeling jealousy over issues of rulership. Moreover, the appearance of jealous behavior in the account of two of the earliest kingships in the Greek cosmos suggests that Hesiod and his contemporaries readily acknowledged that jealousy was a natural response to a perceived threat to one's rule. These passages highlight the tendency among rulers to exhibit jealous behavior, thus priming the development of this association in later texts.

In addition to the *Theogony's* examples of jealous behavior among the gods, Hesiod's *Works and Days* reveals several important passages relating to the nature of envy among men. After calling upon the Muses and instructing Perses to listen carefully, Hesiod famously describes the two *Erides*:

Οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην Ἑρίδων γένος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
 εἰσὶ δύω· τὴν μὲν κεν ἐπαινέσειε νοήσας,
 ἥ δ' ἐπιμωμητή· διὰ δ' ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν.
 ἥ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλει,
 σκετλίη· οὐ τις τὴν γε φιλεῖ βροτός, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης
 ἀθανάτων βουλῇσιν Ἑριν τιμῶσι βαρεῖαν.
 τὴν δ' ἐτέρην προτέρην μὲν ἐγείνατο Νύξ ἐρεβεννή,
 θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης ὑψίζυγος, αἰθέρι ναίων,
 γαίης [τ'] ἐν ρίζησι καὶ ἀνδράσι πολλὸν ἀμείνω·

⁵⁰ Clay (2003), 18.

ἥ τε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὁμῶς ἐπὶ ἔργον ἐγείρει·
 εἰς ἕτερον γάρ τις τε ἴδεν ἔργοιο χατίζων
 πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρόμεναι ἠδὲ φυτεύειν
 οἶκόν τ' εὖ θέσθαι· ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων
 εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ'· ἀγαθὴ δ' Ἔρις ἦδε βροτοῖσιν.
 καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
 καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.

There is not, as it turns out, a single kind of *Eris*, but on earth, there are two.⁵¹ Having understood it, a man would praise the one kind, but the other is blameworthy: they have separate dispositions. For the one, merciless, advances evil war and battle: no man loves her, but under compulsion and by the wills of the immortals, men honor this grievous *Eris*. The other, dark Night bore first, and the high-throned son of Cronus, dwelling in the ether, set her in the roots of the earth and made her much better for men: she stirs up even the helpless to work all the same. For seeing another man—a wealthy man—who exerts himself in plowing and planting and ordering his household, a man craves work: the neighbor emulates the neighbor who strives for wealth.⁵² This *Eris* is good for men. And potter begrudges potter and craftsman begrudges craftsman, and beggar envies beggar and singer envies singer. (11-26)

We have already seen numerous examples of the appearance of *eris* (or related forms) in scenes involving envy or jealousy in the works of Homer, but here, Hesiod suggests a new type of relationship between the two: the good *Eris* rouses men to work hard by stirring up envy over their neighbors' wealth. In this sense, both *Eris* and the associated envy seem advantageous and productive. Hesiod thus reveals a positive side of these phenomena that is not present when they appear in conjunction in Homeric texts.⁵³ Significantly, however, the benefits occur within the economic realm, and the envy at work remains fairly private. In the political (and thus more public) realm, benefits of envy are nowhere to be seen.

⁵¹ Some view this statement as a correction to or retraction of Hesiod's remarks about the genealogy of a single *Eris* in the *Theogony*. I do not think the resolution of this issue has much bearing on the present study. At any rate, I find Clay's argument convincing, namely that what Hesiod says of *Eris* in the *Theogony* is not wrong, but rather incomplete (2003, 7).

⁵² To emphasize the causal relationship between the two, I have translated as if ἴδεν were a participle and χατίζων a finite verb.

⁵³ *Eris* can be positive in the sense that it offers an opportunity to win renown (Hogan 1981, 25, 34). Even so, I have not found Homeric examples that emphasize this aspect in scenarios involving envy or jealousy. *Eris* is still generally understood to be a negative entity (Gagarin 1990, 182 note 11).

Moreover, it is worth noting that even the good *Eris* is perhaps not always wholly positive. The use of the verb *zêloun* (23) may be innocent enough, but *kotein* and *phthonein* (25-26) point strongly to ambiguity, as these verbs are not in keeping with the idea of an entirely good *Eris*.⁵⁴ The fact that *kotein* appears in parallel with *phthonein* suggests that they can function more or less as synonyms, and so I have translated *kotein* here as “begrudge,” as I have done with *phthonein* in other instances. Elsewhere, however, *kotein* (and cognate forms) implies an element of anger or resentment that is not always present in *phthonein*, and it seems to indicate a level of emotion that is more intense than the prototypical case of envy. For instance, when Zeus debates whether he should save his son, Sarpedon, from dying by Patroclus’ hand, Hera cautions him that many of the immortals have sons on the battlefield, so if he saves Sarpedon, he will incite grim resentment (κότον αἰνὸν ἐνήσεις, *Il.* 16.449). This imagined situation fits the criteria for envy: certain immortals would no longer have their children, Zeus would have his, and the bereaved would (presumably) feel that the situation is wrong. It seems likely that they would feel something stronger than mere envy, however, given that Zeus himself would be responsible for creating the inequality; accordingly, we have *kotos* rather than *phthonos*.⁵⁵ These lines thus signal that even the good *Eris* may have a darker side.

Some scholars have found lines 25-26 problematic enough to merit removal, while others have attributed them to a failure on Hesiod’s part to maintain consistency.⁵⁶ Still others have suggested that they are in reference to the bad *Eris*, but this seems unlikely.⁵⁷ There is no indication that Hesiod has switched back to describing the first *Eris*. Michael Gagarin suggests instead that the lines are in fact as Hesiod intended, and the ambivalence they inject into the

⁵⁴ West (1978), 147.

⁵⁵ I agree with Sanders’ distinction that if an unbiased third party agrees that the inequality is wrong, it is no longer considered purely envy, and I believe that this applies here (2014, 23).

⁵⁶ For the former view, see Bona Quaglia (1973), 41-42 note 12. For the latter, see West (1978), 147.

⁵⁷ Sanders (2014), 40.

description of the good *Eris* reflects the intrinsic complexity of the thing itself.⁵⁸ At any rate, lines 25-26, thought to be preexisting Greek proverbs, succinctly express the idea that men are prone to envying those with whom they have something in common. As we will see, this is a fairly widespread belief.⁵⁹

Whereas there is some question about the positive versus negative nature of Hesiod's use of the verb *zêloun* in line 23 (on account of its association with *kotein* and *phthonein*), the noun *zêlos* is unequivocally bad in line 195. In describing the fifth and final age of mankind, the Age of Iron to which he himself belongs, Hesiod forewarns:

Ζῆλος δ' ἀνθρώποισιν οἰζυροῖσιν ἅπασιν
 δυσκέλαδος κακόχαρτος ὁμαρτήσῃ στυγερῶπης.
 καὶ τότε δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης
 λευκοῖσιν φάρεσσι καλυψαμένῳ χροῖα καλὸν
 ἀθανάτων μετὰ φῦλον ἴτον προλιπόντ' ἀνθρώπους
 Αἰδῶς καὶ Νέμεσις· τὰ δὲ λείπεται ἄλγεα λυγρὰ
 θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισι· κακοῦ δ' οὐκ ἔσσεται ἀλκή.

Discordant, horrible Envy who rejoices in misfortune will walk beside all of miserable mankind. And at that time, Reverence and Indignation, veiling their fair frames with white cloaks, will go from the broad-wayed earth toward Olympus with the race of immortals, leaving behind mankind. Baneful pains will remain for mortal men, and there will be no defense against evil. (195-201)

In the absence of reverence and indignation, envy will in time play a defining role among men of this age, and it is indeed an ugly one, associated with the bad *Eris*.⁶⁰ The adjective *kakochartos* (“rejoicing in misfortunes”) points to another unbecoming facet of envy that has not thus far been emphasized: it is not only or not necessarily concerned with one's own gain, but it is at times focused on another's loss. For example, it would not be enough if a man experiencing this type of envy were to acquire as much property as the neighbor whom he envies has (or perhaps

⁵⁸ *Eris* is certainly not alone in having ambiguities and nuances in Hesiod's depiction. Hesiod offers similarly complex portrayals of concepts such as *dikê* and *aidôs* (Gagarin 1990, 175-80).

⁵⁹ Cf. Hdt. 1.99.2 (see p. 120-21) and 7.237.2 (see p. 134-35).

⁶⁰ West (1978), 203.

he does not even want to acquire property for himself), but he would wish for his neighbor's property to be decreased. The examples we have seen in Homer generally fall into the category of covetous envy, where the envious individual is intent on his or her own gain. Hesiod's use of *kakochartos*, however, introduces the idea of begrudging envy, where the envious individual is intent on another's loss.⁶¹ There is naturally some overlap between these categories, and the envy that runs rampant in the Age of Iron could easily fit into both; it seems clear, however, that it at least has the characteristics of begrudging envy.

The departure of reverence and indignation and the ubiquity of envy in the Age of Iron are essentially a guaranteed path to self-destruction, and these components elaborate on the annihilation of mankind by Zeus that Hesiod predicts (180). Whether they are in fact the very tools that will dismantle human society as Zeus looks on or they are the causes for anger that will incite Zeus to destroy mankind is unclear, but perhaps this is immaterial.⁶² Either way, *zêlos* is capable of conveying an emphatically negative meaning. While reverence and indignation are forces that work to prevent men from exhibiting inappropriate or immoral behavior, this envy (associated with the bad *Eris*) works in the opposite direction, driving men to act wickedly.⁶³ This passage about *zêlos* is unlike any found in the other texts discussed in this chapter. Homer generally steers clear of commenting on the moral nature of things such as envy or strife, whereas Hesiod does this throughout the *Works and Days*, and especially here in the description of the ages of man.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, what Hesiod says about envy and about the two *Erides* is not incompatible with the related Homeric material.

⁶¹ For the difference between begrudging and covetous envy, see p. 24; Sanders (2014), 38-39.

⁶² For the idea that men will destroy themselves through their own behavior, see Beall (2005-2006), 172. For the idea that Zeus will destroy men as a punishment for their behavior, see Clay (2003), 38.

⁶³ West (1978), 204.

⁶⁴ Hogan (1981), 25.

One final passage in the *Works and Days* deserves mention. Hesiod counsels Perses, ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος, ἀεργίη δέ τ' ὄνειδος. / εἰ δέ κεν ἐργάζῃ, τάχα σε ζηλώσει ἀεργὸς / πλουτεῦντα· πλούτῳ δ' ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ (Work is no disgrace, but idleness is a disgrace. If you work, soon the idle man will envy you as you become wealthy: excellence and renown go along with wealth, 311-13). Like Homer, Hesiod too sees a relationship between envy and renown (*kudos*): *kudos* is something worthy of being envied. Unlike Homer, however, Hesiod draws this connection explicitly by using a form of *zêloun* and *kudos* in close conjunction.⁶⁵ Interestingly, *zêloun* has a positive, desirable connotation here.⁶⁶ Having already seen that *zêlos* can sometimes be harmful, we might expect Hesiod to advise Perses to avoid attracting the envy of other men, but instead, he holds up the envy of other men as an incentive for Perses to work hard.⁶⁷ Envy may be dangerous to the man who is envied, but the very existence of that envy affirms that he has something worth having.

In short, Hesiod's *Theogony* offers several clear examples of kings acting out of jealousy to protect their rule. Each successive generation of gods witnesses such behavior, and only Zeus manages to secure and safeguard his position. These examples are consistent with what we find in the works of Homer and in the *Homeric Hymns*, especially insofar as they highlight the association between jealousy and issues of *timê*. The *Works and Days*, on the other hand, has more to say about envy than about jealousy. The connection between envy and *eris*, already discernible in the Homeric material, is made explicitly clear in the opening verses, but Hesiod also reveals the positive role envy can play by pairing it with the good *Eris*. Even the good *Eris*,

⁶⁵ Homer uses *kudos* in situations involving jealousy at *Il.* 16.87-90 and *Il.* 22.205-7, but there is no one word that explicitly indicates Achilles' state of mind in either of these examples. These situations involve jealousy rather than envy, but the relationship with *kudos* should be clear nonetheless, since the things that prompt jealousy and the things that prompt envy are generally one and the same.

⁶⁶ West (1978), 234.

⁶⁷ This is similar to the way in which Metaneira and her daughter aim to persuade Demeter by promising gifts that will cause other women to feel envy (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 167-68, 222-23).

however, and so too the envy associated with it, can have unpleasant consequences. The overall picture Hesiod paints of envy in the *Works and Days* is more complex than Homer's portrayal, especially in terms of discussion of its moral ramifications, but it is nevertheless compatible with the material found in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and the *Homeric Hymns*.

Conclusions and implications

Envy and jealousy are not often referred to explicitly with terms such as *phthonos* or *zêlos* in the texts of Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, or Hesiod, but this examination of thematically related passages has nevertheless revealed a constellation of associated words that can aid us in discerning their presence. These words include *eris*, *timê*, *kleos*, *kudos*, *kotos*, *megairein*, and *agaasthai*. None of these words alone (or even in conjunction) can serve as a conclusive identification of envy or jealousy, but such is the elusive nature of studying emotions in the first place. If we hold a positive admission of an emotion by the individual him or herself as the gold standard of certainty, surely we will not get very far, for literary figures seldom make such direct statements about their emotional state. The appearance of these associated words, however, points to the likely and logical expectation of envy and/or jealousy.

This chapter has surveyed envy and jealousy broadly, rather than looking strictly at instances relating to the political sphere, and as a result, we have been able to observe a clear correlation between struggles over honor, glory, and fame, and envious or jealous behavior, especially among the gods. The gods are certainly not immune to feelings of envy and jealousy, which influence not only their relations with one another but also their dealings with humans. Envy and jealousy affect all groups—gods, humans, men, women, the powerful, the powerless,

etc.—and in multiple ways, for individuals not only grapple with their own feelings but they also face the consequences of envy and jealousy felt by those around them.

Despite the broader scope of this chapter, these texts contain key passages relating to kings' experiences with envy and jealousy. We have seen examples of men feeling envy toward kings (e.g. Thersites in the *Iliad* and Odysseus' companions in the *Odyssey*), of kings feeling jealousy over maintaining their reputations and/or positions (e.g. Achilles in the *Iliad* and Cronus and Zeus in the *Theogony*), and of kings demonstrating awareness that they are prone to incur the envy of others (e.g. Odysseus and Menelaus in the *Odyssey*). It may be premature to conclude that such instances constitute patterns and are representative of Greek beliefs about the nature of kingship, but they do establish significant precedents.

The Greeks viewed these emotions in a disagreeable light, and we can see this both from the absence of personal admissions of feeling envy or jealousy (and emphatic denials of the same), but also from the reactions to characters who exhibit tell-tale signs of them, even if they do not speak of them explicitly. Thersites is immediately rebuked and beaten for criticizing Agamemnon, which he does out of envy. Odysseus laments how his companions jeopardized their homecoming by meddling with the bag given to him by Aeolus, which they also do out of envy. Even Telemachus, who does not seem to envy Menelaus' riches personally but nevertheless marvels at them, is met with a response from Menelaus that deliberately discourages envy. Moreover, these examples (among others) indicate that the Greeks not only found these emotions unbecoming, but that they considered them dangerous as well. Thersites' envy must be silenced or else he could possibly foment widespread rebellion among the Greek forces. The envy of Odysseus' companions' causes an even further delayed homecoming. Menelaus speaks as he does because he is well aware that incurring the envy or jealousy of others (and especially

that of the gods) can lead to devastation. Even Hesiod, who is the first to emphasize the potential good that can come of envy, simultaneously showcases its darker, destabilizing side. Indeed, Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, and Hesiod depict envy and jealousy as primarily negative emotions that can have deleterious consequences for both those who feel them and those toward whom they are directed.

CHAPTER 3: SOPHOCLES

1. Why tragedy?

As a genre that dramatizes and brings to life characters in the throes of crisis, tragedy has much to offer to a study of emotions. While ancient Greeks experienced other genres, such as epic, oratory, and even historiography, in performative contexts as well, tragedy provides especially vivid depictions of interpersonal relations and first-person confessions that provide insight into characters' state of mind. A number of factors contribute to this vividness, such as the use of different meters, the presence of multiple speaking actors, and the fact that dialogue and revelations unfold in real time.¹ We may not be able to recover certain elements of the original performances (gestures, voice intonation, etc.), but the emotional power inherent in the texts themselves—which resonates in the audience's own emotional experience—is in large part responsible for the continued performance of Greek tragedy in the modern period. Indeed, tragedy was recognized in antiquity for its ability to evoke strong emotions among audience members. According to Aristotle, tragedy characteristically elicits pity and fear, which in turn produce *katharsis* (*Poet.* 1449b24-28), although scholars have argued that these are not the only emotions that audiences tend to feel while in the theater.² In addition to the aforementioned factors that contribute to vividness, another way in which tragedy draws its audience in is by prompting them to pay close attention to various characters' mental states. Felix Budelmann and Pat Easterling have argued that theater makes use of the natural human tendency to make

¹ Griffin points to musical variety as one of the key novelties that tragedy has to offer in comparison with Homeric epic (1998, 56).

² Konstan argues that audiences often feel a sense of triumph and exultation as well (1999).

inferences about the motivations and intentions of the people around us, and that tragedians at times incorporated signals to encourage viewers to pay attention to what may be going through various characters' minds.³ For example, the attempts of the chorus to make sense of Cassandra's visions in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* invite the audience to do so as well.⁴ Similarly, Creon's opening speech in Sophocles' *Antigone* makes clear his belief that a man's rule will expose his true self (175-77), which in turn prompts spectators to consider what his subsequent words and deeds reveal about him.⁵

On a more macroscopic level, tragedians crafted their works so as to prompt contemporaries to reflect on important issues and themes, such as honor, piety, and family relations (to name a few). Tragedians and other poets were regarded as *de facto* teachers on any number of topics; indeed, poetry constituted an integral part of children's education.⁶ Whereas some authors like Hesiod were at times quite direct about their didactic aims, however, tragedians tended to offer lessons by raising questions and stimulating debate.⁷ The subject matter of tragedy belongs to the world of myth, situated somewhere in the distant past, but tragedians nonetheless adapted it skillfully to suit their purposes, creating a blend of the fictive and the real. Indeed, Josiah Ober and Barry Strauss have noted the bidirectional influence and parallels between tragedy and oratory, a genre that deals with actual living beings: both utilize rhetoric and have the betterment of the community as their ultimate goal.⁸ The difference

³ Budelmann and Easterling (2010), 292. Homeric epic also prompts audiences to speculate about characters' mental states. This is a result of various narratological techniques such as the inclusion of direct speeches, the presentation of characters who make inferences about one another's motives, and the limited information made available by an omniscient narrator. With tragedy, however, audiences must be all the more adept at interpreting characters' behavior on their own, since the narrators of epic are no longer present to supplement their knowledge. For more about the mind-reading and mental states of Homeric characters, see Scodel (2014).

⁴ Budelmann and Easterling (2010), 295-98.

⁵ *Idem*, 299.

⁶ Goldhill (1986), 140-42.

⁷ Blundell (1989), 5-6, 273.

⁸ Ober and Strauss (1990), 248.

between tragedy and oratory, as they describe it, is that “one tries to persuade the audience to engage in a specific political action, the other to persuade the audience of a more general, more ideal, but no less political truth.”⁹

2. Tragedy and politics

There has been much debate about the relationship between tragedy and politics in recent decades. It is important to note that nearly all extant tragedies and fragments of tragedy were composed with an Athenian audience in mind. Moreover, not all tragedians were Athenians, but Athenians were credited with all of the plays that have come down to us in their complete form.¹⁰ Thus the study of Greek tragedy inevitably has an Athenocentric bias. Goldhill has made the case that, since the Great Dionysia was a civic occasion—including a depositing of the tribute in the theater and a parade of state-educated war orphans—we ought to consider tragedies within this particular context, although we should not expect to find any sort of straightforward propaganda: tragedy examines and questions Athens’ civic ideology.¹¹ Indeed, Christopher Pelling has called for a more flexible understanding of ideology, one that is robust enough to make room for exploration and debate. He argues that what some scholars today view as subversion of democratic values is in fact part of the natural civic discourse that tragedy brings to life.¹² In response to Goldhill’s assertion that the Dionysia was a democratic occasion in Athens, Jasper Griffin has argued vehemently that while there was a temporal coincidence of the flourishing of Athenian tragedy and of democracy, there is nothing fundamentally political or democratic about

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Scodel (2010), 2-6.

¹¹ Goldhill (1986) 76-78.

¹² Pelling (1997), 224-25, 234-35.

tragedy as a whole.¹³ This serves as a good reminder. The surviving tragedies were all produced after the development of Athenian democracy, but the genre itself first appeared at some point during the Peisistratid tyranny.¹⁴ Moreover, there is no evidence that the archon responsible for assigning choruses to playwrights did so with any political motives in mind.¹⁵ Griffin does, however, admit that while tragedy does not necessarily have any connection to politics, we can in fact see political messages and currents in some—dare I say many—plays.¹⁶ In this regard, Griffin and Goldhill's claims are not necessarily incompatible, as Goldhill acknowledges that some plays do not contain any conspicuous political or democratic material. Griffin seems to err on the side of being overly cautious and pessimistic: the Dionysia of the classical period can still be democratic without requiring that every single tragedy present pro-democratic ideology. While Griffin's arguments are helpful to keep in mind, we should not let them stop us from analyzing tragedy to learn about Athenian political values, nor do I think Griffin himself would advocate for such abstention.

Others have gone further than Goldhill and made the claim that tragedy is an inherently political genre. Jean-Pierre Vernant considers the language and structure of tragedy to reflect its historical (and therein political) context, as they present a tension between the legendary heroic age and the reality of the *polis*.¹⁷ Like Vernant, Victoria Wohl devotes much attention in her examination of Euripides' tragedies to formal, aesthetic choices (such as the trajectory of the plot, the use of song, etc.), while still acknowledging the fruits borne of a historicizing approach, such

¹³ Goldhill (1990), 114; Griffin (1998), 47, 60. Griffin also takes issue with numerous other scholars' claims, which I will not discuss here. I believe that his response to Goldhill is illustrative of his tendency to carry what one says to the extreme.

¹⁴ Osborne (1993), 36.

¹⁵ Idem, 34.

¹⁶ Griffin (1998), 60.

¹⁷ Vernant sees tension in the relationship between the tragic hero, who, despite using relatively more contemporary language, represents the mythical past, and the chorus, whose members, despite using the more archaic language of lyric, often represent the civic community of the present (1988, 24-25).

as Goldhill's. She argues that political undertones can be found even in the most ostensibly apolitical of Euripides' plays, giving the *Alcestis* as an example: death is understood to be universal (thus mirroring democratic society), yet Admetus manages to avoid it and even gain back his wife by means of elite privilege.¹⁸ While it goes beyond the scope of the present study to evaluate comprehensively whether the same holds true for tragedy in general, the idea that politics so thoroughly permeates the Euripidean corpus strengthens the rationale for using tragedy to examine political attitudes and debates.

I have deliberately chosen to focus on tragedies that contain more explicit political material, although in accordance with Griffin's point, I do not wish to give the impression that this sort of political messaging is blatant or ubiquitous. Not surprisingly, however, we do not have to search long to find relevant examples. Athenian tragedians were members of a community in which political participation was expected, and given their status among the cultural elite in addition, it seems reasonable to assume that they had opinions about developments or courses of action that would benefit the *dêmos*, which opinions were bound to influence their plays in turn.¹⁹ Richard Seaford notes that we see repeated examples in tragedy of the downfall of ruling families from myth, which hints at the possibility of a wider distribution of power in the future.²⁰ This is not to say that what follows the downfall is necessarily democracy. Indeed, the establishment of democracy would possibly strike an Athenian audience as an incongruous ending for plays set in Thebes, which had an oligarchy in the fifth century.²¹ Nevertheless, Seaford makes an important observation about the political trend that emerges in tragedy: if there is a change in the ruling situation, it tends to be the case that a dynasty is

¹⁸ Wohl (2015), 8-18.

¹⁹ Sommerstein et al. (1993), 13.

²⁰ Seaford (1994), 367.

²¹ Seaford (2000), 42-43.

heading toward ruin. Conversely, the kings in tragedy who enjoy the greatest degree of stability (e.g. Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants* or Pelasgus in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*) are those who have the strongest democratic leanings, which underscores the idea that monarchy in its purest and most traditional form is inherently precarious.²²

3. Existing scholarship

To date, several scholars have examined the role of envy and jealousy in tragedy, and the conclusions they offer vary considerably, particularly concerning the role of divine *phthonos* and of sexual jealousy. On the whole, they tend to downplay the importance of these emotions in tragedy, although some regard sexual jealousy as an exception and make the case that this type of jealousy does motivate the plot of several plays. In my view, however, both envy and jealousy (not only of the sexual variety but also of the “jealous of my position” variety) are influential emotions on the tragic stage, contributing to the forward momentum and emotional intensity of the play as well as to the representation of various characters and their mental activities.²³

In *Greek Tragedy and the Emotions* (1983), W. B. Stanford writes that it is mostly the gods who exhibit *phthonos* in tragedy, since its appearance among mortals would “make a person villainous” and thus men and women are not shown to possess it in any significant way, except in some cases of sexual jealousy.²⁴ This is a strange justification, as tragedy surely does not shy away from depicting mortals as acting in villainous ways, even if the characters themselves cannot be delineated so neatly into the role of either protagonist or antagonist.

Stanford also draws a distinction between *phthonos* and *zêlos*, noting that the latter appears more

²² Fletcher (2010), 170, 173. For an overview of the anachronistic references to democratic attitudes and institutions in Theseus' Athens (as depicted in Euripides' *Suppliants*), see Wohl (2015), 90-91.

²³ For the “jealous of my position” script, see p. 21, 25; Sanders (2014), 39.

²⁴ Stanford (1983), 35. Stanford notes that *phthonos* is, however, present in characters who feel sexual jealousy, such as Clytemnestra, Deianeira, Hermione, and Medea.

frequently in Sophocles and Euripides than in Aeschylus, and that it sometimes indicates a milder, less insidious form of *phthonos*, or something akin to ambition.²⁵ Indeed, in some circumstances *zêlos* indicates a more socially acceptable form of *phthonos*, but there are also cases where it seems to be roughly synonymous with it. As we will see, there are also numerous examples in Sophocles' plays of mortals who experience envy and/or jealousy that are not explicitly marked with *phthonos* or *zêlos* words, and this once again highlights the benefits of going beyond a lexical approach.

On the topic of divine *phthonos*, Goldhill has a different view, pointing out in his contribution to Konstan and Rutter's *Envy, Spite and Jealousy* (2003) that this is in fact generally absent from tragedy.²⁶ When it comes to mortals, he acknowledges that envy and jealousy enter into the rhetoric of explaining why characters act in the ways they do, but concludes that "neither motivates a plot, dominates the action, or even receives extensive representation or debate."²⁷ Even in the cases in which Stanford admits that sexual jealousy is a strong motivator (e.g. Sophocles' *Deianeira*, Euripides' *Medea*), Goldhill argues that jealousy alone is a paltry explanation for the action that ensues.²⁸ While fifth-century audiences of tragedy were certainly aware of and familiar with rivalrous emotions such as envy and jealousy, it is Goldhill's view that these emotions are relatively subdued in tragedy. I believe that Goldhill has overstated how little effect these emotions have: they may not be the principal driving force of the action, but they do make significant contributions to the characterization of various figures—and notably, of monarchs, whose actions often determine the outcome—thus establishing a pattern that sheds

²⁵ Idem, 44.

²⁶ Goldhill (2003), 169. Stanford and Goldhill's views on divine *phthonos* are perhaps not incompatible if what Stanford means to say is that there is minimal *phthonos* in tragedy but that what little we do see is that of the gods, and if the point that Goldhill is making is that divine *phthonos* is relatively unimportant in tragedy, relative to its role elsewhere. The difference in their conclusions may also stem from a focus on different tragedians; Aeschylus and Euripides seem to place more of an emphasis on divine *phthonos* than Sophocles does.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Stanford (1983), 35; Goldhill (2003), 167.

light on contemporary political beliefs. Moreover, these emotions motivate actions and speeches that propel the plot forward and raise the stakes involved.

In *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks* (2006), Konstan does not comment on the role of envy in tragedy, focusing instead on the relationship between envy and indignation, particularly in archaic poetry.²⁹ Regarding jealousy, however, he distinguishes between two types according to our modern English understanding of the word, one pertaining to amorous contexts and another relating to issues of success or advantage.³⁰ He focuses exclusively on the former and argues against the existence of sexual jealousy in ancient Greece, claiming, for example, that Euripides' *Medea* acted not so much out of jealousy as out of anger over Jason's lack of gratitude and broken oaths.³¹ This view is in contrast to those of both Stanford and Goldhill (Goldhill at least acknowledges its existence even if he argues against its overall import) and very much in contrast to that of Sanders in *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens* (2014). Sanders argues that *phthonos* is relatively rare in drama (both in tragedy and comedy), appearing only in short episodes that do not have much bearing on the development of the plot, with the exception of sexual jealousy, which he claims serves as a crucial determinant of several tragedies.³² Sanders quotes Goldhill (2003) and explicitly acknowledges that he himself attributes more than just a small role to envy and jealousy, but a broader treatment would establish this idea more securely. In his chapter on *phthonos* in tragedy and old comedy, Sanders discusses three tragedies: Sophocles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Ion*. He does not explain why he selected these and excluded others, but these are certainly not the only tragedies in which envy and jealousy are at work.

²⁹ Konstan (2006), 111-28.

³⁰ Idem, 220.

³¹ Idem, 233.

³² Sanders (2014), 118, 129.

This chapter will focus on envy and jealousy as they appear in relation to sole rulers in the tragedies of Sophocles, with supplemental material drawn from those of Aeschylus and Euripides for comparative purposes when possible.³³ Sophocles' Theban plays in particular have much to say about power dynamics and resulting conflicts. Moreover, Sophocles displays a penchant for exploring the psychological depths of his characters that makes his works especially rewarding for those interested in the study of emotions. Of course, this is not to say that the works of Aeschylus and Euripides are less rich, but the limitations of time and space do not allow for a comprehensive survey of all three major Athenian tragedians. While we cannot automatically assume that the patterns regarding envy and jealousy in Sophocles' works run parallel to what we may find in those of Aeschylus and Euripides, they should at least be sufficient to establish a counterclaim to the idea that these emotions have little import in Greek tragedy as a whole.

4. Power attracts the envy of others

In the discussion that follows, we will see a pattern of thinking emerge, namely that positions of power naturally attract the envy of others. This idea appears in both the actions and speeches of various characters, although characters generally do not admit to feeling envy

³³ I have chosen not to include the topic of sexual jealousy in the present discussion. Deianeira is the only character who seems to experience it in the works of Sophocles, and no political aspect is emphasized. It is worth noting, however, that it is Heracles' position of power that affords him the license to do as he pleases and thus he acts in a way that sparks his wife's jealousy. This may in fact be another variant of how rulership and *phthonos* coincide. In addition, Deianeira is perhaps especially susceptible to jealousy on account of her position as queen, for she has much to lose. Her jealousy need not be sexual or romantic in nature, since she may be concerned primarily for what the introduction of Heracles' mistress into the house will mean for her own position (Carawan 2000, 203). Since there are relatively few examples of this particular manifestation, namely that a ruler's power enables him to engage in behavior that causes his wife to retaliate out of *phthonos*, I will simply point it out but not dwell upon it at this time (cf. Hdt. 9.108-12).

themselves, which we also saw to be the case in the texts of the previous chapter.³⁴ There is, however, a counterargument about why such envy is misguided that is just as prominent—if not more so—and much of the evidence for the existence of the idea that power attracts envy is located in refutations of it. This argument against the desirability of sole rulership does not appear in epic, but takes its beginnings in the poetry of Archilochus (Fr. 19 West) and Solon (Fr. 32-33 West), increases in frequency throughout the fifth century (as we will see in the dramas of Sophocles as well as in those of Euripides), and subsequently finds fuller expression in Plato’s *Republic* (576c-80c) and Xenophon’s *Hiero* (see Appendix).³⁵

In order for feelings of envy to exist, there must first be something worth envying. This was as much common knowledge for the ancient Greeks as it is for us today. In Sophocles’ *Ajax*, the chorus, comprised of men from Salamis, confronts Ajax after hearing what they hope are fictitious rumors about what Ajax has done in the wake of losing the contest for Achilles’ armor. Loyal to their leader, they give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that what Odysseus is spreading is slander. They reason:

τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ψυχῶν ἰεῖς
οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοι· κατὰ δ’ ἄν τις ἐμοῦ
τοιαῦτα λέγων οὐκ ἂν πείθοι.
πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἔχονθ’ ὁ φθόνος ἔρπει.

³⁴ Two of Sophocles’ characters make what can be considered firsthand admissions—but with *zêloun*, not *phthonein*. This suggests that they are trying to do away with any sort of negative connotation, but even with their use of the less intense verb, the qualified nature of their statements reveals a lingering insecurity about the appropriateness of their admissions. After realizing the magnitude of what he has done in his attempt to punish the Greek commanders, Ajax says to his young son, καίτοι σε καὶ νῦν τοῦτο γε ζηλοῦν ἔχω, / ὁθούνεκ’ οὐδὲν τῶνδ’ ἐπαισθάνη κακῶν (“Even now I have cause to envy you, since you perceive these misfortunes not at all,” *Aj.* 552-53). He does not say that he *does* in fact envy his son, but rather he acknowledges that he could potentially feel that way (Stanford 1981, 130). Electra is more direct, but even her admission is tempered by what follows. In an argument with her sister, Electra declares, ζηλῶ σε τοῦ νοῦ, τῆς δὲ δειλίας στυγῶ (“I admire your sense, but I hate your cowardice,” *El.* 1027). She cannot help but issue a scathing insult in the same sentence, thus tearing her sister down more than praising her.

³⁵ Archilochus says that he does not care to be tyrant, although he does not provide an explanation (Fr. 19 West; see p. 5). Solon holds himself up as an example of someone who has successfully resisted the allure of tyranny, in one instance pointing to the loss of identity it would entail (Fr. 33 West), but in other fragments, his objections to tyranny have more to do with its effects on the city than on the tyrant. Homeric kings may be concerned to avoid envy (e.g. Menelaus in *Od.* 4; see p. 54-55), but they do not argue that kingship itself is problematic or undesirable.

“If one should aim at mighty spirits, he would not miss, but if someone should rumor such things against me, he would not be persuasive. For envy advances upon the one who has.” (*Aj.* 154-57)

Prior to his night of madness, Ajax was an esteemed man—a renowned warrior and the son of Telamon, king of Salamis. Accordingly, the chorus paints him as belonging to the group of “haves,” whose members naturally suffer on account of envy more than the “have-nots” do.³⁶ The chorus also characterizes the men among whom these alleged rumors are swirling in an unflattering way: they are acting insolently (*καθυβρίζων*, 153) in their delight at Ajax’s expense, which the chorus understands to be a result of their *phthonos* (157). Thus we can see several important beliefs: the “haves” attract more envy than the “have-nots,” envy makes people more likely to believe slanderous reports, and envy can incite untoward behavior.

The madness of Ajax does not appear in Pindar’s (or Homer’s) reckoning of the story, but Pindar draws an explicit connection between envy and Ajax’s death, making a similar statement about how envy follows the powerful: ὄψον δὲ λόγοι φθονεροῖσιν, / ἄπτεται δ’ ἐσλῶν ἀεὶ, χειρόνεσσι δ’ οὐκ ἐρίζει. / κεῖνος καὶ Τελαμῶνος δάψεν υἱὸν, / φασγάνῳ ἀμφικυλίσσαις (Words are a treat for the envious, and [envy] always clings to noble men, but does not contend with lesser ones. That devoured even the son of Telamon, piercing him with a sword, *Nem.* 8.21-23b). Elsewhere, Pindar blames the Greeks for Ajax’s suicide (*Nem.* 7.24-27); thus the *phthonos* that is responsible most likely belongs to the Greeks collectively, which led them to make the unfair judgment regarding Achilles’ armor.³⁷ While different sources vary in terms of what they emphasize as the factors contributing to Ajax’s demise, it is nevertheless clear that Ajax was a

³⁶ The chorus’ mention of “the one who has” does not specify what it is that the person has. Generally speaking, this could refer to either material possessions or intangibles, but given that their focus here is on Ajax, it seems likely that they mean a person of high esteem or renown. Ajax is known for his martial abilities rather than for riches, as his epithets indicate: *σακεσφόρῳ* (shield-bearing, 19), *ὤμοκρατῆς* (strong-shouldered, 205), etc.

³⁷ Bulman (1992), 46. Sanders takes a different approach, drawing attention to the envy that Ajax feels toward Odysseus after the latter was awarded the armor (2014, 122-25).

figure beleaguered by envy that stemmed from the elevated position he enjoyed and tried to maintain.³⁸

Since sole rulers are the epitome of the “haves,” it follows naturally that they would attract a great deal of envy. In the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, when Teiresias reluctantly discloses that Oedipus himself killed Laius, Oedipus lashes out and accuses both Teiresias and Creon of having ulterior motives. He then takes a moment to reflect on the nature of his position:

ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνῃ τέχνης
ὑπερφέρουσα τῷ πολυζήλῳ βίῳ,
ὅσος παρ’ ὑμῖν ὁ φθόνος φυλάσσεται,
εἰ τῆσδ’ γ’ ἀρχῆς οὐνεχ’, ἦν ἐμοὶ πόλις
δωρητόν, οὐκ αἰτητόν, εἰσεχείρισεν,
ταύτης Κρέων ὁ πιστός, οὐξ ἀρχῆς φίλος,
λάθρα μ’ ὑπελθὼν ἐκβαλεῖν ἰμεῖρεται
ὑφεῖς μάγον τοιόνδε μηχανορράφον,
δόλιον ἀγύρτην, ὅστις ἐν τοῖς κέρδεσιν
μόνον δέδορκε, τὴν τέχνην δ’ ἔφ’ τυφλός.

“Wealth and kingship and skill surpassing skill in the much-admired life, how great is the envy stored up in you, if on account of this rule, which the city entrusted to me—offered, not asked for—trusty Creon, a friend from the beginning, desires to expel me by undermining me secretly [and] suborning such a crafty-scheming impostor, a deceitful beggar, who has sight only for profits but is blind in respect to skill.”³⁹ (380-89)

In this passage, Oedipus fully embraces his role as an innocent victim. He clearly believes that it is the king’s position that turns a well-liked man into a much-envied (and conspired against) man, rather than anything the king himself does or does not do. He emphasizes *this rule* (τῆσδ’ γ’ ἀρχῆς οὐνεχ’, 383) as the reason Creon has now (allegedly) turned against him, and makes it a point to mention that he himself did not seek out such a position, but that it was freely given to

³⁸ In Sophocles’ *Ajax*, Ajax and Teucer both refer to the awarding of arms to Odysseus as dishonest or somehow fraudulent (445-49, 1135). In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus names Zeus’ hatred of the Greeks as the ultimate cause of Ajax’s destruction (11.558-60).

³⁹ In tragedy, *turannos* at times means simply “king” (Parker 1998, 58). Accordingly, I believe that *turannis* ought to be translated here as something other than “tyranny,” given that these are Oedipus’ own words and he would not intentionally cast aspersions on his rule by implying that there was anything illegitimate or authoritarian about it. Sophocles’ fifth-century audience, however, was aware of the potentially pejorative connotation of *turannis*, and the lines following its appearance, with their mention of *phthonos*, seem to blur the lines between kingship and tyranny, even if Oedipus himself does not realize it.

him. Moreover, the definite article in τῷ πολυζήλῳ βίῳ (381) indicates that Oedipus is not referring to life in general, but to the specific life of a king.⁴⁰ In Oedipus' view, it is a king's inevitable burden to endure such envy and its unfortunate effects.

In his description of the king's predicament, Oedipus also draws a clear association between *phthonos* and *zêlos*: *zêlos* may at times suggest a milder, more benign emotion than *phthonos*, but his point here is that where there is *zêlos* (or, more specifically, something that is *poluzêlos*), *phthonos* is likely to follow, since the two are not easily disentangled. Interestingly, while Oedipus surely means to invoke the passive meaning of *poluzêlos*—namely that he is the recipient of *zêlos*—the adjective may also be capable of conveying an active meaning. Bacchylides applies the term to Proetus, a mythical king who ruled over Argos, until his twin brother, Acrisius, defeated and exiled him (11.63). Eventually they split the kingdom, but they were notorious for their long-standing quarrel, which was said to have begun in the womb (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.2.1-2). Thus it is ambiguous (and likely deliberately so) whether Bacchylides' use of *poluzêlos* is active or passive. Given that it is here that Oedipus shows the first overt signs of jealousy regarding the maintenance of his position, keen observers may wonder whether both active and passive meanings are applicable.⁴¹ Oedipus both incurs envy and feels a great deal of jealousy, although he himself is only aware of and intends to draw attention to the former.⁴² Thus his words may reveal more about the king's experience than he himself realizes.

By the mid-fifth century, the idea that power attracts envy had become so deeply entrenched in popular thinking that it began to manifest itself in a new way: it was no longer

⁴⁰ Dawe (2006), 108. *Phthonos* and *zêlos* (and related forms) do not appear frequently in Sophocles' plays, so this instance of both in close proximity is striking. Given that they appear in neighboring lines and without any additional elaboration, it seems that they are more or less synonymous here; *zêlos* is not necessarily less potent than *phthonos* in this case.

⁴¹ This ambiguity remains in the translation of certain commentators. For example, Rusten suggests rendering it as "in the competitive life" (1991, 23).

⁴² For the main distinction between envy and jealousy, see p. 23. In short, envy has to do with something one does not currently have, while jealousy has to do with something one does currently have and is afraid of losing to a rival.

simply a warning to rulers about the dangers they faced, but for those in power, it also functioned as a source of comfort and/or as a strategy for preserving their reputation. By reducing the motivations of someone of lower standing to mere envy, a person of higher standing can both avoid having to reflect on his or her own behavior and deflect scrutiny onto the other person.⁴³ In this way, labeling others as envious can be considered a political tactic that works to the advantage of the “haves” and to the disadvantage of the “have-nots.”⁴⁴ Oedipus does not seem to be employing this strategy consciously, but nevertheless it offers him an explanation of Teiresias and Creon’s behavior and so too a convenient way of insulating himself from the painful truth of Teiresias’ words, namely that he killed his father.

We can observe a similar phenomenon in Thucydides’ depiction of the Athenians’ behavior leading up to and during the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides presents several speeches that liken the Athenian empire to a tyranny, although this comparison was likely already in use before he wrote his history. While delivering a speech at Sparta and urging their allies to action, the Corinthians portray Athens’ hegemony as a tyranny. They exhort, δοκοῖμεν ἂν...τῶν πατέρων χεῖρους φαίνεσθαι, οἱ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἡλευθέρωσαν, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐδ’ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς βεβαιοῦμεν αὐτό, τύραννον δὲ ἐῷμεν ἐγκαθεστάναι πόλιν, τοὺς δ’ ἐν μιᾷ μονάρχους ἀξιοῦμεν καταλύειν (“We would seem...to appear inferior to our fathers, who gave Greece freedom, while we do not even secure it for ourselves, but allow a tyrant city to be established, although we deem it fitting to overthrow the monarchs in individual cities,” 1.122.3).⁴⁵ Pericles similarly represents Athenian power as a tyranny, but uses it as a warning in his attempt to steel the Athenians’

⁴³ Cairns (2003), 237.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The fact that the Corinthians do not feel the need to elaborate upon this likening of Athens to a tyrant city suggests that the comparison was already in circulation and Thucydides’ audience had likely heard it before. The similarly abbreviated manner in which it appears subsequently in Thucydides’ history lends further support to this inference (Tuplin 1985, 353).

resolve in the face of adverse conditions. He cautions, ὥς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον (“For what you have presently is like a tyranny, which seems unjust to take hold of, but dangerous to release,” 2.63.2). Cleon also uses the word *turannis* in his speech to persuade the Athenians to stick to the original plan of killing the men of Mytilene and enslaving the women and children, but he does not say the Athenian empire is *like* a tyranny; he says it *is* one.⁴⁶ He believes the Athenians have been lulled into a false sense of security, and so he chastises them, οὐ σκοποῦντες ὅτι τυραννίδα ἔχετε τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ πρὸς ἐπιβουλεύοντας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἄκοντας ἀρχομένους (“[You make decisions] without considering that your rule is a tyranny and that those you rule are themselves plotting against you and unwilling,” 3.37.2).

Cognizant of the fact that their empire could be construed as a tyranny, the Athenians (as represented by Thucydides) appear to have relied on the idea that holding a tyranny and incurring envy go hand in hand to help them contextualize the hostility they received from abroad. In the debate at Sparta before the declaration of war, the Athenians defend themselves, and in doing so, they assume a connection between envy and tyranny that is similar to the view Oedipus expresses in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The Athenians argue, Ἄρ’ ἀξιοί ἐσμεν, ὧς Λακεδαιμόνιοι, καὶ προθυμίας ἔνεκα τῆς τότε καὶ γνώμης ξυνέσεως ἀρχῆς γε ἣς ἔχομεν τοῖς Ἕλλησι μὴ οὕτως ἄγαν ἐπιφθόνως διακεῖσθαι; (“Are we not worthy, Spartans, on account of our willingness at that time and our intelligence of judgment, of being spared such a high degree of envy from the Greeks, at least on account of the rule we have?” 1.75.1). They feel that they earned their empire and therefore do not deserve envy, but in making such a declaration, they implicitly acknowledge that they have in fact incurred extreme envy from other Greek cities (or

⁴⁶ Hornblower (1991), 337.

at least, it is their perception that the hostility directed toward them is rooted in envy).⁴⁷ Pericles also makes a point about the inevitable connection between envy and power when attempting to improve the Athenians' morale, stating that those who rule must necessarily contend with a certain amount of envy and hatred (2.64.4-5). This is indeed a compelling argument and a potential source of reassurance for those in power. Attributing one's unpopularity to the envy of others shifts the blame onto those others: since envy is not considered a virtuous emotion, labeling others as envious releases the recipient of envy from culpability. In Oedipus' case, however, this justification for Teiresias' damning disclosure (and for Creon's actions) is entirely inaccurate. Thus Oedipus is misguided in his application of the commonplace that power attracts envy, an error in judgment that furthers the perception of him as a tyrant.⁴⁸

Shortly after Oedipus makes known his suspicions about Teiresias and Creon in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Creon appears, intent on clearing his name. He argues that it is in fact better not to be king:

σκέψαι δὲ τοῦτο πρῶτον, εἴ τιν' ἂν δοκεῖς
 ἄρχειν ἐλέσθαι ξὺν φόβοισι μᾶλλον ἢ
 ἄτρεστον εὖδοντ', εἰ τὰ γ' αὐθ' ἔξει κράτη.
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὔτ' αὐτὸς ἰμείρων ἔφυν
 τύραννος εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ τύραννα δρᾶν,
 οὔτ' ἄλλος ὅστις σωφρονεῖν ἐπίσταται.
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἐκ σοῦ πάντ' ἄνευ φόβου φέρω,
 εἰ δ' αὐτὸς ἦρχον, πολλὰ κἂν ἄκων ἔδρων.
 πῶς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ τυραννὶς ἡδίω ἔχειν
 ἀρχῆς ἀλύπου καὶ δυναστείας ἔφυν;

“Consider this first, whether you think anyone would choose to rule amidst fears rather than sleeping fearlessly, if he will have the same powers. Certainly I myself was not born desiring to be king, nor anyone else who knows good sense, but rather, [I desire] to do

⁴⁷ Plato also represents the envy of the other Greeks as a precipitating factor for the Peloponnesian War (*Men.* 242a). See p. 157-58 for a more detailed discussion of this passage.

⁴⁸ Goldhill (2003), 168. Oedipus' claim that envy motivates Creon's actions at least seems to be a genuine mistake on his part. When Clytemnestra indicates in a prayer that Electra has a tendency to spread empty rumors about her out of *phthonos* (*Soph. El.* 637-42), it is unclear whether she truly believes this or whether she says this with the intention of discrediting Electra and thereby exculpating herself.

what a king does. For as things are now, on account of you, I enjoy all the advantages—and without fear—but if I myself ruled, I would have to do many things against my will. How then is kingship sweeter for me to have than painless rule and lordship?” (584-93)

Implicit in Creon’s argument is the recognition that many men covet a king’s position, but he strives to distance himself from such men. Through his use of αὐτὸς (587) and ὅστις σωφρονεῖν ἐπίσταται (589), Creon emphasizes that while the natural or uncritical view of kingship is that it is desirable, he and those who have good sense know better. This reiterates the belief that envious men are lacking in moral fortitude, making it all the more important for Creon to dispel the suspicion that he is conspiring against Oedipus out of envy. Creon reasons that he already enjoys certain privileges by virtue of his association with Oedipus, but by not being king himself, he avoids the concomitant envy that is presumably the source of the fears that plague kings.

A similar line of reasoning about the ways in which a king’s position is burdensome appears in several of Euripides’ plays: the *Hippolytus*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Ion*. In the *Hippolytus*, produced roughly around the same time as the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Theseus does not explicitly accuse Hippolytus of desiring his throne, but Hippolytus nonetheless defends himself preemptively against such a charge. He explains:

πότερα τὸ τῆσδε σῶμ’ ἐκαλλιστεύετο
πασῶν γυναικῶν; ἢ σὸν οἰκῆσειν δόμον
ἔγκληρον εὐνήν προσλαβὼν ἐπήλπισα;
μάταιος ἄρ’ ἦν, οὐδαμοῦ μὲν οὖν φρενῶν.
ἀλλ’ ὥς τυραννεῖν ἡδὺ τοῖσι σώφροσιν;
†ἥκιστά γ’, εἰ μὴ† τὰς φρένας διέφθορεν
θνητῶν ὅσοισιν ἀνδάνει μοναρχία.
ἐγὼ δ’ ἀγῶνας μὲν κρατεῖν Ἑλληνικοὺς
πρῶτος θέλοιμ’ ἄν, ἐν πόλει δὲ δεύτερος
σὺν τοῖς ἀρίστοις εὐτυχεῖν ἀεὶ φίλοις·
πράσσειν τε γὰρ πάρεστι, κίνδυνός τ’ ἀπὼν
κρείσσω δίδωσι τῆς τυραννίδος χάριν.

“Was the body of this woman the most beautiful of all women? Or did I hope to govern your household by taking hold of your wealthy marriage bed? Then I [would be] rash, with no wits at all. But [is it the case] that to be king is sweet in the view of those with

good sense? Not at all, unless kingship has corrupted the minds of those men to whom it is pleasing. I may wish to prevail as first in the Hellenic games, but in the city, [I wish] to live prosperously as second, always with the best men [as] my friends. For it is possible to act, and danger being absent grants a greater pleasure than kingship.” (1009-20)

Like Creon, Hippolytus prefers the privileges afforded to him in an unofficial capacity: by being second (i.e. the son of the king), he can live well without having to worry about being usurped or otherwise targeted by those who might envy him. Moreover, both men use words with the stem *sôphro-* to put themselves into a category of higher understanding and sophistication than men who succumb to envy. Hippolytus goes a step further than Creon, however, by describing kingship itself as a corrupting force: certain men may be predisposed to finding kingship appealing (ὅσοισιν ἀνδάνει, 1015), but kingship itself (μοναρχία, 1015) is the subject of the active verb διέφθορεν (1014).

In Euripides’ *Phoenician Women*, Jocasta cautions her son Eteocles against the things she imagines he considers advantageous about being in power. The scenario presents notable differences from those discussed above. Jocasta is not trying to prove that she herself does not want power, but rather she aims to persuade her son to let go of his obsession with holding a tyranny. Moreover, she is in a uniquely qualified position to dispense such advice, having lived as queen for many years and having seen firsthand all the troubles that plague the royal household. This lends an increased credibility to her argument against the desirability of rule, although in content it is similar to what we have seen above. She warns:

τί τὴν τυραννίδ’, ἀδικίαν εὐδαίμονα,
τιμᾶς ὑπέρφει καὶ μέγ’ ἥγησαι τόδε;
περιβλέπεσθαι τίμιον; κενὸν μὲν οὖν.
ἢ πολλὰ μοχθεῖν πόλλ’ ἔχων ἐν δώμασι
βούλῃ; τί δ’ ἔστι τὸ πλεον; ὄνομ’ ἔχει μόνον.
ἐπεὶ τὰ γ’ ἀρκοῦνθ’ ἱκανὰ τοῖς γε σῶφροσιν.

“Why do you excessively value tyranny, a prosperous injustice, and consider it great?⁴⁹ Is being admired valuable? On the contrary, it is useless. Or are you willing to endure many hardships for the sake of having many things in your house? What is the advantage? [Tyranny] offers a name alone, for what is sufficient is satisfactory, at least for those of good sense.” (549-54)

While Jocasta describes admiration as being empty (rather than as potentially dangerous), she acknowledges that wealth brings trouble along with pleasure, presumably on account of the envy it stands to attract. In her full speech, she mentions *phthonos* only once (545), when she argues that men who value equality (*isotês*, 536) as opposed to ambition (*philotimia*, 532) do not succumb to envy, a statement that reiterates the connection between envy and reputation.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, envy remains a prominent topic throughout her speech, and we can see this in the appearance of associated terms. Her use of *περιβλέπεσθαι* (551), which appears only here in Euripides’ works, recalls the chorus’ use of *ζήλω...ἐπέβλεπεν* at the end of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1526, to be discussed below), and the appearance of two *timê* words in consecutive lines (*τιμῆς*, 550; *τίμιον*, 551) reinforces the idea that she believes her son is acting out of envy, fueled by concern for his personal honor. Like Creon and Hippolytus, Jocasta indicates that prudent men (*τοῖς...σώφροσιν*, 554) know better than to strive for tyranny, thus issuing a subtle criticism of Eteocles as lacking good sense. She then turns to Polyneices and reproaches him for endangering Thebes. Ultimately, Jocasta fails to dissuade either son from his chosen course of action—they hardly even acknowledge her before resuming their quarrel—which serves as a sobering reminder that while some, such as Jocasta, recognize that a ruler’s life is not enviable, some persist in believing otherwise.

⁴⁹ Jocasta likely intends for *turannis* to mean “tyranny” rather than “kingship,” given the larger context of her speech as well as the appositive *ἄδικίαν εὐδαίμονα*, which combines two antithetical ideas: the idea that tyranny is desirable on account of the associated wealth and the idea that tyranny is ultimately unjust (Mastronarde 1994, 308). In Eteocles’ case, tyranny is doubly unjust. It is unjust in the way that any tyranny is unjust, but also on account of the fact that he has broken the agreement with his brother and driven him into exile.

⁵⁰ For the association between *timê* and the emotions of envy and jealousy in epic, see p. 46ff.

In Euripides' *Ion*, Ion explains to Xuthus why he does not wish to go with him to live in Athens, where Xuthus and Creusa are members of the royal house. His reasoning is similar to that of Creon, Hippolytus, and Jocasta: he views kings as fearful and surrounded by worthless friends, and he does not desire any part of such a life (621-32).⁵¹ Ion shapes his argument in terms of personal preference with first-person statements (ἄν θέλωμι, 626; οὐ φιλῶ, 630), and generally refrains from passing absolute judgment on positions of power. Moreover, he does not attempt to depict himself as having superior insight or good sense for resisting the allure of kingship. This is perhaps in part because Ion, unlike Creon and Hippolytus, has no anxiety about being suspected of feeling envy—he does not pose any threat to Xuthus and Xuthus does not view him as a rival—but more significantly, Ion *does* eventually go to Athens and become king, thus providing the connection that later enables the Athenians to establish their Ionian empire.⁵² If Euripides had had Ion declare himself too wise to want to be king, it could have potentially created an uncomfortable dissonance for the Athenian audience, who knew perfectly well what Ion's future held in store.⁵³ Nevertheless, all of these examples simultaneously acknowledge the prevalence of and work to challenge the idea that the position of a sole ruler is innately enviable. The fact that these counterarguments come from a diverse range of character perspectives— young, old, male, female, citizen, foreigner—as well as from different authors demonstrates that this line of thinking was gaining in prominence and was not merely an outlier opinion in the fifth century.

⁵¹ Ion thus rejects even the association with those in power, unlike Creon and Hippolytus, who are content to reap the benefits of such a connection.

⁵² Wohl (2015), 22.

⁵³ Alternatively, if Ion were to make such a statement, it could function as a sign that he would be a sage and self-aware king. Regardless, its absence makes matters simpler.

The topic of envy reappears at the end of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, at which point the chorus issues a reminder that anyone can experience a reversal of fortune before reaching the end of life. The Theban elders caution:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ταῖς τύχαις ἐπέβλεπεν,
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντ' ἐκείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἔδει
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἄν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεῖν ὄν παθόν.⁵⁴

“Inhabitants of ancestral Thebes, behold this man Oedipus, who knew the renowned riddle and was a most powerful man. Who of the citizens did not eye his fortunes with envy? [See] into what a great flood of terrible misfortune he has come. Therefore, count no one who is mortal and waiting to see his final day as happy until he passes through the end of life having suffered nothing grievous.” (1524-30)

The chorus' message is clear: it is premature to judge whether an individual's life is happy or not before it comes to an end. There is, however, another implicit lesson, namely that there is little (if any) point in dwelling on the pain of envy, given that we cannot know whether the person toward whom envy is directed is truly worthy of such envy until his or her life has reached its conclusion. According to the chorus, virtually every citizen envied Oedipus (although there is no suggestion that we should take this as a vindication of Oedipus' earlier distrust of Creon). Here, the focus is on the ultimate pointlessness of envy more so than on its potential nefariousness, and accordingly, the term used is *zēlos* (1526): in this instance, it seems to denote a milder form of *phthonos*, more akin to covetous envy than begrudging envy.⁵⁵ As the epitome of the “haves,”

⁵⁴ Dawe has argued that these lines are an interpolation, pointing to similar passages in Euripides (cf. *Andr.* 100-2; *Phoen.* 1687-89, 1758-63) (2006, 202). Other scholars disagree and the debate continues. See Sommerstein (2011); Kovacs (2014). Whether the lines are authentically Sophoclean has little bearing on the present study: regardless of the origins of these particular lines, the idea presented in them (i.e. that you cannot judge a man as happy until he comes to the end of his life) is a conventional one. For example, it is discussed at length in Herodotus' narrative about the meeting between Croesus and Solon (1.32; see p. 140-41).

⁵⁵ For the distinction between covetous and begrudging envy, see p. 24; Sanders (2014), 38-39. Stanford's observation that *zēlos* sometimes represents a milder form of *phthonos* (1983, 44) is valid here. Elsewhere (e.g. *OT* 380-89; see p. 84), the two are not so different.

sole rulers are especially liable to incurring envy, but they also have the highest position from which to fall.⁵⁶ By highlighting the change in Oedipus' affairs, the chorus indirectly corroborates Creon's earlier argument against the enviable nature of a king's position: although the chorus and Creon have very different messages, they arrive to a similar conclusion, namely that feeling envy toward a ruler is not worthwhile.

Sophocles includes a comparable message in a scene near the end of the *Antigone*. A messenger arrives to tell of Haemon's death, an event that subsequently prompts Eurydice's suicide. He announces:

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅποιον στάντ' ἄν ἀνθρώπου βίον
οὔτ' αἰνέσαιμ' ἄν οὔτε μεμψαίμην ποτέ.
τύχη γὰρ ὀρθοῖ καὶ τύχη καταρρέπει
τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα τὸν τε δυστυχοῦντ' αἰεί·
καὶ μάντις οὐδεὶς τῶν καθεστώτων βροτοῖς.
Κρέων γὰρ ἦν ζηλωτός, ὡς ἐμοί, ποτέ,
σώσας μὲν ἐχθρῶν τήνδε Καδμεῖαν χθόνα,
λαβὼν τε χώρας παντελεῖ μοναρχίαν
ἡὔθυνε, θάλλων εὐγενεῖ τέκνων σπορᾷ·
καὶ νῦν ἀφεῖται πάντα.

“There is no life of men of such a sort that I would ever praise or blame it as it stands. For fortune straightens and fortune makes fall the lucky and the unlucky constantly. And there is no prophet of established things for mortals. For Creon was once enviable, at least in my view, having saved this Cadmeian land from enemies, and after receiving total sovereignty of the region, he guided it straight, while flourishing with the noble sowing of children: and now all is lost.” (1156-65)

Like in the passage from the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (quoted above), the term used here to denote envy is a form of *zēlos* (ζηλωτός, 1161). This is fitting, given that once again, the point being made is one about the precariousness of the good fortune that invites envy (and thus the pointlessness of envy), rather than about the potential danger or malignancy of such feelings.

Nevertheless, these two passages once again demonstrate how common it was (or was believed

⁵⁶ Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* presents a similar message (i.e. that even the most successful are subject to reversals of fortune) and cites Oedipus as a prime example (772-84).

to be) for people to envy their rulers, even if this envy was ultimately a waste of emotional energy. In reality, all is not yet lost: Creon will fall even further when he learns of the death of his wife, which will reinforce the messenger's point that fortune is constantly changing.

In contrast to many of the previous cases, which involve arguments or statements about why people do not or should not envy rulers, the *Oedipus at Colonus* offers a concrete example of the disastrous effects that can ensue when people do envy rulers and their power. Creon assumed control of Thebes after Oedipus' fall from grace, but eventually Oedipus' sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, grew envious of Creon's position, which in turn led to conflict between brothers.

Ismene, their sister, describes how they were once satisfied with Creon occupying the throne:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἤρεσεν Κρέοντί τε / θρόνους ἔασθαι, 367-68), but later had a change of heart: νῦν δ' ἐκ θεῶν του καὶ ἀλειτηροῦ φρενὸς / εἰσῆλθε τοῖν τρισαθλίῳιν ἔρις κακὴ, / ἀρχῆς λαβέσθαι καὶ κράτους τυραννικοῦ ("But now, from one of the gods and a sinning mind, wicked strife entered into them, triply wretched, to seize command and kingly power," 371-73).

Although envy is not explicitly named as a driving force of the brothers' actions, the scenario included the prerequisite conditions: Eteocles and Polyneices did not have control over Thebes, Creon *did* have control over Thebes, and the brothers felt that this was wrong. Moreover, Ismene attributes their deeds to "wicked strife" (ἔρις κακὴ, 372), and as we have seen in the previous chapter, where there is *eris*, there is often envy as well.⁵⁷

When Polyneices makes his appearance, his telling of the events that transpired indicates that his idea of proper governance is more akin to a tyranny than to a benevolent kingship. He describes how he felt entitled to occupy the throne himself, but Eteocles took it upon himself to

⁵⁷ See p. 40-41, 48-49. As a point of comparison, in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, after Creon has already been removed from power, Jocasta mentions *phthonos* as she tries to dissuade Eteocles from obsessing over power. While we cannot expect absolute continuity among playwrights' works or even among a single playwright's works, this at the very least indicates that it would not be far-fetched to regard Eteocles (and so too Polyneices) as acting out of *phthonos*.

banish him in what Polyneices considers an unceremonious and illegitimate manner: οὔτε νικήσας λόγῳ / οὔτ' εἰς ἔλεγχον χειρὸς οὐδ' ἔργου μολών, / πόλιν δὲ πείσας (“neither by prevailing [against me] in an argument of words nor by entering into a test of act or deed, but by persuading the city,” 1296-98). His disdain for Eteocles’ power of persuasion would not have endeared him to a democratic audience, and it reveals an authoritarian disposition.⁵⁸ Moreover, Polyneices clearly prioritizes his own reputation over all else, including the well-being of his native city.⁵⁹ His speech is relatively devoid of explicit verbal markers such as *timê*, *kleos*, or *kudos*, but he uses terms that emphasize the moral outrage he feels, which in turn reveals an elevated concern for honor.⁶⁰ For example, he describes Eteocles as a *turannos* (1338) who laughs at both Oedipus and Polyneices (κοινῇ καθ’ ἡμῶν ἐγγέλων, 1339). When Antigone tries to dissuade him from marching against Thebes, asking what he hopes to gain by destroying it, he responds simply, αἰσχρὸν τὸ φεύγειν, καὶ τὸ πρεσβεύοντ’ ἐμέ / οὔτω γελᾶσθαι τοῦ κασιγνήτου πάρα (“It is shameful to be in exile and to be derided in this way by my brother, since I am the elder,” 1422-23). This may indeed be shameful, but the fact that Polyneices is willing to risk his own life, his comrades’ lives, and the destruction of his ancestral Thebes all for the sake of personal honor speaks volumes. He has determined that sole rule is the definitive measure of his honor, and this obsession suggests that he is being consumed by a particularly corrosive envy. He has heard the prophecy regarding his and Eteocles’ mutual deaths, but he would rather die

⁵⁸ Blundell (1989), 244-45. Blundell notes that Sophocles does not depict Eteocles as blameless, but he is less objectionable in the eyes of an Athenian audience in this particular regard.

⁵⁹ For Aristotle, the distinction between a king and a tyrant hinges upon the question of whose interest is at the forefront of the ruler’s mind (*Pol.* 1279a33-b7). According to this logic, Polyneices is surely a would-be tyrant, rather than a would-be king.

⁶⁰ Polyneices uses the verb *atimân* when he entreats Antigone to provide him with a proper burial so that he might not be dishonored (1409), but the request itself is not an unusual one.

and take his brother with him than live to see his continued rule.⁶¹ Thus Polyneices exhibits a combination of covetous and begrudging envy, but the latter seems to be the stronger of the two: his ultimate goal is to deprive Eteocles of the throne, regardless of what that means for his own attainment of the throne or even for his life.

We have now seen examples that illustrate the commonplace that sole rulership attracts the envy of others, arguments that challenge the desirability of such a position, and statements about the pointlessness and/or dangers of feeling envy toward rulers. But armed with the knowledge that power typically attracts envy, what is a sole ruler to do? The prospect of constituents' envy is one of the primary reasons why sole rulers were believed to live in fear, and unfortunately for them, mere awareness of it does not necessarily equip them to manage or circumvent it. The alacrity with which Oedipus assumes an envious Creon is conspiring against him demonstrates this fear in action, and indeed, his paranoia renders him incapable of evaluating the facts in a sensible manner. Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* offers another depiction of a monarch who is wary of provoking envy, at least initially, but who ultimately fails to navigate the situation wisely. When Agamemnon arrives home from Troy, Clytemnestra urges him to dismount from his chariot onto strewn tapestries, but he objects:

μηδ' εἵμασι στρώσας' ἐπίφθονον πόρον
τίθει· θεούς τοι τοῖσδε τιμαλφεῖν χρεών,
ἐν ποικίλοις δὲ θνητὸν ὄντα κάλλεσιν
βαίνειν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἄνευ φόβου.

“Do not make my path liable to envy by spreading it with garments. We must worship the gods with these, but for one who is mortal to walk on beautiful works of tapestry is in no way without fear in my view.” (921-24)

⁶¹ One could argue that as a son of Oedipus, Polyneices is more aware than most of the futility of trying to avoid a prophecy's fulfillment and so he is just resigned to his fate. His straightforward and unwavering resolve, however, suggests that he not only accepts the idea of mutual death but even welcomes it as a matter of moral necessity.

Agamemnon thus demonstrates awareness that he risks the *phthonos* of the gods if he does as Clytemnestra suggests. Several lines later, he raises the censure of men as another concern, pointing out, φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει (“The voice of the people, however, has great strength,” 938).⁶² Clytemnestra works to allay his various fears in different ways, ultimately countering, ὁ δ’ ἀφθόνητός γ’ οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει (“The unenvied man is not admirable,” 939), and this argument wins him over. The idea that envy is a marker of success is one that appears elsewhere as well, but there are several notable caveats about its use here.⁶³ First, the fact that it is Clytemnestra who says this—a woman who duplicitously pretends to ward off envy (φθόνος δ’ ἀπέστω, “But let envy be absent,” 904) while in reality hoping to stir up envy toward her husband in an attempt to further assassinate his character—is a solid indication (to the audience, if not to Agamemnon) that we should not blindly accept such logic in every case. Moreover, Clytemnestra’s words seem to draw a distinction between *phthonos* and *zēlos*: a man who does not provoke envy in the bad sense (*phthonos*) is not worthy of envy in the good sense (*zēlos*).⁶⁴ The context of this situation, however, suggests that she is taking advantage of the conceptual fluidity and deliberately blurring the line between the two: *phthonos* is bad, but *zēlos* is not always good.⁶⁵ Even if we accept her statement as valid—that the unenvied man is truly not admirable—this does not actually prove that it is appropriate to act deliberately so as to incite envy.⁶⁶ If Agamemnon were a humbler, more sensible man, we might expect him to realize this, especially since this argument does nothing to dispel his earlier objection regarding the *phthonos*

⁶² Denniston and Page (1957), 148.

⁶³ Cf. Hes. *Op.* 312-13: εἰ δέ κεν ἐργάζῃ, τάχα σε ζηλώσει ἀεργὸς / πλουτεῦντα· πλοῦτῳ δ’ ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ (If you work, soon the idle man will envy you as you become wealthy: excellence and renown go along with wealth); Pind. *Pyth.* 1.85-86: ἀλλ’ ὅμως, κρέσσων γὰρ οἰκτιρμοῦ φθόνος, / μὴ παρίει καλά (But nevertheless, do not give up on noble deeds, for envy is better than pity).

⁶⁴ Stanford (1983), 142.

⁶⁵ Clytemnestra’s assertion suggests that *phthonos* is either a precursor or concomitant of *zēlos*. For the idea that *zēlos* gives way to *phthonos*, see *OT* 380-89 (p. 84); Pl. *Menex.* 242a (p. 157 note 7).

⁶⁶ Goldhill (1986), 12.

of the gods. Clytemnestra only addresses this point cursorily, with a bizarre counterfactual hypothetical about whether he would tread on the tapestries if he had made a vow to the gods.⁶⁷

At any rate, neither divine nor mortal envy from walking on the tapestries can be considered the immediate cause of Agamemnon's death, but nevertheless this exchange characterizes him as vain and reckless, since the most plausible reason for why he yields so suddenly is that he himself secretly wants to walk on the tapestries and be welcomed home with such pomp.⁶⁸ Thus we can see what happens when a ruler throws caution to the winds and gives in to his desires. If Agamemnon had heeded his initial misgivings about incurring the envy of gods and men, he would not have acquiesced to Clytemnestra's instructions, which *do* result in his death. Assessing and managing the envy of others is a difficult matter for kings: in Oedipus' case, his hyperawareness leads to misguided accusations, but in Agamemnon's case, his dismissal of initial concerns leads to a fatal mistake.

For those who experience envy toward rulers, the most neutral outcome in tragedy is sheer pointlessness, as passages near the end of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone* reveal, but nowhere is it seen to play a positive role. Eteocles and Polyneices constitute an extreme example of the negative effects that can come from feeling envy. Incited by envy of Creon's position, they have taken power from him, but the allure of sole rule is too great and they are unable to share with one another; thus envy takes hold again and eventually leads to double fratricide, along with the destruction of several armies. Given that envy can have such devastating consequences, not only do kings want to avoid being its object, but conversely, people want to avoid being suspected of acting out of envy. We have seen this with Creon in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and with

⁶⁷ Raeburn and Thomas (2011), 166-67.

⁶⁸ Denniston and Page (1957), 151-52. Goldhill has argued that it is not so much Agamemnon's weakness as Clytemnestra's argumentation that determines how the scene plays out (1986, 13). Clytemnestra is a skilled rhetorician, to be sure, but her logic is not without flaws, and thus Agamemnon must still bear much of the responsibility.

Hippolytus, and Teucer in the *Ajax* offers an additional example. After Ajax's suicide, Teucer bemoans his own fate, anxious about what his irascible father, Telamon, will say when he returns without Ajax, the preferred son. Among other accusations that Teucer anticipates, he imagines that his father will assume that he in some way allowed or even engineered Ajax's demise because he envied Ajax's power at home (τὸν δειλίᾳ προδόντα καὶ κακνδρία / σέ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἢ δόλοισιν, ὥς τὰ σὰ / κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοιμι σούς, "the one who betrayed you out of cowardice and unmanliness, most beloved Ajax, or with tricks, in order that with you dead, I might enjoy your rule and house," 1014-16). Teucer predicts that Telamon will banish him from Salamis. Although banishment pales in comparison to the punishment with which Oedipus threatens Creon, namely death (*OT* 622-24), it is still no trivial matter. With penalties like these, we can easily see why people are keen to avoid being suspected of feeling envy, especially toward powerful individuals.

5. Power engenders jealousy in rulers

Occupying a position of power increases the likelihood of attracting the envy of others, but it simultaneously increases the likelihood of experiencing jealousy when one senses that his position is in jeopardy. In contrast to envy, which we see in both the actions and speeches of various characters in Sophocles' tragedies, jealousy appears solely in rulers' actions; there are no discussions or statements about their jealous tendencies.⁶⁹

In the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Oedipus accuses Creon of conspiring against him out of envy, but Oedipus' own jealousy is responsible for making him suspect this in the first place. Oedipus

⁶⁹ Power dynamics offer a partial explanation for this difference. Envy and jealousy were both regarded as unflattering emotions; thus it is one thing to accuse those not in power of acting out of envy and in doing so characterize them in a negative way, but quite another to accuse those in power of acting out of jealousy and in doing so characterize them in a negative way. This cannot, however, account for the lack of discussion of rulers' jealous tendencies when the rulers themselves are not present.

begins to have doubts about Creon during his encounter with Teiresias, but even before then, he displays a hint of generalized insecurity about his position: ὅστις γὰρ ἦν ἐκείνον ὁ κτανὼν τάχ' ἄν / κᾶμ' ἂν τοιαύτη χειρὶ τιμωρεῖν θέλοι. / κείνῳ προσαρκῶν οὖν ἑμαυτὸν ὠφελῶ (“For whoever was the killer of [Laius] could perhaps wish to take revenge on me also with such a hand. Therefore by helping him, I benefit myself,” 139-41). At this point, Oedipus’ apprehension seems fairly reasonable (albeit ironic, since the audience already knows that Laius’ killer wishes Oedipus no harm whatsoever), but once he can envision a specific person (Creon) as a potential threat, his concern rapidly devolves into a jealous need to protect his rule, even if that means turning on his close associates.⁷⁰ After coming to the quick conclusion that Teiresias has named Oedipus as Laius’ killer only because Creon has paid him to do so, Oedipus neither allows Creon to speak nor questions him at all before accusing him of plotting murder and theft (532-42). Creon immediately asks Oedipus to let him respond to the accusations, appealing to his sense of reason and his intelligence, but Oedipus has already made up his mind. His certainty that Creon is a threat to his rule and his refusal to consider other possibilities suggest that jealousy over his position as king and the concomitant need to protect it have clouded his judgment. This jealousy—and the corresponding belief that Creon is acting out of envy—is crucial to the continued escalation of the play. If Oedipus simply accepted Teiresias’ declaration that he killed his father as true, he would then be forced to make good on his word and remove himself from the city. It is unclear whether he would make the further discovery about having married his mother, and the plot would be truncated and oddly straightforward. Thus Oedipus’ jealousy is

⁷⁰ Tyrants are often depicted as being suspicious of and mistreating their *philoï*. Seaford identifies distrust of *philoï* as one of three main characteristics of tyrants, with impiety and greed as the other two (2003, 96-99). He names Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, Zeus in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, and Creon in Sophocles’ *Antigone* as examples of tyrant figures who display strained relationships with *philoï* in tragedy (99-101, 104-5). For additional examples, as well as a more comprehensive list of tyrannical characteristics and associations, see Lanza (1977), 233-36.

not only a way of portraying him as a flawed character but it is also a necessary device of plot advancement.

In the *Antigone*, Creon also exhibits a possessiveness regarding his rule that points to jealousy. Whereas for Oedipus, Creon constitutes the perceived threat to his power, for Creon, it is the people that he views as a potential rival. When Creon rejects Haemon's advice on the basis of his youthful age, the two argue about how much consideration Creon ought to give to the counsel of others. Creon asks, ἄλλω γὰρ ἢ 'μοὶ χρή με τῆσδ' ἄρχειν χθονός; ("Must I rule this land in accordance with a person other than myself?" 736). Haemon responds, πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ' ἣτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ' ἐνός ("A city that belongs to one man is not a [true] city," 737), to which Creon retorts, οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομίζεται; ("Is the city not considered [to belong to] the ruler?" 738). By maintaining that the city belongs to him and to him alone, Creon reveals both his jealous side and his tyrannical nature.⁷¹ If he were not so concerned with protecting his reputation and his position, he would be less likely to view the city and his constituents' opinions as a threat.

Sophocles' audience has already seen evidence of Creon's tyrannical leanings by the time the exchange between father and son takes place. In his opening speech, Creon addresses the chorus of Theban elders:

ὅτ' οὖν ἐκεῖνοι πρὸς διπλῆς μοίρας μίαν
καθ' ἡμέραν ὤλοντο παῖσαντές τε καὶ
πληγέντες αὐτόχειρι σὺν μιάσματι,
ἐγὼ κράτη δὴ πάντα καὶ θρόνους ἔχω
γένους κατ' ἀγχιστεῖα τῶν ὀλωλότων.

"Since [Eteocles and Polyneices] perished from a double fate on one day, having struck and having been struck with the stain of their own hand, I hold all the power and the throne in accordance with the closeness of family of those who have perished." (170-74)

⁷¹ Fletcher (2010), 173.

While these lines serve to inform Sophocles' audience of the backstory, they also reveal Creon's preoccupation with establishing his legitimacy. Moreover, his use of *kratê panta* (273) hints at the authoritarianism that will emerge over the course of the play. In this opening speech (162-210), Creon repeatedly draws attention to himself and his views. Words such as *egô* and *emos* appear nine times, and often in emphatic positions, such as the *egô* at the beginning of line 173, which is also the first word of a main clause that has been delayed by three lines.⁷² Creon claims to put the state's interest ahead of his own (184-90), but the prevalence of self-centered language in this opening speech raises questions about this avowed allegiance.

Indeed, when Creon addresses Haemon for the first time, it becomes clear that Creon views Antigone's transgression as a personal affront.⁷³ He announces, *ψευδῆ γ' ἑμαυτὸν οὐ καταστήσω πόλει, / ἀλλὰ κτενῶ* ("I will not make myself a liar before the city, but I will kill her," 657-58). At this point, he cares more about vengeance than mere punishment, and he has lost sight of doing what is best for the city because he is too preoccupied with upholding his own dignity.⁷⁴ This sort of egocentric behavior is stereotypically tyrannical, but it also suggests underlying jealousy; as we have seen, personal honor is often (perceived to be) at stake when feelings of envy or jealousy arise.⁷⁵ Whereas Oedipus was concerned that Creon wanted to take over his actual rule, Creon is concerned that Antigone's action will diminish his honor by tarnishing the image of his rule as a strong and capable one. Both men take steps to neutralize the threats and protect themselves, but the fact that they go too far in their attempts and ignore the (sound) advice of those around them speaks to their jealous natures.⁷⁶

⁷² Griffith (1999), 156.

⁷³ Idem, 236.

⁷⁴ Trousson (1964), 25.

⁷⁵ See the discussion of Polyneices above (p. 95-96). For the relationship between these emotions and honor in epic, see p. 46ff.

⁷⁶ The topic of this study necessitates an emphasis on Creon's (and Oedipus') negative qualities as they relate to envy and jealousy, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that the *Antigone* has no simple protagonist or

Euripides' *Ion* presents an additional example of royalty acting out of jealousy when a potential rival enters into the equation. After the oracle at Delphi tells Xuthus that Ion is his son and he succeeds in convincing him to come to Athens, Creusa learns of her husband's newfound son from her attendants. The aged tutor who accompanies Creusa quickly jumps to the conclusion that Xuthus has been dishonest with her. He informs her, δέσποινα, προδεδόμεσθα (σὺν γὰρ σοὶ νοσῶ) / τοῦ σοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός καὶ μεμηχανημένως / ὕβριζόμεσθα δωμάτων τ' Ἐρεχθέως / ἐκβαλλόμεσθα ("Mistress, we have been betrayed—for I suffer along with you—by your husband and by stratagem we are outraged and cast out from the house of Erechtheus, 808-11). He explains how Xuthus must have sired a child with another woman after entering into Creusa's house and inheritance, with the intention of later introducing him as an heir, and he urges Creusa to prevent this from happening by killing both Xuthus and Ion (812-31, 836-56). This explanation of events is somewhat strange and far-fetched, and if Creusa were thinking more rationally, she might realize this, especially given that the timeline does not match up. She has already noted that Ion seems to be the same age as her own son would be (354), to whom she gave birth before marrying Xuthus, so a child born of Xuthus and another woman after their marriage would need to be younger.⁷⁷ Moreover, Xuthus has given Creusa no reason to suspect him of being so deceptive and cunning. To her credit, she objects to the prospect of killing her husband (977), although she agrees to poison Ion. This demonstrates the corrosive power of jealousy: Creusa is so keen on preventing an interloper from entering her household and ascending the Athenian throne that she is willing to commit murder, despite a lack of concrete evidence to support the tutor's version of events. She even goes so far as to acknowledge the stereotype that stepmothers feel *phthonos* toward their stepchildren (φθονεῖν γὰρ φασι μητρυσὶς

antagonist. For a more detailed treatment of the degree to which Antigone (as well as Creon) can be considered at fault, see Griffith (1999), 28-34; Sourvinou-Inwood (1990).

⁷⁷ Lee (1997), 252.

τέκνοις, 1025), yet Creusa's jealousy is no ordinary case. The typical *phthonos* that a stepmother may feel is exaggerated on account of Creusa's position: if Ion's presence means that she will be ousted from the royal household, as the tutor suggests, she has much more to lose than the average stepmother.⁷⁸

This scenario in the *Ion* offers an interesting comparison for the examples of jealousy from the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone*: unlike Creusa, Oedipus and Creon need no prompting from an allied source to fuel their jealousy and suspicion, and, unlike Creusa, Oedipus and Creon themselves occupy the royal seat, whereas Creusa is a princess of the royal family. In all three cases, however, death is the proposed solution: Oedipus initially wants to put Creon to death so as to protect his rule, Creon wants to make good on his declaration to kill Antigone so as to protect his reputation, and Creusa wants to kill Ion so as to prevent him from becoming an heir to the Athenian throne. And in all three cases, these feelings of jealousy fail to be productive, but rather they cause the individuals experiencing them to act in ways that turn out to be detrimental to their interests in the short and/or long term. Oedipus' downfall is predestined, regardless of his actions, but in the short term, his jealousy negatively affects his relationships with Teiresias and Creon, two trusted associates. Creon's jealousy causes him to prioritize his reputation over all else and to insist upon Antigone's death; he does not see the error of his ways until it is too late, and thus he loses his son and his wife (in addition to his niece). Creusa's jealousy, stirred up by the tutor, makes her try to murder Ion, which nearly results in her own death when the deed is discovered.

As we have seen above, individuals in positions of power are especially susceptible to attracting the envy of others, and this makes sense, because they have more to be envious of—

⁷⁸ Creusa likely feels a certain amount of envy as well. She has longed for a child and while Xuthus now finds that he has one, she still does not (Sanders 2014, 128-29).

material resources, license to act as they please, honor, etc. Conversely, individuals in positions of power are especially susceptible to experiencing jealousy, and this too makes sense, because they have more to lose. Furthermore, just as envy can be dangerous and is often pointless, so too jealousy can be dangerous and is often pointless. The only suggestions we have seen that envy and jealousy can bring about positive effects are ones from Aeschylus and Euripides, but even these are highly debatable. Clytemnestra argues that envy serves as a marker of success, but her ulterior motives cast doubt upon her logic; at best, this means that envy at times has a positive aspect, but it is never without the negative aspect. One could argue that when Creusa tries to poison Ion out of jealousy, she initiates a series of events that leads to her discovery that he is her son. On the other hand, her actions very nearly end in her being flung from a cliff or stoned to death, and this course of action is only one of many possible ways the discovery could have been made. Thus jealousy is only very indirectly responsible for Creusa and Ion's happy reunion, and this outcome is far more happenstance than it is necessary or natural. Based on these examples, it seems likely that Aeschylus and Euripides considered envy and jealousy to be largely—if not entirely—negative emotions, but it is impossible to say for certain without doing a more comprehensive survey of their works. In Sophocles' plays, however, these emotions are unequivocally negative, and the frequency with which they occur or are suspected of occurring in relation to ruling figures constitutes a cautionary message about the instability and volatility of one-man rule.

6. Conclusions and implications

In this study of political envy and jealousy in the plays of Sophocles, we have seen enough to revisit and revise the earlier claims made by Stanford, Goldhill, and Sanders. Stanford

asserts that characters do not exhibit strong *phthonos* in tragedy, since it would brand them in a villainous way, but that sexual jealousy does have a more pronounced role. Envy and jealousy do appear, and when they do, they contribute to a negative characterization (to be discussed in summary below), but they do not so intensely vilify the figures under their influence that they become irredeemable antagonists for whom we feel no sympathy. Oedipus devotes himself to solving the problems that beset Thebes, despite forewarnings of unsettling discoveries, and he demonstrates willingness throughout to adhere to the expectations he sets for others. Creon, while highly unlikeable for most of the play until he changes his mind, nevertheless garners our sympathy in the end as he suffers loss upon loss, painfully aware of his own culpability in bringing about such devastation.⁷⁹ Even Polyneices admits how he has wronged Oedipus in the past and does not try to disguise his motives for coming to him now.⁸⁰

Goldhill claims that envy and jealousy enter into characters' understandings of others' behavior, but that they are "brief tokens in rhetorical battles" that do not drive the overall plot or permeate the action.⁸¹ Similarly, Sanders argues that *phthonos*, with the exception of sexual jealousy, occupies a small role and tends to appear only in brief scenes.⁸² I do not wish to overstate the importance of envy and jealousy in the works of Sophocles. Indeed, there are entire plays in which these emotions, at least insofar as they relate to the political sphere, are either nonexistent or inconsequential. In the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone*, however, these emotions appear both in the behavior and in the imagination of certain characters: they may not be the principal motivating factor of the actions that ultimately determine the outcome of the play, but

⁷⁹ Cairns (2016), 57

⁸⁰ Kelly (2009), 120.

⁸¹ Goldhill (2003), 178.

⁸² Curiously, Sanders goes on to discuss how in addition to Ajax's shame and anger, jealousy over Achilles' armor also plays a key role in fueling his desire for revenge, particularly against Odysseus, who was awarded the armor (2014, 122-25). Since I do not consider Ajax's jealousy over Achilles' armor to have a political dimension, I have chosen not to examine it further in this chapter.

they make significant contributions nevertheless. The assumption that his position attracts envy feeds Oedipus' jealousy and causes him to believe that Creon is conspiring against him out of envy; we cannot consider envy and jealousy to bring about the play's end result, but a considerable amount of time is devoted to these scenes with Oedipus, Teiresias, and Creon, in which these emotions play an essential role. The deaths in the *Antigone* seem more avoidable than some in other tragedies, which places the responsibility on a combination of Creon and Antigone's emotions and personal traits, of which jealousy is one.⁸³ Eteocles and Polyneices are depicted in the *Oedipus at Colonus* as having taken over Creon's position out of envy, and Polyneices' continuing envy and obsession with honor is what drives him to march against Thebes and attack his brother. While this attack occurs after the conclusion of the play and prior to the start of the *Antigone* (so envy cannot be considered to motivate the plot of either), it is clearly presented as a powerful force. In sum, envy and jealousy are not ubiquitous and cannot be considered principally responsible for the outcomes of Sophocles' tragedies, but when they do appear, they either represent great potential for danger or indeed act as destructive forces. Moreover, they have a striking impact on the characterizations of various figures.

More specifically, envy and jealousy can serve as useful tools to help characterize a ruler as a king or as a tyrant. It is important to note, however, that the issue of king versus tyrant is not so much a binary as a spectrum, and in tragedy this fluidity is perhaps in part due to the frequent use of *turannos* to mean "king." Let us revisit the cases of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Creon in the *Antigone* once more in summary.

In many ways, Oedipus does not present as a stereotypical tyrant at the start of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. He came into power by invitation (384), seems to enjoy the respect of his

⁸³ Other deaths seem more inevitable. For example, Polyneices is determined to destroy Eteocles, Hippolytus stands no chance once Aphrodite decides to punish him, etc.

constituents (31-39), and there is no indication that he has ever ruled arbitrarily or considered himself to be above the law. This is what makes his behavior in and following his encounter with Teiresias so surprising. Teiresias has been a trusted adviser to Oedipus in the past, but this does not prevent Oedipus from accusing and threatening the old prophet, and this marks a turning point in the play. Paranoid about suffering ill effects on account of others' envy, he succumbs to jealousy and, in an attempt to protect his position, threatens Creon with death (623). While this rash behavior cannot be considered responsible for the outcome of the play—indeed, Oedipus killed his father and married his mother years before, and however he found out, he would be equally horrified—it is crucial for characterizing Oedipus in a tyrannical manner, as well as for escalating the tension and the development of the plot.⁸⁴ This is not to say that he *is* a tyrant, since there is a spectrum and he resists such a categorization in several ways, but this less-than-admirable behavior constitutes a key part of his persona and of his culpability. According to Aristotle, the main character of a tragedy is not supposed to be entirely virtuous and just (*Poet.* 1453a7-12), and in this way, his jealousy renders Oedipus an appropriately imperfect figure.

Creon exhibits tyrannical traits in a variety of ways in the *Antigone*, some of which have been mentioned above, namely his insistence that the city belongs to him alone and his privileging of his own reputation above the interests of the state. Moreover, he exhibits a preoccupation with money and a pattern of troubled relationships with *philoï*, two behaviors often associated with tyrants.⁸⁵ He believes that those who oppose him are doing so on account of bribes (293-301), and when he accuses Teiresias (and other prophets) of being greedy and

⁸⁴ The jealousy that Oedipus exhibits is not the only reason he could be considered tyrannical. He becomes noticeably (although understandably) more self-absorbed as the play progresses; significantly, he tends to be referred to as a *turannos* in these instances (Budelmann 2000, 218). Oedipus' change in focus is evident in the fact that the word *polis* appears twenty-five in the first nine hundred lines of the play, but nowhere in the last six hundred (Burian 2009, 109).

⁸⁵ Seaford (2003), 104-6.

fond of money (1055), Teiresias counters that the same is true of tyrants (1056)—and here, Teiresias' use of *turannos* seems intended to carry a pejorative connotation. As for relationships with *philoï*, he denies his nephew burial, refuses to consider the counsel of his son, and drives his wife to suicide, as she considers him responsible for both Haemon's death as well as that of another unnamed son (1312-13).⁸⁶ Lastly, Creon's irritation at the mere suggestion of political dissent—a common and expected phenomenon in the society of Sophocles' audience—and his expectation of submission (289-92) point to his tyrannical nature.⁸⁷ All of these traits have some connection to envy and jealousy; even if the relationship is not clear or explicit in Creon's case, it exists in the abstract. Greed and jealousy both suggest a heightened awareness of what one has, especially relative to what others have. Jealousy has detrimental effects on one's ability to trust and have good relationships with close friends and family, particularly if it causes that person to believe that others are envious and thus do not have his or her own interests at heart. And political dissent can easily be perceived as a threat to one's own position or status, which threat is an integral part of jealousy.

Not everyone who exhibits envious or jealous behavior in tragedy can be considered tyrannical, but the characters in Sophocles' plays who show signs of being influenced by political envy or jealousy tend to be rulers (or their close associates) and these emotions constitute an essential part of their characterization.⁸⁸ Being in a position of power increases the likelihood of incurring the envy of others and of experiencing jealousy oneself, and how a ruler handles these emotions is an important indication of where he falls on the spectrum of benign king to oppressive tyrant. Moreover, the pattern of rulers appearing in conjunction with these

⁸⁶ Athenian law forbade burial of traitors within Attica, but it did not outlaw burial elsewhere, as Creon does (Scodel 2010, 108).

⁸⁷ Funke (1966), 35.

⁸⁸ It would be difficult to argue, for example, that Deianeira plays a tyrannical role.

negative emotions corroborates the idea that one-man rule persisted as a relevant topic of discussion in political discourse and as a source of anxiety in Athens well into the fifth century, decades after the introduction of democracy. Sophocles staged political envy and jealousy in such a way as to highlight their potential danger and/or pointlessness; perhaps the discerning audience member recognized the applicability of his warnings not just for the purposes of political life at home in Athens but also for Athenian imperialism at large.

CHAPTER 4: HERODOTUS

As the only work of historiography included in the present study, Herodotus' *Histories* is bound to offer a perspective on envy and jealousy and on their role in Greek society that differs somewhat from what we find in poetry. With history as his subject, Herodotus had less creative liberty to mold characters and series of events to suit his purposes than authors of poetry, although there was certainly still room for his opinions and interpretations; no recording of history can be truly objective, especially given that decisions must be made about what to highlight and what to omit. The aim of the *Histories*, as Herodotus sets out in the proem, is to record great and wondrous deeds, of Greeks and barbarians alike, and in doing so, to examine the origins of the conflict between these two civilizations. There is no suggestion that Herodotus intends to take sides, and indeed, he does not systematically demonize the Persians or other eastern peoples. Moreover, since Athens was neither Herodotus' birthplace nor permanent residence, we cannot assume that his work propagates an exclusively Athenian perspective.¹ Even so, however, the *Histories* reveals serious misgivings about tyranny, which the Athenians in Herodotus' day vehemently opposed and which had come to be associated with the east, despite the Greeks' own history with tyrants. While Herodotus largely refrains from issuing programmatic or moralizing statements in his own voice, his work nevertheless contains messages about the dangers of tyranny, and *phthonos* figures prominently in these.

¹ Herodotus did spend time in Athens (as well as in Thurii, a colony sponsored by Athens), during which he gave public readings of his work (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 3; Munson 2013a, 13).

1. Existing scholarship

In his contribution to Konstan and Rutter's *Envy, Spite and Jealousy* (2003), which is the most recent study on envy in Herodotus' work, Harrison focuses largely on the emotion among mortals. He asserts, "Envy—interpreted broadly to include the pre-emptive envy of tyrants, the desire for tyranny and for imperial expansion, as well as the seemingly more benign rivalry of the Athenians—is arguably for Herodotus the primary motor of historical action."² This falls on the opposite side of the spectrum as Mabel Lang's stance in *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (1984). Lang hones in on divine rather than human *phthonos*, but only to conclude that while it "has very definite rhetorical value," it has "no merit for Herodotus as an expression of historical causation" and that Herodotus gives no indication that he personally believes in the phenomenon.³ In this chapter, I hope to demonstrate that both of these views are too extreme.

While I concede that Harrison's is an attractive theory, in reality, it is problematic. Harrison does not define or set out requisite conditions for envy, but merely groups certain things, like the desire for tyranny and for imperial expansion, under the heading of envy. Moreover, he does not provide sufficient evidence that *phthonos* has scripts that cover these concepts in the ancient Greek understanding. As stated in the introduction, envy is rooted in social comparison and can be differentiated from greed in this way.⁴ There is no clear indication that a ruler who wants to expand his boundaries necessarily has any designs on depriving a specific person of that land. He may even have his sights set on a particular territory (for its resources, its proximity to his own, etc.), but that does not automatically mean that he wishes ill on the ruler currently in possession of it—the latter's potential loss is incidental. While a ruler's desire for expansion can

² Harrison (2003), 157.

³ Lang (1984), 61-62. Gould agrees with the assessment that divine *phthonos* cannot serve an explanation of causation (1989, 80).

⁴ See p. 23-24.

be related to envy, we cannot automatically consider them one and the same, as Harrison does. On the other hand, Lang is perhaps too eager to discount the effects of divine *phthonos*. It is true that divine *phthonos* appears predominantly in abstract discussions or warnings, but there are also several scenarios in which it can be considered the driving force behind the outcome. Moreover, Herodotus makes extensive use of narrative patterning to convey messages and morals, so we should not necessarily read too much into the fact that he rarely calls explicit attention to instances of divine *phthonos* in action.

The aim of the present chapter is to show that Herodotus represents human *phthonos* as an influential and largely negative emotion that often appears in conjunction with kings and tyrants, thus characterizing them in an unflattering and transgressive light, and that he uses divine *phthonos* to shed light on the fragility of the human condition as well as on the dangers of amassing too much power. While *phthonos* (either human or divine) alone cannot account for the majority of events detailed in the *Histories*, it is shown to be responsible for a considerable number of actions and its presence often serves as a warning about the drawbacks of sole rulership. The final section will examine whether Herodotus represents *phthonos* as unequivocally and universally harmful. While *phthonos* is never beneficial for those toward whom it is directed, Herodotus allows for—but does not emphasize—the possibility that it can in some circumstances have a positive effect on others or on society as a whole.⁵

⁵ Even when Periander tells his son that it is better to be envied than pitied (φθονέεσθαι κρέσσον ἐστὶ ἢ οἰκτείρεσθαι, 3.52.5), his point is about relativity rather than about any standalone merits of being the object of envy. Periander has resources worth envying, but such envy is only incidental. It does not increase his standing or the value of his resources and there is no indication that Periander goes out of his way to increase the amount of envy directed toward him.

2. Depiction of tyrants

Some scholars hold the opinion that Herodotus did not intend to create a stereotype of tyranny and that none exists in his work. Vivienne Gray is a proponent of this view, arguing that while there are similarities among the characteristics that despots exhibit, it is the context of the episodes in which the tyrants appear that is ultimately responsible for any such patterns.⁶ Few would dispute Gray's stance that context plays a key role in shaping narratives. Indeed, one of the reasons for the overall complexity of Herodotus' depiction of tyranny is that the episodes in which tyrants appear are crafted to demonstrate various ethical and philosophical lessons, rather than merely political ones.⁷ Gray has perhaps been too rigid, however, in her expectation of a clearly defined template for tyrants, from which Herodotus never deviates. Moreover, Gray's arguments in favor of the influence of context do not sufficiently negate or disprove the possibility that, by virtue of possessing similar positions of absolute power, tyrants did in fact tend to develop certain parallel characteristics. Pelling's view is more moderate. He uses the example of Darius to illustrate that not all rulers fit the mold set forth in the constitutional debate by Otanes, who argues in favor of rule by the people.⁸ Pelling insists that if there is a pattern of tyrannical characteristics and how tyrants behave, its function is "to guide the questions that the reader puts to the complicated stories which follow: it is not to guide the answers."⁹

On the other side of the debate, John Gammie finds examples throughout the *Histories* of rulers who embody the flaws or inappropriate behaviors that Otanes lists, although he acknowledges that this pattern is less pronounced among Greek tyrants than eastern ones and that

⁶ Gray (1996), 364.

⁷ Forsdyke (2006), 236.

⁸ For example, Darius does not exhibit violence toward women, commit outrage, or act out of jealousy (Pelling 2002, 154).

⁹ Ibid.

Herodotus occasionally mentions positive attributes or actions as well.¹⁰ Likewise, Carolyn Dewald argues in favor of the existence of what she terms “the despotic template,” to which eastern despots generally adhere, while Herodotus’ treatment of Greek tyrants is more idiosyncratic: their stories and their challenges vary more widely than those of their eastern counterparts.¹¹ The fact that exceptions and qualifications exist does not detract from the significance of this template—indeed, it would be to the detriment of Herodotus’ reputation as a historian if he presented such one-dimensional monarchs that they could all be reduced to the same exact set of characteristics. Regardless of exceptions and qualifications, enough similarities emerge among the descriptions of tyrants to suggest that a template does exist, and as we will see below, *phthonos* is a distinctive feature of it.

The *Histories* contains three extended narratives about the drawbacks of autocratic rule: the description of Deioces’ rule over the Medes in Book 1, the constitutional debate of the Persians in Book 3, and the speech of Socles of Corinth to the Spartans in Book 5.¹² All three of these involve envy and/or jealousy, whether named explicitly or not, but let us begin with the constitutional debate, since this is the most generalized, theoretical discussion of various types of rule, as well as the one in which *phthonos* is treated most directly.

Otanes speaks first in the debate. His argument against one-man rule contains four instances of *phthonos* (and cognates), whose repetition emphasizes the close association he sees between the two. After protesting that monarchy is a fundamentally flawed institution on the grounds that a monarch is not held accountable to anyone, Otanes identifies *hubris* and *phthonos* as the root of every evil, arguing that these two traits inevitably corrupt even the best of men

¹⁰ Gammie (1986), 195.

¹¹ Dewald (2003), 44, 47.

¹² Idem, 27. Dewald also notes that these passages have been placed deliberately in order to emphasize the tendency of sole rulership to grow more controlling and perverse as time progresses (32).

when placed in a position of sole power.¹³ He states, καὶ γὰρ ἂν τὸν ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν πάντων σπάντα ἐς ταύτην τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐωθότων νοημάτων στήσειε. ἐγγίνεται μὲν γὰρ οἱ ὕβρις ὑπὸ τῶν παρεόντων ἀγαθῶν, φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῇθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ. δύο δ' ἔχων ταῦτα ἔχει πᾶσαν κακότητα (“Putting even the best of all men into this rule would push him beyond his accustomed thoughts. For *hubris* is bred in him from the good things at hand, while *phthonos* grows in man from the start. Having these two [traits], he has every evil,” 3.80.3-4). Given that *phthonos* can refer to both envy and jealousy and that both are applicable in this case, I have chosen not to translate it in this passage, in order to avoid giving precedence to one term over the other. A tyrant can just as easily envy others for possessions or qualities they have as he can feel jealousy over protecting what he believes is his. According to Otanes, power has the ability and tendency to corrupt, and *phthonos*, a basic and natural phenomenon, is one of the forces that bring about this corruption. His use of the verb *emphuein* with *phthonos* as its subject suggests that this is not something we as humans need to learn or acquire: it is a matter of nature rather than nurture. Herodotus could have had Otanes say that men experience *phthonos* or are *phthoneros* from the start, but by using the noun form in the nominative case, Otanes depicts *phthonos* as a force to be reckoned with, as something that has agency of its own. It is not surprising, then, that such a force grows stronger and more pronounced when one enters into a position of sole power, which creates ample space for flaws and vices to run rampant.

After asserting that many types of misconduct exhibited by tyrants have their origins in the aforementioned *hubris* and *phthonos* (τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὕβρι κεκορημένος ἔρδει πολλά καὶ ἀτάσθαλα, τὰ δὲ φθόνῳ, 3.80.4), Otanes enumerates various examples. Tyrants are inconsistent in their behavior and treatment of others because they demand more than just moderate

¹³ In the beginning of his speech, Otanes refers to the sole ruler as a *monarchos*, but later switches to calling him a *turannos*.

admiration, but while rejecting false flattery; still worse, they disregard customs, commit violence against women, and are prone to indiscriminate killing without trial (3.80.5). Moreover, Otanes acknowledges the paradoxical nature of a tyrant's *phthonos*: καίτοι ἄνδρα γε τύραννον ἄφθονον ἔδει εἶναι, ἔχοντά γε πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ· τὸ δὲ ὑπεναντίον τούτου ἐς τοὺς πολίτας πέφυκε. φθονέει γὰρ τοῖσι ἀρίστοισι περιεούσι τε καὶ ζώουσι, χαίρει δὲ τοῖσι κακίστοισι τῶν ἀστῶν, διαβολὰς δὲ ἄριστος ἐνδέκεσθαι (“And yet a tyrant ought to be a man free from *phthonos*, since he has all good things, but he becomes by nature the opposite of this against the citizens. For he feels *phthonos* toward the best men because they excel and [even] exist, and he delights in the worst of the citizens, and is the best at giving ear to slander,” 3.80.4). *Phthonos* can refer to both envy and jealousy in this context as well. It is ambiguous (and perhaps deliberately so) whether Otanes’ stereotypical tyrant feels envy toward the best men (because they happen to have some particular quality, ability, or type of wealth that he does not) or jealousy (because he views them as rivals and is concerned to protect his own position and holdings), or perhaps some combination of the two (e.g. because they have something that he too possesses but he wants to possess it in greater quantity than anyone else or even exclusively).¹⁴ *Phthonos* plays a crucial role in Otanes’ criticism of one-man rule. Nowhere else in the *Histories* does such a dense clustering of *phthonos* terms occur, and this repetition—especially given its placement in the most prominent and theoretical discussion about the nature of monarchy—highlights the intensity and inevitability of the connection between *phthonos* and sole rulership.

The constitutional debate is imbalanced in several ways, but this does not detract from the idea that *hubris* and *phthonos* can incite rulers to multiple types of wrongdoing. Not only are the speeches mismatched in terms of length, with Megabyzus’ argument in favor of oligarchy

¹⁴ For the idea that Cypselus and Periander kill many leading citizens out of a jealous desire to protect their regime, see Hdt. 5.92.ε2, 5.92.η1 (discussed below, p. 122-23).

receiving by far the least attention, but the characters compare the best scenarios of their preferred governments with the most flawed scenarios of those they oppose. A more productive debate would compare the best versions of each type with one another and the worst versions with one another.¹⁵ But as the debate stands, the lack of response to the critiques raised suggests that they are indeed valid concerns, and in the case of absolute rule and its susceptibility to *phthonos*, we can see this in action throughout the *Histories*. Of course, not every king or tyrant exhibits the kind of behavior that Otanes describes as originating from *phthonos*, but Otanes' insistence on the significance of *phthonos* is enough to alert Herodotus' audience to look for it whenever a sole ruler enters the picture.

Croesus is easily the most prominent example in the *Histories* of a ruler who craves the admiration of others, which is one of the behaviors that Otanes attributes to *hubris* and *phthonos*. He claims, ἦν τε γὰρ αὐτὸν μετρίως θαυμάζῃς, ὄχθεται ὅτι οὐ κάρτα θεραπεύεται ("If you marvel at him [only] moderately, he is vexed that he is not honored exceedingly," 3.80.5). Expecting Solon to deem him the most fortunate man he has known, Croesus grows angry (σπερχθεις, 1.32.1) when Solon names Tellus first and Cleobis and Biton second, thus flattering Croesus in no way (οὐδὲν ὑποθαπεύσας, 1.30.3). Herodotus does not explicitly label Croesus as laboring under the influence of either *hubris* or *phthonos*, but his need for admiration and confirmation of his high status and his displeasure upon failing to receive it fit Otanes' description. Also in Book 1, Candaules exhibits a similar need for validation, but in his case regarding his wife's beauty (1.8). It is not enough for him that he himself believes his wife to be the most beautiful woman in the world, but he needs other people to recognize her as such, even at the risk of causing her potential disgrace. Considered in isolation, the behaviors of Croesus and of Candaules do not seem terribly dangerous (although Candaules' action is certainly perverse, as the reactions of

¹⁵ Raaflaub (1989), 44.

both Gyges and Candaules' wife indicate). In context, however, both of these incidents form part of a greater narrative that details the downfall of each man, and thus they point to the dangers that a ruler's *phthonos* poses to the ruler himself. Curiously, it seems that this particular type of *phthonos*, which drives the ruler's need for admiration, can in turn be satisfied by the envy of others. Indeed, admiration and envy are nearly inseparable, for what inspires admiration in one man inspires envy in another, and both serve as validation that one has something worth having.¹⁶ We have seen in the previous chapter what happens when Oedipus becomes paranoid about incurring the envy of others, but here, Croesus and Cambyses have the opposite problem: insufficiently wary of the consequences of incurring envy, they are willing to risk it and perhaps even want it, and this mentality either drives them to or itself constitutes inappropriate and even reckless behavior.¹⁷ The stories of Croesus and Candaules appear before Otanes' criticisms of monarchy in the constitutional debate, but it is plausible that Herodotus' audience would have had these men in mind when encountering the description of the typical behaviors spurred on by *hubris* and *phthonos*.¹⁸

The two other extended narratives about the drawbacks of autocratic rule focus on individual rulers. As discussed above, we should not expect individual rulers to confirm

¹⁶ Thucydides has Pericles express the belief that the same thing induces different reactions in different people, depending on the temperament and/or past experience of the subject: καίτοι ταῦτα ὁ μὲν ἀπράγμων μέμψαιτ' ἄν, ὁ δὲ δρᾶν τι καὶ αὐτὸς βουλόμενος ζηλώσει· εἰ δὲ τις μὴ κέκτηται, φθονήσει ("The unambitious man may censure these things [i.e. our success], but he who himself is also eager to act will feel emulation, and if someone has not attained [such success], he will be envious," 2.64.4). For the idea that the envy or admiration of others serves as an indication of value, see *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 167-68, 222-23; *Hes. Op.* 312-13; *Aesch. Ag.* 939 (discussed on p. 57, 68, and 97-98, respectively).

¹⁷ Herodotus notes that after Solon's departure, Croesus suffers great divine anger (ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη, 1.34.1); see p. 140-41 for a more in-depth discussion of this passage. There are other examples in Herodotus' work of rulers who seek admiration without consequences, but these are typically only mentioned in passing. For example, the Scythian king Ariantas conducts a census by asking that each Scythian present him with a bronze arrowhead. Rather than merely counting them for informative purposes, he has the arrowheads melted down and turned into a massive monumental bowl (4.81.6). His decision to create a tangible symbol of the extent of his power for others to see reveals his desire for admiration (Christ 2013, 218-19).

¹⁸ Many Greeks experienced Herodotus' work via oral performances. Some may have heard the speeches of the constitutional debate before hearing about Croesus and Candaules. The point here is merely that the order in which they read or heard these particular episodes does not necessarily matter and that a connection can be made regardless.

precisely to every part of Otanes' description, and indeed they do not, but they do echo certain parts of it. After successfully revolting from Assyrian rule, the Medes find themselves plagued by robberies and lawlessness (ἄρπαγῆς καὶ ἀνομίης, 1.97.2), so they decide to appoint Deioces as king, having recognized that he is a fair and just judge (ἰθύς τε καὶ δίκαιος, 1.96.2).¹⁹ Herodotus' account gives no indication that Deioces wavers in his duties of dispensing justice, but nevertheless the relationship between Deioces and his subjects undergoes a drastic change upon his assumption of power. He demands a palace worthy of a king and a band of bodyguards, surrounds his palace with multiple walls (while leaving the people to live outside), and forbids anyone except messengers from entering into his presence (1.98-99). Herodotus explains, ταῦτα δὲ περὶ ἑωυτὸν ἐσέμνυνε τῶνδε εἵνεκεν, ὅπως ἂν μὴ ὀρῶντες οἱ ὁμήλικες, ἐόντες σὺντροφοί τε ἐκείνῳ καὶ οἰκίῃς οὐ φλαυροτέρῃς οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀνδραγαθίην λειπόμενοι, λυπεοίαιτο καὶ ἐπιβουλεύοειν, ἀλλ' ἑτεροῖός σφι δοκέοι εἶναι μὴ ὀρῶσι (He affected such a solemn air about himself for the following reasons, namely in order that the men of his same age, who had grown up with him and were neither of trivial lineage nor were they inferior in bravery, may not look upon [him] and then be vexed or contrive [against him], but rather in order that he might seem different to them if they should not look upon him, 1.99.2).

Deioces is clearly nervous about his personal safety and the security of his rule. Herodotus' explanation of his actions strongly suggests that this concern originates from his awareness of the danger and likelihood of incurring envy, particularly in light of the fact that he is not reported to have committed any atrocities for which he might potentially anticipate

¹⁹ Herodotus more commonly refers to Deioces with the term *basileus*, but in introducing the episode, he remarks that while those on the mainland were living under their own laws, the Medes came back around to tyranny (ἐόντων δὲ αὐτονόμων πάντων ἀνὰ τὴν ἡπειρον ὅδε αὖτις ἐξ τυραννίδα περιῆλθον, 1.96.1). He also comments that Deioces acted as he did because he longed to hold a tyranny (ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος, 1.96.2). Despite the presence of the term *basileus*, by using *turannis* twice in close succession in setting the stage for the episode, Herodotus indicates that contemporary Greeks likely would have considered this regime a tyranny.

retribution. As we have seen in previous chapters, there are two common beliefs regarding the targets of envy and these appear in Herodotus' work as well: one is that people who are powerful or wealthy are wont to incur envy, and the other is that people tend to feel envy toward those who are their equal in some way.²⁰ Obviously, Deioces cannot entirely avoid envy that arose on account of his position. Indeed, Periander has so internalized the inevitability of a ruler being the object of envy that he simplifies the difference between a ruler's lot and that of a commoner without house or home (i.e. his son's current predicament) to a matter of envy versus pity (3.52.5).²¹ Deioces can, however, and does attempt to minimize envy felt by those who (used to) have something in common with him, and he does so by creating distance and isolating himself, thus reducing the temptation for social comparison and disrupting the potential for envious feelings among his former peers. Deioces understands that the security of his regime as a king depends on his ability to construct a sense of inequality where previously there was equality.²²

What Deioces' example and Otanes' argument have in common is that *phthonos* plays a significant role in the transformation that takes place when one enters into a position of sole power. But whereas Otanes cautions that the *hubris* and *phthonos* that come along with being a tyrant cannot help but change even the best of men (3.80.3), we see something different in Deioces' case: it is his anticipation of the *phthonos* of others, rather than his own *phthonos*, that causes him to change his ways. Even so, however, it is not difficult to read in his story a warning about the potential dangers of entrusting the state to a single man. Deioces does not fit Otanes' description of the stereotypical tyrant regarding *phthonos*, but by sequestering himself away

²⁰ For the first belief, see Soph. *Aj.* 157 (p. 81-82). For the second, see Hes. *Op.* 25-26 (p. 63-66); Hdt. 7.237.2-3 (p. 134-35).

²¹ Periander does not view envy as something to fear, but rather as a byproduct of his position that simultaneously serves as an indicator of something worth having. Accordingly, he attempts to convince his son to come home by telling him that it is far better to be envied than pitied (φθονέεσθαι κρέσσον ἐστὶ ἢ οἰκτίρεσθαι, 3.52.5).

²² Saxonhouse (1996), 46.

from the eyes of others, he embodies the lack of accountability with which Otanes begins his critique of monarchy. Moreover, if even he, perhaps the most perfect tyrant a man can be, experiences an increasing preoccupation with security and has the ability to distance himself from and spy on his subjects, then his example serves as a harbinger of other, less benevolent tyrants' descent into paranoia, narcissism, and arbitrary rule.²³

The third extended passage concerning the negative aspects of tyrannical rule comes in Book 5, when Socles of Corinth speaks out in opposition to the Spartans' desire to reinstate Hippias as tyrant in Athens. As is the case with the constitutional debate, the anti-tyrannical sentiments expressed cannot be attributed to Herodotus himself, but are understood as belonging to the speaking character himself. Herodotus reports that the Spartans learned that the Alcmeonids had bribed the oracle to urge the Spartans to drive out the Peisistratids (5.90.1). Moreover, after seeing how the Athenians were flourishing (5.91.1), they wanted to reestablish tyranny in Athens, but most of Sparta's allies did not support such an endeavor (5.92.1). Socles claims that if the Spartans themselves had ever lived under a tyrant's rule, they would not consider subjecting another city—even a city whose growing power was cause for concern—to such a rule, and to illustrate his point, he recounts the Corinthians' experience with Cypselus and his son Periander.

In Socles' opening remarks, he states unequivocally, τοῦ οὔτε ἀδικώτερόν ἐστι οὐδὲν κατ' ἀνθρώπους οὔτε μαιφονώτερον ("nothing among men is more unjust or bloodthirsty than tyranny," 5.92.α1). Indeed, Cypselus ordered the execution of many citizens (5.92.ε2), thus demonstrating this characteristic bloodthirstiness. The comparative adjective *miaiphonōteros* appears again in Socles' description of Periander, whom he reveals was far more bloodthirsty

²³ For the idea that Deioces is as perfect as a tyrant can be, see McGlew (1993), 82. Benardete takes a different view: while admitting that he administers justice in a proper manner, Benardete nevertheless calls Deioces the "unjust source of all justice" on account of his lack of transparency (1969, 25-26).

than Cypselus (5.92.ζ1). When Periander sends a messenger to ask Thrasybulus of Miletus for advice about how to best secure his rule, Thrasybulus simply goes into a field and cuts down the tallest stalks of grain. The messenger returns, confused, but Periander recognizes the symbolism in what Thrasybulus has done and acts on this advice: Περίανδρος δὲ συνείς τὸ ποιηθὲν καὶ νόῳ σχὼν ὥς οἱ ὑπετίθετο Θρασύβουλος τοὺς ὑπερόχους τῶν ἀστῶν φονεύειν, ἐνθαῦτα δὴ πᾶσαν κακότητα ἐξέφαινε ἐς τοὺς πολίτας. ὅσα γὰρ Κύψελος ἀπέλιπε κτείνων τε καὶ διώκων, Περίανδρός σφεα ἀπετέλεσε (“Understanding what had been done and having it in mind that Thrasybulus was suggesting that he kill the prominent men of the city, Periander then exhibited every evil to the citizens. For as much as Cypselus left unfinished in killing and exiling, Periander completed,” 5.92.η1). While not named explicitly, *phthonos* seems to have been the driving force for the executions ordered by both Cypselus and Periander (as well as for the banishments during Cypselus’ rule, 5.92.ε2), and this is precisely what Otanes argues in the constitutional debate. Otanes lists the tendency to kill men without trial as one of the typical atrocities that tyrants commit, right after stating that all evil lies in the two traits of *hubris* and *phthonos*; he also points out that tyrants feel *phthonos* toward the best citizens, even though tyrants ought to be *aphthonos* (3.80.4).²⁴ While it is unclear in Otanes’ theoretical discussion whether the *phthonos* directed at the best citizens is envy or jealousy (or even a mixture of the two), Cypselus and Periander seem to have been operating more out of jealousy. They viewed the Corinthian elites as rivals, and in an aggressive attempt to secure their power, they decided to eliminate them, through either exile or death.²⁵

²⁴ See p. 117.

²⁵ Thrasybulus’ “advice” makes clear that Periander targeted the Corinthian elites, rather than the citizenry at large, but for the idea that Cypselus was also primarily concerned with rival elites (particularly the Bacchiads who held power before he became tyrant), see Forsdyke (2005), 71-73.

We find numerous other examples of kings and tyrants whose concern over the security of their position drives them to extreme and jealous behavior. It is important to note, however, that concern about security does not itself necessarily constitute jealousy. Defensive actions such as acquiring bodyguards or building better fortifications are generally benign (and even prudent), but offensive actions, namely executions or attempted murder, are much more telling. For example, Deioces demands bodyguards, a palace, and fortification walls (1.98.2-6); his most actively intrusive order is that he sends spies throughout the region to report inappropriate behavior so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice (1.100.2). As discussed above, Deioces' choices seem to be motivated in large part by his fear of incurring the envy of others, but there is no indication that jealousy of his own is a factor: his measures are purely defensive or reactionary, rather than offensive or aggressive.

On the contrary, according to Socles' speech, Cypselus and Periander (and possibly Thrasylbulus as well, if he himself employs the methods he indicates to Periander) cross the line into acting out of jealousy by killing their rivals. Other examples include Astyages, king of Media, who orders his grandson, the infant Cyrus, to be killed after he has a dream portending his eventual replacement by the child (1.107-8); Cambyses, who sends a man to kill his brother Smerdis after he has a dream that Smerdis was sitting on the throne (3.30); and Darius, who kills one of his former co-conspirators along with his male relatives because he suspects they were plotting against him (3.119).²⁶ Cambyses' case is particularly noteworthy, since Herodotus explains as part of the background to the dream the fact that Cambyses already sent Smerdis back to Persia out of envy (τὸν ἀπέπεμψε ἐς Πέρσας φθόνῳ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, 3.30.1). The reason for his envy was that Smerdis managed to string a bow from the Ethiopian king, a feat at which

²⁶ Jealous behavior concerning one's rule is a common and long-standing paradigm that occurs in works as early as Hesiod's *Theogony*, where Cronus and Zeus employ violence against their family members to secure their position (see p. 62-63).

Cambyzes and the other Persians had failed (3.30.1). This glimpse into Cambyzes' state of mind at the time when the dream occurred helps to illustrate how envy and jealousy can easily shade into one another: already beset by envy at his brother's success, the dream provokes an acute sense of jealousy and thus the need to protect his throne from his brother's grasp. Cambyzes' *phthonos* first drives him to push his brother away and later, aggravated by the dream, it drives him to order that he be killed. This is clearly not an innocent act undertaken by a prudent-minded monarch, as Herodotus makes known from the outset by labeling it as a *kakon*: *πρῶτα μὲν τῶν κακῶν ἐξεργάσατο τὸν ἀδελφεὸν Σμέρδιν* (first among his evils he destroyed his brother Smerdis, 3.30.1).

Phthonos appears explicitly in Otanes' speech during the constitutional debate, but as I hope to have shown, it also plays a role in the other two extended narratives about the drawbacks of autocratic rule: Deioces' concern about the envy of others prompts him to isolate himself and become an inaccessible (and thus unaccountable) ruler, and Cypselus and Periander's jealous need to protect themselves urges them to murder their rivals without trial. What, then, does this pattern reveal: contemporary Greek attitudes, Herodotus' own, or both? It is tempting to assume that Otanes is a mouthpiece for Herodotus' opinion about types of government, and this certainly seems plausible, but we should be careful about the process by which we arrive to such a conclusion. According to the *Suda*, Herodotus left his native Halicarnassus because of its tyrant, Lygdamis, and later returned to drive him out (s.v. Ἡρόδοτος). Unfortunately, the *Suda* is less reliable than we would like, and it is possible that the story of his involvement in removing Lygdamis from power was created out of the anti-tyrannical statements (in the voices of various characters) found in the *Histories*.²⁷ Helmut Apffel believes that Otanes' speech is less likely to be authentic than the other speeches, arguing that pro-democratic sentiments were not yet so

²⁷ Munson (2013a), 9-10.

advanced in Persia.²⁸ It is not, however, an established fact that such sentiments (or at least ambivalence about monarchy) did not exist in fifth-century Persia. Rosaria Munson urges us to read the fact that Herodotus twice insists upon the historicity of the debate as an indication that he was utilizing Persian sources, and she points out various instances elsewhere that corroborate this idea.²⁹ Helmut Berve suggests that Herodotus' defense of freedom and dislike for tyranny elsewhere in the work (e.g. his emphasis on the increased strength of the Athenians after the removal of the Peisistratids, 5.78) means that Otanes' view is in accordance with the author's own.³⁰ This argument holds up better under scrutiny. This commentary about the change in Athenian morale and ability indeed appears in Herodotus' own voice and it is his most explicit endorsement of the benefits of political freedom, yet significantly, this is simply an endorsement of political freedom, of which democracy is not the sole provider or guarantor.³¹ Moreover, Herodotus is not uncritical of democracy, and in this way his view is more nuanced than Otanes', even if the two are largely in accordance.³²

Other scholars have argued that it is misguided to attempt to extract Herodotus' political ideas from passages such as the constitutional debate or Socles of Corinth's speech, given that they are pieces of rhetoric inserted into the mouths of other figures, rather than part of the narrative itself.³³ While it is only prudent to remember that characters' viewpoints are not necessarily the same as the author's own, this need not mean that their speech is wholly unaffected by the author's opinions; a speech can bear traces of various influences. Taking

²⁸ Apffel (1979), 48-58.

²⁹ Munson (2013c), 326-30.

³⁰ Berve (1967), 197.

³¹ Forsdyke (2006), 233. Forsdyke argues elsewhere that Herodotus deliberately incorporates and favors democratic ideology (2002, 542-45). For the idea that freedom is not the exclusive prerogative of democracy, see Saxonhouse (1996), 38-39.

³² After recording that Aristagoras was successful in rousing the Athenians to come to the aid of the Ionians, whereas he failed to persuade the Spartans, Herodotus notes that it is apparently easier to deceive thirty thousand men than a single man (5.97.2).

³³ Hornblower (2013), 249.

matters a step further, however, Kenneth Waters finds Herodotus' work to possess a high degree of objectivity throughout and thus he considers it unwise to focus too much energy on trying to determine authorial intent.³⁴ Waters has perhaps gone too far in trying to establish Herodotus' objectivity in the first place. Relying heavily upon arguments from silence, he takes the lack of overt condemnation of tyranny and tyrants as a sign of impartiality.³⁵ For example, he notes that Herodotus refrains from making any unflattering comments after relating that Periander killed his wife.³⁶ While this could in theory support Waters' claim about Herodotus' objectivity, it seems more likely that Herodotus figured that the depraved act of killing one's wife could speak for itself and needed no further elaboration to evoke the audience's disdain.

The fact that the debate over his political views continues to this day is a testament to Herodotus' fair-mindedness as a historian, but the lack of unequivocal condemnation of tyrants and their behavior in Herodotus' own voice does not necessarily mean that he was truly neutral and had no misgivings about tyranny. Taking a more moderate approach, David Asheri asserts (correctly, I believe) that Herodotus would surely choose freedom over despotism in the Greek cities, but that it is more difficult to assess his preference for democracy versus oligarchy.³⁷ While Herodotus at times mentions commendable traits and actions of individual tyrants, there is nothing to suggest that he sees tyranny as a viable and worthwhile option for his audience to consider.³⁸ Moreover, his overall tendency to pass over or minimize tyrants' positive

³⁴ Waters (1971), 41.

³⁵ See Gammie (1986), 189.

³⁶ Waters (1971), 19.

³⁷ Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella (2007), 45-46. Asheri points to 5.97.2 (see p. 126 note 32) as evidence of this ambiguity. Saxonhouse argues that Herodotus' regard for equality is at the core of his opposition to tyranny and of his admiration of the institutions of Greek cities, but that he has praise for more than just one type of regime (1996, 43, 37).

³⁸ For example, Herodotus recognizes that Cambyses exempted his subjects from military service and taxes for three years (3.67.3) and provides details that reveal Darius' competence and skill as an imperial administrator (3.88.3ff.). Deioces is perhaps the most benevolent tyrant in the *Histories*, but even his example hints at the troubles inherent in the position of a sole ruler (see p. 121-22).

achievements while highlighting their transgressions conveys a deliberate message to those discerning enough to read between the lines.³⁹ Herodotus does not come out and say directly in his own voice that tyranny is dangerous and that it ought to be avoided, but rather he shows his readers through his careful selection of material. From the examples he provides, a despotic template emerges, which in large part draws upon Otanes' list of criticisms: *hubris*, *phthonos*, inconsistent behavior, disregard for custom, violence toward women, and indiscriminate killing. This template is more or less in accordance with ideas present in the works of other fifth-century authors, and thus can be considered both a reflection of contemporary views and a window into Herodotus' own.

3. *Phthonos*: a cautionary tale about sole rulership

Despite the role of *phthonos* in characterizing various kings and tyrants and explaining some of their actions, and despite the fact that Herodotus' narrative has a tendency to center on significant individuals and the influence they have on affairs, *phthonos* alone cannot account for the decisions that propel the main action of the *Histories* forward, as Harrison claims.⁴⁰ While incidents involving *phthonos* generally turn out either to be of relatively limited consequence as far as the larger narrative is concerned or to not involve real *phthonos* at all, taken in aggregate, these examples nevertheless constitute a serious warning about this destructive emotion and the dangers of one-man rule. Deioces' concern about minimizing his constituents' grounds for *phthonos* does not seem to have caused him to become paranoid or violent, and given that he allegedly ruled for fifty-three years, it does not seem to have affected him or his people in an adverse way (1.102.1). Even so, this episode reveals how the fear of incurring envy can make

³⁹ Lateiner (1989), 186.

⁴⁰ Harrison (2003), 157.

even the most reasonable of kings suspicious and aloof, which does not bode well for less scrupulous or disciplined heads of state and their constituents. Cypselus and Periander also managed to stay in power for a relatively long time—Cypselus for thirty years (5.92.ζ1) and Periander until he was too old to administer affairs (3.53.1)—which serves as somewhat of an indicator that the Corinthians did not find their rule wholly intolerable. Nevertheless, their jealous need to secure their rule resulted in the extralegal murder of numerous citizens, and they are held up as a prime example of why tyranny is bad—so bad that it should not even be inflicted upon one’s enemies.⁴¹ In Cambyses’ case, it is again unclear that the *phthonos* that drove him to have his brother killed resulted in any far-reaching effects. True, Smerdis’ death made it possible for the Magi to assume the throne, which led to Darius’ assumption of power, but neither the power of the Persian Empire nor the nature of its government underwent a radical change in the period between Cambyses and Darius’ reigns. Even so, *phthonos* is clearly depicted as a destabilizing force: a radical change could have taken place, and the fact that it did not seems almost happenstance.

Let us consider several other examples. The kingship at Sparta gives rise to several incidents of *phthonos*. In one, King Anaxandrides fathers several boys by different mothers, and the second eldest, Dorieus, assumes that he will one day inherit the throne, on the grounds that the eldest, Cleomenes, is not of sound mind (5.39-42). The Spartans, however, adhere to their ancestral law in making the eldest son king, at which point Dorieus grows angry and decides to leave Sparta to found a colony (ὁ Δωριεὺς δεινὸν τε ποιεύμενος καὶ οὐκ ἄξιῶν ὑπὸ Κλεομένεος

⁴¹ Alternatively, Socles’ use of an argument that associates tyranny with oppression and weakness to convince the Spartans not to reinstate tyranny in a state whose growth concerns them indicates that Herodotus is relying on Athenian sources for this episode, rather than Spartan or Corinthian sources (Forsdyke 2002, 545).

βασιλεύεσθαι, αἰτήσας λεὼν Σπαρτιήτας ἦγε ἐς ἀποικίην, 5.42.2).⁴² Doreius' reaction to his brother being named king exhibits the requisite conditions for envy: his brother has the kingship, he himself does not, and he clearly believes this situation to be grievously unfair.⁴³ By including this incident, Herodotus provides context for the fact that it is Cleomenes who is king at the time when Aristagoras comes to ask for help in freeing the Ionians. Moreover, Cleomenes does not rule for long and dies without an heir, which explains why Anaxandrides' son Leonidas is king at the time of the battle of Thermopylae. The story of Doreius is thus related to the development of events relating to the Ionian revolt, but is not strictly necessary, as the story of the Ionian revolt could easily be told without it.⁴⁴ Thus Doreius' departure from Sparta, motivated by envy, does not hold much (if any) significance in the whole scheme of things. Nevertheless, Doreius' envy does not serve him or those following him well, and it can still be considered a lesson or warning of sorts: after a failed attempt at establishing a colony in Libya (5.42.3), he and most of his company are killed in battle by the Phoenicians in Sicily (5.46.1). If he had not let his envy get the best of him and instead he had stayed in Sparta, he would have become king when Cleomenes died without an heir.⁴⁵

Later during Cleomenes' rule, Darius demands submission from the city-states in mainland Greece, and many, including Aegina, comply. The Athenians ask the Spartans for help in intervening, but when Cleomenes attempts to seize the guilty parties in Aegina, the Aeginetans

⁴² This is an unusual situation from the start: Doreius' mother was Anaxandrides' first wife, whom he refused to divorce when she failed to bear a son. The Spartans urged him to take a second wife, which ran contrary to Spartan tradition, and after the second wife gave birth to Cleomenes, the first wife subsequently bore Doreius. Doreius thus had reason to believe that he might inherit the kingship, if the law were reinterpreted to mean the eldest son of the first wife.

⁴³ Doreius' aggravation is likely intensified by the concurrence of his negative estimation of Cleomenes' qualifications with the positive one of his own. Either one by itself could lead to the third requisite condition for envy (i.e. his assessment that the situation is wrong). Although he believes that he should be king, the Spartans evidently do not agree. As a group, they decide that Cleomenes is the rightful king, which suggests that they would consider Doreius' reaction to be more akin to envy than to indignation (see p. 24).

⁴⁴ Hornblower (2013), 148.

⁴⁵ Benardete (1969), 166-67.

argue that he has no authority to do so. They claim that if the Spartan government approved of this action, they would have sent both kings instead of just one (6.50.2). The other king, Demaratus, had advised them on this matter (6.50.3), and Herodotus describes that he meanwhile remained in Sparta, slandering Cleomenes out of envy and malice (Τότε δὲ τὸν Κλεομένεα ἔοντα ἐν τῇ Αἰγίνῃ καὶ κοινὰ τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἀγαθὰ προεργαζόμενον ὁ Δημάριτος διέβαλλε, οὐκ Αἰγινητέων οὕτω κηδόμενος ὥς φθόνῳ καὶ ἄγῃ χρεώμενος, 6.61.1).⁴⁶ In reality, the two kings represented opposing sides of an ongoing debate at Sparta between those who advocated involvement beyond their own borders and those who favored an isolationist approach, but Herodotus' assessment of Demaratus' motives as *phthonos* and *agê* gives no indication that the quarrel is anything other than personal in nature.⁴⁷ Demaratus' *phthonos* and *agê* set off a series of events in which Cleomenes retaliates and contrives a deceitful plan to remove Demaratus from the kingship by casting doubt on his paternity, leading to Demaratus' flight to Persia (6.70.2), where he is welcomed by Darius and later becomes a trusted adviser to Xerxes. Cleomenes eventually goes mad and cuts himself to pieces, the cause of which madness is told variously by different groups—Herodotus himself favors the explanation that the madness was punishment (*tisis*) for what he did to Demaratus (6.84.3). Thus in Herodotus' account of events, Demaratus' flight to Persia and Cleomenes' madness and ensuing self-destruction can be traced back to *phthonos* and *agê*. These matters have relatively little bearing on the events of the *Histories* as a whole: it would be difficult to connect Demaratus' advice to Xerxes to any significant Persian victory (and ultimately his campaign was unsuccessful), and Cleomenes' madness, while alarming, is not shown to have impacted anyone other than himself. But even so, the

⁴⁶ While Herodotus generally uses *basileus* terminology to describe the kingship at Sparta, it is noteworthy that Demaratus is here described in a way that likens him to the stereotypical tyrant of Otanes' argument: διαβολὰς δὲ ἄριστος ἐνδέκεσθαι (“[a tyrant] is the best at giving ear to slander,” 3.80.4). Here, acting out of envy, Demaratus is not merely paying attention to slander but rather is producing it himself.

⁴⁷ Scott (2005), 214.

unpredictable chain reaction triggered by Demaratus' envy-fueled slander surely illustrated for Herodotus' audience the tumult that can ensue when rulers succumb to *phthonos*, and of course, there is always the possibility of things turning out even worse.

The following two examples involve *phthonos* as a possible or suspected motive. In Book 5, Darius confronts Histiaeus about the revolt Aristagoras has begun in Histiaeus' absence from Miletus, warning him to see to it that he not have himself to blame (ὄρα μὴ ἐξ ὑστέρης σεωυτὸν ἐν αἰτίῃ σῆῃς, 5.106.2). Histiaeus defends himself by saying, τί δ' ἂν ἐπιδιζήμενος ποιοῖμι ταῦτα, τεῦ δὲ ἐνδεῆς ἐὼν; τῷ πάρα μὲν πάντα ὅσα περ σοί, πάντων δὲ πρὸς σέο βουλευμάτων ἐπακούειν ἄξιεῦμαι ("Seeking what in addition would I do these things, or being in lack of what? I have everything that you have, [and] I am deemed worthy to hear all of your deliberations," 5.106.3). Neither man mentions envy by name, but Histiaeus takes it upon himself to address this first, even before denying his involvement in the revolt. He evidently believes that if he can demonstrate that he feels no envy toward Darius, this will be sufficient to establish his innocence. Obviously, Histiaeus is not being forthcoming with Darius, as he did in fact urge Aristagoras to revolt (5.35.2-4), and his statement that his possessions or means are equal to Darius' serves as a red flag. As we have seen in Otanes' argument, a king's vast resources ought to make him immune to *phthonos*, but instead he experiences it in undue proportions (3.80.4). Considered against the background of the constitutional debate, this passage thus suggests that Histiaeus, a former ruler, may in fact harbor envious feelings toward Darius, even though, as he argues, he ought not to. Moreover, Herodotus reports what was believed to be the real reason why Histiaeus acted as he did: ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Ἰστιαῖος ἐποίηε συμφορὴν ποιούμενος μεγάλην τὴν ἐωυτοῦ κατοχὴν τὴν ἐν Σούσοισι· ἀποστάσιος γὰρ γινομένης πολλὰς εἶχε ἐλπίδας μετήσεσθαι ἐπὶ θάλασσαν (Histiaeus did these things because he considered his detention in Susa a great

misfortune, for he had high hopes that, if a revolt took place, he would be discharged to the sea, 5.35.4). Herodotus is content to attribute the revolt to a personal motive such as wanting to return home, and thus it is not much of a stretch to imagine that envy could be a contributing factor.⁴⁸ Histiaeus may not have his eye on Darius' specific role as king of Persia, but as he seems to miss being involved and in charge among his people, he likely envies Darius' authority and active leadership.⁴⁹

In the grand scheme of affairs, Histiaeus' envious behavior is hardly the only contributing factor to the Ionian revolt.⁵⁰ His co-conspirator, Aristagoras, was not acting solely out of obeisance to Histiaeus, as he had his own motives for participating in the revolt—namely, to secure his own position and create as much trouble as possible for Darius, in the aftermath of the failed siege of Naxos (5.35.1-2, 5.37.1). Moreover, it seems likely that Herodotus includes Histiaeus' personal agenda because this was something upon which his sources could agree, even if no consensus existed regarding other causes, overall goals, or reasons for the failure of the revolt.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the Ionian revolt was one of the reasons why Darius (and so too Xerxes) invaded Greece, and by even raising the suggestion that envy could have spurred Histiaeus to incite a revolt, Herodotus illustrates how an envious ruler's reckless behavior can impact the lives of countless others.

The possibility of a trusted adviser having ulterior motives appears again in Book 7, when Xerxes asks Demaratus how to defeat the Spartans. Demaratus tells him to divide and conquer: if he sends part of his fleet to attack the coast near Sparta, this will decrease the likelihood that the Spartans will assist the rest of the Greeks; Xerxes can then more easily defeat

⁴⁸ Hornblower (2013), 17.

⁴⁹ We can thus consider his envy to be more of the covetous sort, rather than begrudging.

⁵⁰ Forsdyke (2002), 530.

⁵¹ *Idem*, 529.

the others, and when he subsequently attacks the Spartans, they will be weaker at that point.

Achaemenes, Xerxes' brother, casts doubt upon this advice on the grounds that Demaratus may harbor envious feelings toward Xerxes. He cautions him, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὀρέω σε ἀνδρὸς ἐνδεκόμενον λόγους ὃς φθονέει τοι εὖ πρήσσοντι ἢ καὶ προδοῖ πρήγματα τὰ σά. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τρόποισι τοιούτοισι χρώμενοι Ἕλληνες χαίρουσι· τοῦ τε εὐτυχέειν φθονέουσι καὶ τὸ κρέσσον στυγέουσι ("King, I see that you are accepting the words of a man who envies you in your success or even betrays your affairs. For the Greeks delight in behaving in these ways: they are envious of good fortune and they hate the stronger," 7.236.1). Achaemenes does not provide any evidence for the claim that Demaratus envies Xerxes other than the general belief that the Greeks are envious by nature, but he is convinced that if Xerxes follows Demaratus' advice, he risks significant damage to the Persian fleet, as well as to their overall effort. Xerxes yields to Achaemenes' opinion regarding what he perceives to be the better course of action—namely, to keep the fleet united so as to be more secure—but disagrees vehemently with his estimation of Demaratus' motives. He counters:

οὐ γὰρ δὴ κεῖνό γε ἐνδέξομαι ὅκως οὐκ εὐνοέει τοῖσι ἐμοῖσι πρήγμασι, τοῖσί τε λεγόμενοισι πρότερον ἐκ τούτου σταθμώμενος καὶ τῷ ἐόντι, ὅτι πολίτης μὲν πολίτη εὖ πρήσσοντι φθονέει καὶ ἐστὶ δυσμενὴς τῇ σιγῇ, οὐδ' ἂν συμβουλευομένου τοῦ ἀστοῦ πολίτης ἀνὴρ τὰ ἄριστα οἱ δοκέοντα εἶναι ὑποθέοιτο, εἰ μὴ πρόσω ἀρετῆς ἀνήκοι· σπάνιοι δέ εἰσι οἱ τοιοῦτοι· ξείνος δὲ ξείνῳ εὖ πρήσσοντί ἐστι εὐμενέστατον πάντων, συμβουλευομένου τε ἂν συμβουλεύσειε τὰ ἄριστα. οὕτω ὦν κακολογίης πέρι τῆς ἐς Δημάρην, ἐόντος ἐμοὶ ξείνου, ἔχεσθαί τινα τοῦ λοιποῦ κελεύω.

"I will not accept that [idea] that he is not well intentioned toward my affairs, when I measure by the things said before by him and by the truth, that a citizen envies a citizen who fares well and is hostile in silence, and a man would not even suggest what seems best to him when a citizen of the town is asking advice, unless he has reached a high point of virtue; but these kinds of men are rare. But a guest-friend is most kindly of all to a guest-friend who fares well, and would give the best advice when he asks for it. Thus I order everyone to refrain hereafter from [engaging in] slander of Demaratus, since he is my guest-friend." (7.237.2-3)

Xerxes' speech presents a defense of Demaratus and his trustworthiness on the basis of his past truthfulness, as well as a theoretical discussion of which relationships do and do not tend to give rise to envy. Curiously, Xerxes does not contradict his brother's claim that the Greeks are envious by nature, but rather, he focuses on the idea that Demaratus is not likely to envy him because they are guest-friends as opposed to fellow citizens. Guest-friends are supposed to have one another's best interests in mind, and Xerxes (rightfully) believes that acting out of envy toward a guest-friend would be a violation of this special bond. Moreover, the dissimilarity inherent in a guest-friendship (namely that they come from different states) means that the two parties are not in direct competition and thus envy is unlikely. The idea that like envies like is in accord with sentiments found elsewhere in the *Histories* and in other works.⁵² Moreover, the repeated nouns and verb choice in πολίτης μὲν πολίτη εὖ πρήσσοντι φθονέει creates a strong resemblance to Hesiod's πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει (*Op.* 26), although without any of its positive connotations of productivity.⁵³ In a similar vein, Plato has Socrates quote this passage from the *Works and Days* when discussing the idea that the strength of a friendship depends on a certain degree of dissimilarity (*Lys.* 215d).⁵⁴ This resemblance in turn suggests that we should take this as a general truth with which Herodotus' audience would have been familiar, rather than merely a chance statement inserted into the speech of a Persian character.

Xerxes does not believe that Demaratus is acting out of envy, but regardless, he claims to make his decision solely based on the merit of the strategies proposed (7.237.1), and for this reason, *phthonos* cannot be considered to have had any tangible effect on the development of

⁵² See p. 120-21: Deioces aims to prevent envy by making himself seem different from his former peers (1.99.2).

⁵³ Vannicelli (2017), 590.

⁵⁴ For more about this passage, see p. 154-55.

events.⁵⁵ Achaemenes' concern does, however, shed light on the difficulty of a king's position, for he has to weigh different sources' credibility and evaluate their intentions and interests. This task must not be taken lightly, and the overall effect of Achaemenes voicing doubt is that Herodotus' readers are reminded of the precariousness of a ruler's affairs (which in turn affect entire populations), and how even the possibility of envy can tip the scale and lead to ruin if the ruler makes an error in judgment. The overall pattern that emerges from these examples, whether real or suspected *phthonos* is involved, is that while the actual repercussions tend to be relatively limited in scope, they nevertheless constitute a warning about potential repercussions. One possible exception to the pattern of localized consequences is the unnamed envy that causes Histiaeus to urge a revolt at Miletus, which in turn prompts Darius to retaliate and launch an invasion. It is clear to modern historians, however, that the Ionian revolt had various underlying causes that Herodotus does not identify directly (e.g. influence of democratic reforms at Athens, economic discontent, etc.).⁵⁶ Indeed, the fact that he reports about other city-states joining or assisting the revolt suggests that Herodotus himself was aware of causal forces at work beyond Histiaeus' personal motives. This, then, reduces the impact that Histiaeus' envy can be considered to have had on the development of events. Nevertheless, taken in sum, these examples offer a cautionary tale about both *phthonos* and one-man rule: matters are always on the verge of ending badly whenever *phthonos* enters into the equation, especially when heads of state or other powerful individuals are involved.

⁵⁵ It is unclear from what Herodotus says whether the audience is meant to suspect Demaratus of having acted out of envy, as Achaemenes suggests. Demaratus is shown elsewhere to behave in such a manner (cf. 6.61.1, discussed above, p. 130-32), and Herodotus himself is unsure whether he subsequently sent word of Xerxes' imminent invasion to the Spartans as an act of goodwill or gloating (πάρεστι δὲ εἰκάζειν εἴτε εὐνοίῃ ταῦτα ἐποίησε εἴτε καὶ καταχαίρων, 7.239.2). If the former, it is a distinct possibility that his advice to Xerxes about splitting the fleet was disingenuous (Benardete 1969, 208).

⁵⁶ Hornblower (2013), 15-17.

One final example deserves mention, an unusual scenario in which Herodotus alludes to what might be a potential benefit of *phthonos*. Significantly, if we are indeed meant to understand envy as playing a role in this passage, it neither originates from nor is directed toward a sole ruler; it belongs to the people. After recounting the Athenians' victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians, Herodotus notes that their change in government was responsible for their increasing strength:

δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἓν μοῦνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὥς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύομενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῷ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο. δηλοῖ ὧν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐθελοκάκεον ὥς δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἐωυτῷ προεθυμέετο <τι> κατεργάζεσθαι.

It is clear that an equal voice is an excellent thing not in a single regard alone but in all ways, because the Athenians were better than none of their neighbors in matters of war while they were living under tyranny, but after they were freed from tyrants, they became the first by far. Therefore this makes clear that while being oppressed, they were deliberately slack, because they were working for a master, but each of them, after they were liberated, was eager to earn something for himself. (5.78)

Harrison takes this as evidence for the productive side of envy, presumably along the same lines as Hesiod's good *Eris*: namely, in democracy, envy and its requisite social comparison spurs individuals to work harder in order to improve their standing relative to their peer group.⁵⁷ The Athenians' growing power and skill in warfare does have a tremendous impact on the events of the fifth century, so if we can attribute the change in the Athenians' behavior under democracy to *phthonos*, this is then perhaps the strongest example we have in order to argue in favor of the importance of *phthonos* as a driving force in the *Histories*. The fact that this would be a rare instance of positive *phthonos* among men, however, as well as the absence of verbal cues (such as we have seen in previous chapters, e.g. *zēlos*, *eris*, *timê*, etc.) to help confirm the presence of *phthonos*, suggests that Herodotus did not intend for this to be a programmatic statement about

⁵⁷ Harrison (2003), 154.

the overarching impact of *phthonos* on human affairs. It is a significant passage for establishing the benefit of political freedom, but the involvement of envy is less definite.⁵⁸

In sum, *phthonos* cannot be considered the primary motivating factor of human action in the *Histories*, but it does appear repeatedly, and the collection of instances in which it is responsible for men's behavior sends a persuasive message about its destructive capacity and about the precariousness of one-man rule. While it goes beyond the scope of the current study to make a case for what *is* the primary motivating factor, Henry Immerwahr and John Gould have gone to great lengths to identify and classify the various modes of causation at work in Herodotus' text. Immerwahr divides Herodotean causation into three categories: immediate causes (vengeance is a key example), "permanently operative" causes (desire for expansionism is the primary cause of this type, but vengeance can also fall under this heading when it stems from a long-standing resentment), and metaphysical causes (such as the concept of necessity).⁵⁹ Gould simplifies the matter even further, suggesting the "reciprocity model" as the best possible means of explaining any given part of the narrative—human action, divine action, and even physical phenomena such as the flow of rivers.⁶⁰ Within this model, Gould identifies gratitude and revenge as the primary motives as far as human behavior is concerned. Immerwahr and Gould's analyses of Herodotean causation are flexible enough to have substantial merit, and indeed, it is not difficult to find examples that support their validity. For instance, fueled by his desire to return home, Histiaeus' envy and instigation of rebellion can be considered a response (of a vengeful sort) to Darius' decision to remove him from Myrcinus (5.23-24), which Darius had originally granted to him as a token of gratitude for his prior service (5.11). The ensuing Ionian revolt in turn triggers Darius' invasion of Greece, which results from a combination of

⁵⁸ Forsdyke (2006), 233. This passage will be discussed further below, p. 151-52.

⁵⁹ Immerwahr (2013), 178.

⁶⁰ Gould (1989), 85.

immediate causes (including vengeance; 5.105, 7.1) and the ever-present motive of desire for expansionism (3.134). This example demonstrates that while *phthonos* can at times fit into the larger schema of causation, its narrow parameters render it unsuitable for the role of a primary motivating factor in comparison with broader, more inclusive causal principles such as vengeance or gratitude.

4. Divine *phthonos*

Herodotus presents divine *phthonos* as having enormous potential to affect mortals, both individually and collectively. Homer and Hesiod's gods exhibit envious and jealous behavior (both among themselves and in relation to mortals), but the nature of the *phthonos* they direct toward mortals is significantly different from what we find in Herodotus' *Histories*, where it is more impersonal (Herodotus' characters at times use the neuter substantive adjective *to theion*) and often comes to signify something akin to moral censure.⁶¹ The idea of the gods taking punitive action against humans on account of bad behavior certainly existed in the works of earlier authors, but they did not use *phthonos* to express it; they used words like *megairein*, *agaasthai*, *kotein*, and *nemesis*.⁶² According to Walcot, the emergence and prevalence of divine *phthonos* in the works of fifth-century authors such as Herodotus, Aeschylus, and Pindar stems from the Greeks' increased familiarity with larger-than-life eastern autocrats. He argues that before the fifth century, the gods were not widely depicted as experiencing *phthonos* toward mortals because the Greeks had not encountered mortals whose power could conceivably

⁶¹ Sanders (2014), 42.

⁶² Idem, 53; Walcot (1978), 26. In other scenarios (i.e. ones that do not involve divine action against mortals), these words are sometimes found in conjunction with *phthonos*, which helps explain how the semantic range of *phthonos* was able to expand in later centuries.

compete with that of the gods.⁶³ Moreover, Konstan notes that there was a general shift away from the use of *nemesis* (and related terms) and toward that of *phthonos* (and related terms) around the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the fifth.⁶⁴ This transition likely played a role in enabling *phthonos* (especially in the divine realm) to take on the meaning of indignation and thus moral censure as well. Regardless of this change, however, and the fact that divine *phthonos* in the *Histories* is frequently portrayed in an impersonal manner, Herodotus' use of *phthonos* terminology in reference to the divine realm is still significant. Namely, despite variations in the nature of divine and human *phthonos*, Herodotus' use of related terms to describe both suggests that even when the Greeks believed that divine *phthonos* was acting in a retributive or moralizing role, they conceived of the gods as having an emotional response to human affairs.

The concept of divine *phthonos* appears several times throughout the *Histories*, although nearly always in characters' speeches rather than in Herodotus' own voice. Solon is the first to talk about divine *phthonos*, and he does so in response to Croesus' annoyance at being named neither the most nor the second most fortunate man Solon has met. Solon explains, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὸν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπείων πρηγμάτων πέρι ("You question me about human affairs, and I know that the divine is entirely jealous and prone to disturbing [them], 1.32.1). He then describes the vicissitudes that men often undergo, as a means of illustrating why it is necessary to wait until the end of a person's life in order to deem it happy or not (1.32.2-9). To his own detriment, Croesus is dismissive of Solon's wisdom, for Herodotus reports, μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβε ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὥς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἐνόμισε ἐωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ὀλβιώτατον (After Solon left, a god's great anger

⁶³ Walcot (1978), 31.

⁶⁴ Konstan (2006), 119.

seized him, to venture a guess, because he considered himself to be the most blessed of all men, 1.34.1). Herodotus describes how Croesus' son dies shortly thereafter, despite his best attempt to avert the foretold disaster, and from there his fortunes continue on a downward trajectory. This is the only appearance of the noun form *nemesis* in the *Histories*, but elsewhere, from Homer onward, it often denotes the displeasure of the gods (as well as hostile reactions among men).⁶⁵ In some cases, as here (given its juxtaposition with Solon's warnings about gods' jealousy), its context also suggests *phthonos*.⁶⁶ Konstan even goes so far as to argue that by the time Aristotle was writing, *nemesis* and *phthonos* were essentially the same thing, despite the distinction the philosopher draws between the two.⁶⁷ While the warnings about the jealous nature of the divine and the mutability of human affairs comes from Solon, rather than from Herodotus himself, Herodotus' comment about the *nemesis* that followed strongly suggests that Solon's views mirror his own and that Herodotus too considers the gods to be highly jealous beings.⁶⁸

The clearest statement in Herodotus' own voice about divine *phthonos* appears in Book 4. When Pheretima, the exiled queen of Cyrene, exacts revenge on the people of Barca for murdering her son, she orders that the men be killed and the women's breasts be cut off (4.202.1). She subsequently dies a wretched and disgusting death, of which Herodotus gives the following account: ζῶσα γὰρ εὐλέων ἐξέξεσε, ὥς ἄρα ἀνθρώποισι αἱ λίην ἰσχυραὶ τιμωρίαι πρὸς θεῶν ἐπίφθονοι γίνονται (For she boiled over with worms while still alive, since excessively

⁶⁵ Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella (2007), 105; Sanders (2014), 52.

⁶⁶ As an example of the association between *nemesis* and *phthonos*, Penelope's suitors grow angry (νεμέσησαν, *Od.* 21.285) at the suggestion that the beggar Odysseus be allowed to try to string the bow, anxious that he may succeed where they failed. *Phthonos* is not explicitly named, but the scenario suggests it: the suitors are possessive of Penelope and seem to believe that only they have the right to compete for her hand.

⁶⁷ Konstan (2006), 114. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that envy (*phthonos*) and indignation (*to nemesan*) have in common that they are set in opposition to pity (*to eleein*), but the difference between the two has to do with the issue of merit. The latter is pain at another's undeserved success, while in the case of the former, merit appears to be irrelevant, for Aristotle defines envy as pain at the success of someone who is similar to ourselves (1386b16-20). Aristotle's definitions will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (see p. 165-72).

⁶⁸ Shapiro (1996), 352.

severe vengeance among mortals is regarded with jealousy by the gods, 4.205). Susan Shapiro notes that excessive anger and revenge were regarded as the exclusive right of the gods, and so Pheretime crossed a boundary by taking matters into her own hands in such an extreme manner.⁶⁹ This interpretation, while plausible, requires a certain amount of mental flexibility to make the scenario fit the traditional sense of jealousy, but regardless, there is no difficulty in regarding Pheretime's demise as an example of *phthonos* as moral censure.

The remaining discussions of divine *phthonos* all appear in the speeches of various characters, rather than in Herodotus' own commentary, but as we will see, these examples together constitute an integral part of the worldview presented in the *Histories*. In Book 3, Herodotus narrates the story of another monarch who receives a warning about the jealousy of the gods. Amasis, the king of Egypt, expresses concern for Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos, and his continuing good fortune: ἐμοὶ δὲ αἰσαὶ μεγάλαι εὐτυχίαι οὐκ ἀρέσκουσι, ἐπισταμένῳ τὸ θεῖον ὥς ἔστι φθονερὸν...οὐδένα γὰρ κω λόγῳ οἶδα ἀκούσας ὅστις ἐς τέλος οὐ κακῶς ἐτελεύτησε πρόρριζος, εὐτυχέων τὰ πάντα ("Your great success does not please me, because I know that the divine is jealous...for I neither know nor have heard of anyone who, being fortunate in all respects, did not die utterly miserably in the end," 3.40.2-3). Amasis' warning runs parallel to what Solon tells Croesus, although Amasis also dispenses some practical advice—that Polycrates throw away his most valued possession—in an attempt to help him ward off unexpected misfortunes. Unlike Croesus, Polycrates takes Amasis' message to heart, although the disposal of his beloved ring is not ultimately as permanent as he had planned. Much later in Book 3, Herodotus describes Polycrates' death: in pursuit of funds to help him achieve his ambitions of ruling Ionia (3.122.2-3), Polycrates falls victim to the trickery of the Persian Oroetes, who kills him brutally and impales his corpse (3.125.3). Curiously, while Herodotus

⁶⁹ Idem, 353.

remarks that Polycrates did not deserve such an end (οὔτε ἐωυτοῦ ἀξίως οὔτε τῶν ἐωυτοῦ φρονημάτων, 3.125.2), he nevertheless refers back to the earlier story with Amasis.⁷⁰ He narrates, Πολυκράτεος μὲν δὴ αἱ πολλαὶ εὐτυχίαι ἐς τοῦτο ἐτελεύτησαν τῇ οἱ Ἄμασις ὁ Αἰγύπτου βασιλεὺς προεμαντεύσατο (Indeed, the many successes of Polycrates came to this end in the way in which Amasis the Egyptian predicted, 3.125.4). Even if τῇ...προεμαντεύσατο ought to be deleted, as some editors prefer, the use of an *eutuch-* word in conjunction with the verb *teleutan* nevertheless recalls Amasis' warning in 3.40.2-3.⁷¹ Once again, the statement about the jealous nature of the divine comes from Herodotus' character rather than from the historian himself, but Herodotus' comment at 3.125.4 suggests that he at least believes in the possibility that the gods and their *phthonos* had something to do with his unfortunate end.

Xerxes likewise receives a warning about the jealousy of the gods from his uncle when he solicits advice about his proposed invasion of Greece. Artabanus reminds him of several of Darius' failures before issuing a more general statement about the gods:

ὁρᾷς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα ζῶα ὡς κεραυνοῖ ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲ ἐᾷ φαντάζεσθαι, τὰ δὲ σμικρὰ οὐδὲν μιν κνίζει· ὁρᾷς δὲ ὡς ἐς οἰκήματα τὰ μέγιστα αἰεὶ καὶ δένδρεα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποσκήπτει τὰ βέλεα· φιλέει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν. οὕτω δὲ καὶ στρατὸς πολλὸς ὑπὸ ὀλίγου διαφθείρεται κατὰ τοιόνδε· ἐπεὶ σφι ὁ θεὸς φθονήσας φόβον ἐμβάλλῃ ἢ βροντὴν, δι' ὧν ἐφθάρησαν ἀναξίως ἐωυτῶν. οὐ γὰρ ἐᾷ φρονέειν μέγα ὁ θεὸς ἄλλον ἢ ἐωυτόν.

“You see how the god strikes prominent living beings with the thunderbolt and does not allow them to make a show of themselves, but the small ones do not provoke him, and you see how he always hurls his bolts against the greatest buildings and trees of this sort. For the god loves to cut down all prominent things. And so too a mighty army is destroyed by a small one, in accordance with this sort of [principle], when the god casts fear or thunder among them out of jealousy, on account of which they are destroyed undeservedly. For the god does not allow anyone but himself to be prideful.” (7.10.ε)

⁷⁰ A similar phrase appears in the next example as well (ἀναξίως ἐωυτῶν, 7.10.ε). It may be the case that Polycrates and the unspecified “mighty army” can be considered deserving of *some* deleterious effect, but that they do not necessarily deserve the magnitude of the punishment inflicted on them by the jealous gods.

⁷¹ I am using the Oxford Classical Text edited by Wilson (2015), who does not place this phrase in brackets.

Artabanus' advice is in accordance with that of Solon and Amasis, but he adds a higher degree of specificity, providing examples of natural phenomena that illustrate the principle of high stature attracting negative attention before pointing out how the gods bring down mighty armies (which is precisely what he fears will happen if Xerxes proceeds with the invasion).⁷² The parallels among the statements of Solon, Amasis, and Artabanus are impossible to overlook. While it is always prudent to remember that the views of characters do not necessarily reflect those of the author, the fact that Herodotus has multiple characters from different backgrounds (Greek, Egyptian, and Persian, respectively) express a similar idea about the danger of divine *phthonos* strongly indicates that it is representative of Herodotus' own beliefs and of Greek beliefs in general.⁷³ The outcomes in these three cases serve as additional evidence of this: Croesus suffers the *nemesis* of a god, Polycrates is deceived and brutally killed, and Xerxes' campaign ends in disaster. It is difficult to make a definitive argument that Xerxes' ultimate failure is solely or even primarily on account of the *phthonos* of the gods, but it is worth noting that Herodotus comments (in his own voice) later on that a god caused the destruction of part of the Persian fleet with a storm in order that it would more closely match the size of the Greek fleet (8.13).⁷⁴

Artabanus discusses divine *phthonos* with Xerxes once again after leaving Susa. When Xerxes surveys his ships at the Hellespont and weeps, he explains to Artabanus that he was reflecting on the brevity of human life. Artabanus makes the point that death is not a bad thing, but rather a welcome respite from the inevitable misfortunes of life: ἐν γὰρ οὕτω βραχέϊ βίῳ οὐδεὶς οὕτως ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν εὐδαίμων πέφυκε, οὔτε τούτων οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων, τῷ οὐ παραστήσεται πολλάκις καὶ οὐκ ἅπαξ τεθνάναι βούλεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῶειν ("For even in such a short life, no man—among these or any others—is so fortunate that he does not wish, often and

⁷² Vannicelli (2017), 316.

⁷³ For a discussion of the slight ways in which these three views differ, see Benardete (1969), 185-86.

⁷⁴ Shapiro (1996), 355.

not just once, to die rather than live,” 7.46.3). He then traces this misfortunes back to divine *phthonos*: ὁ δὲ θεὸς γλυκὺν γεύσας τὸν αἰῶνα φθονερός ἐν αὐτῷ εὐρίσκεται ἐὼν (“The god is found to be jealous in this regard, giving [only] a taste of sweet life,” 7.46.4). Artabanus’ words are meant to ease Xerxes’ grief over the short lifespan of mortal men, but they contain a grim message nevertheless. Whereas before, Artabanus warned Xerxes about the risk of incurring divine *phthonos* on account of pride (φρονέειν μέγα, 7.10.ε), divine *phthonos* is here presented as universal, affecting any and everyone. This sentiment is similar to what Solon says to Croesus; neither adviser is urging a particular course of action at the time, but he is merely making a point about the fragility and mutability of human affairs.

The Persians retreat back to Asia after sustaining significant losses in battle, and Themistocles cautions the Athenians not to pursue them at that time. He reasons that they did not bring about their present success themselves, but rather, it was divine *phthonos* that struck down their enemies: τάδε γὰρ οὐκ ἡμεῖς κατεργασάμεθα, ἀλλὰ θεοὶ τε καὶ ἥρωες, οἱ ἐφθόνησαν ἄνδρα ἓνα τῆς τε Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης βασιλεῦσαι, ἐόντα ἀνόσιόν τε καὶ ἀτάσθαλον (“We did not accomplish these things, but the gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should be king of both Asia and Europe, and an unholy and wicked man at that,” 8.109.3). Herodotus notes that Themistocles had ulterior motives in saying this, as he wanted to be able to use this as an example of his goodwill toward Persia, should he ever need to take refuge there (8.109.5), so we cannot tell for certain whether Themistocles truly believed that the gods and heroes were responsible. Regardless, the Athenians were apparently convinced (8.110.1), which shows that the idea of divine *phthonos* was a plausible enough explanation of events in Herodotus’ day, or at the very least, it was an explanation that no one cared to challenge openly.

Lang argues that divine *phthonos* “has very definite rhetorical value” but “no merit for Herodotus as an expression of historical causation,” a claim which Gould also finds generally valid.⁷⁵ Although I agree that the role of divine *phthonos* in Herodotus’ narrative is much more often abstract than concrete, the claim that there is no indication of divine *phthonos* as a causal force in the *Histories* is an overstatement in my view, in light of the comments in Herodotus’ own voice about both Croesus’ reversal of fortune and Pheretime’s death. Moreover, why would Herodotus include as many references to divine *phthonos* as he does, if not to suggest that it can at times explain historical causation? First, it will be useful to consider what Gould elsewhere terms the “uncertainty principle.” This principle explains that Herodotus’ hesitation to identify instances of divine influence on mortal affairs is an acknowledgment of his own limited knowledge—a limitation that all humans experience by default.⁷⁶ In accordance with this principle, perhaps Herodotus refrains from naming divine *phthonos* as the cause in more situations because he does not want to presume a special and privileged understanding of the divine. We can see evidence of such hesitation in the phrase ὡς εἰκάσαι (to venture a guess, 1.34.1) when he mentions the *nemesis* that strikes Croesus after Solon’s visit. The uncertainty principle thus offers one possible explanation: Herodotus believes in the concept of divine *phthonos* in the abstract, but is too cautious to use it frequently in determining the cause of specific events. Second, perhaps Herodotus does not need to be dogmatic about divine *phthonos* by repeatedly attributing outcomes to it. Given Herodotus’ use of narrative patterning, it is highly possible that he intended the abstract discussions of divine *phthonos* to signal to his readers (or listeners) that they should be attuned to its presence even when not named explicitly.

⁷⁵ Lang (1984), 62; Gould (1989), 80.

⁷⁶ Gould (1994), 94.

The examples discussed above can be split into two categories: one in which divine *phthonos* is depicted as universal and likely to affect anyone at any time, and another in which it is depicted as predictable and likely to afflict those who grow too prideful or powerful. Solon's advice to Croesus and Artabanus' reasoning as to why Xerxes should not grieve the prospect of death fall into the first category, which showcases the vulnerability of (all) human life in a rather pessimistic light. Amasis' advice to Polycrates, Artabanus' argument against the invasion of Greece, Themistocles' (somewhat less than genuine) account of Xerxes' defeat as an act of the gods, and Pheretima's punishment fall into the second category, which can be interpreted as providing a slightly different outlook. While divine *phthonos* is never a pleasant experience for whoever is on the receiving end, divine *phthonos* of the second category serves to benefit society as a whole.⁷⁷ When acts of *hubris*—humans overstepping their bounds or committing egregiously offensive acts against one another—arouse divine *phthonos*, divine *phthonos* helps reestablish proper balance.⁷⁸ In this regard, such *phthonos* is justified, and indeed, toward the end of the fifth century, the term more and more frequently indicated a sort of moral censure.⁷⁹ This dichotomy between divine *phthonos* that strikes at random and divine *phthonos* that falls upon the overweening reflects two conflicting yet coexistent phenomena: the anxiety that the gods have little to no concern for the suffering of mortals and cannot be relied upon for assistance or good will, and the hope that the gods care enough to regulate justice in the mortal realm (although, of course, at-risk powerful individuals would not likely consider such punishment justified and thus would regard it with further trepidation).⁸⁰ Thus divine *phthonos* is not entirely

⁷⁷ It is never good to be the victim of divine *phthonos*, but being marked as an individual who is at high risk and needs to be careful to avoid incurring it is indeed an indication of achievement, and Pindar makes frequent use of this paradox (Cairns 2003, 250).

⁷⁸ Plescia (1972), 311.

⁷⁹ Sanders (2014), 42.

⁸⁰ Burkert (1985), 189.

negative in the *Histories*, and as we will see in the following section, there are small indications that even human *phthonos* can at times serve a positive purpose.

5. *Phthonos* as a positive force?

Herodotus does not state explicitly the idea that either divine or human *phthonos* can have a positive effect, but one can see fairly easily from his depiction of divine *phthonos* how the gods' punishment of overly arrogant or powerful individuals (or states) could benefit the rest of society. As for human envy, several scholars claim that Herodotus shows that it can serve in a helpful capacity, but the textual evidence is so subtle that it begs the question whether Herodotus intended to convey any message about such a role. I aim to demonstrate that while Herodotus provides material that one could use to make an argument for the existence of positive human *phthonos*, he himself refrains from making such an argument. This material is worth mentioning not so much because it forms an integral part of Herodotus' overall presentation of *phthonos*, but simply because it offers an alternative to the overwhelmingly or often entirely negative image seen elsewhere.

Immerwahr states, "The notion that through envy the citizens of a free society prevent the rise of despotism is in fact current in fifth-century political thought, but to Herodotus envy is rather a sign of that disunity which, as an aspect of diversity in the historical process, is so essential to his political philosophy."⁸¹ Immerwahr provides no direct citations of passages from other fifth-century authors to vouch for the presence of the idea that envy functions as a safeguard against tyranny, but he does point to Herodotus' account of the Greeks' difficulty in

⁸¹ Immerwahr (1966), 313-14. For the role of disunity in Herodotus' "political philosophy" (i.e. the idea that disunity is what accounts for the strength of Greek states relative to the strength of those led by eastern monarchs), see Immerwahr (1966), 307.

awarding a prize of valor after the battle of Salamis.⁸² According to Herodotus, each man casts his first vote for himself and his second for Themistocles (8.123.2).⁸³ This results in a stalemate: οὐ βουλομένων δὲ ταῦτα κρίνειν τῶν Ἑλλήνων φθόνῳ, ἀλλ' ἀποπλῶνόντων ἐκάστων ἐς τὴν ἐωυτῶν ἀκρίτων (Out of *phthonos*, the Greeks were unwilling to decide these matters, but each sailed home without coming to a resolution, 8.124.1).⁸⁴ There is also a similar instance following the battle of Plataea, which Immerwahr does not mention. When discussion among the Spartans turns to the matter of who fought most bravely (γενομένης λέσχης ὃς γένοιτο αὐτῶν ἄριστος, 9.71.3) in the battle, they refrain from honoring Aristodemus, because he clearly wanted to die in battle. Herodotus adds that they might have spoken in this way out of *phthonos* (ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν καὶ φθόνῳ ἂν εἴποιεν, 9.71.3). One could argue, as Immerwahr does, that these two examples show how widespread *phthonos* can maintain balance in society by preventing any one person from receiving too much distinction or power (and that this functions on the state level as well, helping maintain balance among international powers).⁸⁵ On the other hand, they more clearly illustrate the negative side of *phthonos*: if the majority of men are unable or unwilling to see another exalted above themselves, action can grind to a halt, as it does in the first scenario, or a

⁸² One of the articles that Immerwahr cites to show that this idea existed in the fifth century focuses on Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles* (Martin 1961, 333). Plutarch attributes Themistocles' ostracism to *phthonos*, noting that ostracism was an outlet for people to vent their envy (*Vit. Them.* 22), but we cannot automatically assume that Plutarch's writings are indicative of fifth-century views, even if he draws from Herodotus as a source. Moreover, it is somewhat of a stretch to claim that *phthonos*, insofar as it can lead to ostracism, is a means of preventing the rise of tyranny. At any rate, Plutarch does not seem to regard either as a positive phenomenon. The institution of ostracism was more of a response to the disruptiveness of intra-elite rivalry than a safeguard against tyranny (Forsdyke 2005, 153).

⁸³ This demonstration of egoism showcases the messy side of the Greeks' desire for honor, in contrast to the nobility of the Olympic ideal, which Arcadian deserters discuss with the Persians at 8.26 (Bowie 2007, 212).

⁸⁴ Since envy and jealousy may both be at work, I have chosen to leave *phthonos* untranslated. A man may act out of anticipatory envy because he imagines what it will feel like when another man receives the distinction he craved, but he may also act out of anticipatory jealousy because he imagines the distinction already belongs to him, and so he must fight all the more bravely to make sure that no potential rival takes it away from him.

⁸⁵ The aftermath of the Greeks' indecision following the battle of Salamis somewhat negates the idea that *phthonos* is an effective equalizing force. Themistocles immediately goes to Sparta, seeking the honor he feels he deserves, and he is given a crown, a chariot, and an escort of three hundred men (8.124.2-3), which things in turn provoke an Athenian man to revile him out of envy (8.125.1). This goes to show that even if the *phthonos* of others denies a man distinction in one setting, he may still find another way to exalt himself.

deserving individual can be passed over, as is the case in the second.⁸⁶ Herodotus merely provides examples that can be interpreted in a way so as to make an argument for positive *phthonos*, but this does not seem to be the point that Herodotus himself is making. It may very well be true in reality that envy can act as an equalizing force, preventing any one person from becoming too preeminent, but there are several logical steps of explanation that separate the idea of ubiquitous envy and a balanced society, and Herodotus opts not to emphasize this connection.

Following in Immerwahr's footsteps, toward the conclusion of his article on Herodotean *eris*, Joseph Plescia states, "Thus, envy and strife not only are believed to prevent the rise of despotism and to promote an equalitarian society in a free polis, but also, according to Herodotus, they surge to an international level, as indicated above, to prevent excessive accumulation of power and to promote a balance of powers."⁸⁷ The only passages in the *Histories* that he cites regarding envy are 3.80, in which Otanes argues that *phthonos* is one of the root causes of a tyrant's wrongdoing, and 7.236, in which Achaemenes cautions Xerxes that the Greeks are envious by nature and so Demaratus may be giving intentionally bad advice on account of his envy of Xerxes. He uses these passages—in which *phthonos* has a distinctly pejorative connotation—to establish the idea that envy is an innate part of human nature, but then fails to cite any further passages to support his inference that envy not only plagues men, but it also benefits them by maintaining balance.

Donald Lateiner does not argue that envy is instrumental specifically in preventing the rise of tyranny, but he makes a similar claim about its benefits, for which he cites both Immerwahr and Plescia. Lateiner argues, "The paradoxical advantage of non-autocratic governments is, Herodotus believes, that envy, strife, and disunity—among men and nations—

⁸⁶ Herodotus states that Aristodemus was the most valiant in his opinion (ἄριστος ἐγένετο μακρῶ Ἀριστόδημος κατὰ γνώμας τὰς ἡμετέρας, 9.71.2).

⁸⁷ Plescia (1972), 311.

promote human freedom and perpetuate a fruitful diversity for the human race.”⁸⁸ He too points to Otanes’ speech in the constitutional debate to make the case that man is naturally envious, and he too neglects to offer additional textual evidence for his claim that “the agonistic character of Greek institutions harnesses this energy.”⁸⁹

Significantly, none of these scholars connect what Herodotus says about the change in the Athenians after the deposition of the Peisistratids to envy, as Harrison does.⁹⁰ Herodotus writes:

δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ’ ἓν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσηγορία ὡς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύομενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο. δηλοῖ ὧν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐθελοκάκεον ὡς δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἐωυτῷ προεθυμέετο <τι> κατεργάζεσθαι.

It is clear that an equal voice is an excellent thing not in a single regard alone but in all ways, because the Athenians were better than none of their neighbors in matters of war while they were living under tyranny, but after they were freed from tyrants, they became the first by far. Therefore this makes clear that while being oppressed, they were deliberately slack, because they were working for a master, but each of them, after they were liberated, was eager to earn something for himself. (5.78)

Herodotus attributes the transformation to a change in motivation. Once again, there are several logical steps between the cause and effect that we have to imagine for ourselves in order to attribute the change to envy, but it indeed seems conceivable: once the Athenians were freed from tyranny and there was a chance to win honor and material goods for themselves in battle (rather than for a tyrant), each man fought all the more zealously, driven by the desire to distinguish himself relative to his peers, which is related to both envy and jealousy of an anticipatory sort.⁹¹ What begins as an estimation of military prowess quickly seems to take on a

⁸⁸ Lateiner (1989), 184.

⁸⁹ Idem, 184.

⁹⁰ Harrison (2003), 154. This passage is also discussed briefly above, p. 137-38.

⁹¹ The desire for distinction relates to both envy and jealousy because all three speak to a preoccupation with what one has relative to what others have. See p. 149 note 84 about the anticipatory nature of *phthonos* in a similar situation.

more general tone.⁹² The standard connotation of *ergazesthai* is one of manual labor, but not necessarily of military endeavors.⁹³ This supports the idea that the influence of this unnamed envy has wider applicability, which is in line with what other scholars' general claims suggest. While this envy-centric interpretation of Herodotus' statement falls within the realm of possibility, it is not the only explanation. A more straightforward explanation is that the Athenians fought and worked more assiduously after their liberation simply because they had more of a vested interest in the outcome: victory on the battlefield bolsters Athens' glory, and if the state is thriving, its citizens profit. This is not the case under tyranny, since assumption is that the tyrant takes whatever is gained in battle, both in terms of spoils and the intangibles (i.e. honor and prestige).⁹⁴

The idea that competition or discord is beneficial for freedom appears in *Federalist Paper* No. 51, in which James Madison states, "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition." He writes this in support of a system of checks and balances to help safeguard the powers of the various branches of government, but also it applies to his subsequent argument that the security of civil rights depends on the existence of numerous competing factions. Thus while it is possible to read a passage like Herodotus' description of Athens after the deposition of the Peisistratids or of what happened in the aftermath of Salamis and Plataea as evidence of the benefits of envy, this may be an instance of superimposing ideas that have gained momentum in the modern period onto the past. For his own part, Herodotus does not go out of his way to emphasize any connection between human *phthonos* and societal balance or advancement.

⁹² Hornblower (2013), 225.

⁹³ LSJ s.v. I.

⁹⁴ Lateiner (1989), 182.

6. Conclusions and implications

Phthonos appears in a variety of ways throughout the *Histories*: explicitly and implicitly, in the speeches of characters and in Herodotus' own commentary, originating from the gods and among men, in entirely negative contexts and in contexts that point to a larger societal benefit. In a work of this magnitude, there are naturally some exceptions and irregularities, but the overall picture of *phthonos* that emerges can be summarized in the following way. Divine *phthonos* is conceived of as a powerful force in the universe (an idea that gains momentum in the fifth century among select authors), but because it is more often discussed in abstract terms than in specific examples, it functions primarily as a reminder of what is at stake for mortals and of the mutability of their fortunes. It sometimes appears to have a random element, but at other times, it is directed toward the dangerously preeminent, in which case it comes to signify something akin to moral censure, thereby providing a benefit to the rest of society. Herodotus seems aware of the possibility that *phthonos* among men as well as from the divine realm can have beneficial effects, but he refrains from making this a priority in his overall presentation of *phthonos*. *Phthonos* plays a key role in the despotic template, and the effects of it on both those exhibiting it (among mortals) and those toward whom it is directed are detrimental. While it cannot be considered the primary engine of human action throughout the *Histories*, as Harrison suggests, *phthonos* is shown to motivate certain actions and Herodotus uses it to remind his audience of what is at stake, namely that there is always the potential for it to have far-reaching consequences, especially given that heads of state are so prone to experiencing it.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Part I: Plato and Aristotle

The views put forward by Plato and Aristotle have entered into our exploration of envy and jealousy at various times thus far, but I have chosen to delay treating their works more fully until this point—the conclusion of the study—in order to preserve a natural chronological progression and to avoid overemphasizing texts that may be more prescriptive than descriptive. As teachers and writers of philosophy, Plato and Aristotle’s works draw from and engage with contemporary views, but they should not be considered a mere reflection of them, as they often represent a more idealistic level of thinking.¹ Given the prolificacy of these two authors, a comprehensive review goes beyond the scope of this project. This is one area in which further research is needed. What follows in Part I is a sampling of passages from Plato and Aristotle’s works that have to do with envy and jealousy, chosen for how they compare with what we have seen in the works of previous authors. Some of these passages illustrate general characteristics of these emotions and others speak directly to their association with tyrants. Part II is comprised of general conclusions, drawn from the works of Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus.

1. Plato on envy and jealousy

The principle that like envies like has been seen in numerous cases examined in this study.² For example, in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod makes explicit the idea that people often

¹ Walcot (1978), 20.

² For an overview of passages that convey this idea, see p. 186.

envy and mark as rivals those with whom they have something in common (23-26). Plato too draws attention to this propensity. He cites these lines in the *Lysis*, in a discussion about the sorts of people who tend to be friends. Socrates recalls hearing a man make the argument that similar men are most hostile to one another by relying on Hesiod's authority:

καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ
καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ,
καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ πάντα οὕτως ἔφη ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι μάλιστα τὰ ὁμοιότατα <πρὸς> ἄλληλα
φθόνου τε καὶ φιλονικίας καὶ ἔχθρας ἐμπίμπλασθαι, τὰ δ' ἀνομοιότατα φιλίας·

“‘Potter begrudges potter and singer begrudges singer and beggar begrudges beggar,’ and he said that all other things [behave] in this way too, that the things most similar to one another are necessarily filled with envy and rivalry and hatred, while the most dissimilar are filled with friendship.” (*Lys.* 215c-d)

In Hesiod's original lines, there is some question about the exact spirit of such rivalries, as he inserts these examples into a discussion of the good *Eris* yet uses words that often have negative connotations (*kotein*, *phthonein*).³ Grouped together with hatred (*echthra*), however, there is no ambiguity in Socrates' conversation: its effects are clearly detrimental. A similar sentiment can be found in the *Philebus*: Socrates names envy as an example of a pain mixed with pleasure, pointing out that a man who feels envy, which itself constitutes a pain, is shown to take pleasure in his neighbors' misfortunes of (ὁ φθονῶν γε ἐπὶ κακοῖς τοῖς τῶν πέλας ἡδόμενος ἀναφανήσεται, 48b). The use of *pelas* could indicate literal or figurative proximity, but in both cases, this shows that people tend to experience envy in relation to those with whom they share some kind of common ground, which in turn goes back to the fact that envy is rooted in social comparison.

Another theme we have seen throughout is that envy is often connected to issues of honor and reputation, and this too appears in Plato's works.⁴ In the *Laws*, there is a discussion of the causes of voluntary and premeditated murder, and envy is named second only to desire or greed

³ For the ambiguity surrounding these lines, see p. 65-66.

⁴ For a summary of this idea, see p. 183-85.

(*epithumia*): δεύτερον δὲ φιλοτίμου ψυχῆς ἕξις, φθόνους ἐντίκτουσα, χαλεποὺς συνοίκους μάλιστα μὲν αὐτῷ τῷ κεκτημένῳ τὸν φθόνον, δευτέροις δὲ τοῖς ἀρίστοις τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει (“A second [cause] is the possession of an ambitious soul, which creates feelings of envy, grievous associates most of all for the one who harbors these feelings, but next for the best of the men in the city,” *Leg.* 870c). By describing a soul that is ambitious—or, in other words, that loves honor (*philotimos*)—as what produces envy, Plato includes an explicit link between the concepts of honor and envy.⁵ Moreover, this confirms what we have seen elsewhere, namely that envy is dangerous for multiple parties.

According to Plato’s characters, however, envy is not only harmful for the ones experiencing it and the best citizens: it is also to the detriment of the state as a whole. In the *Laws*, the Athenian declares:

φιλονικεῖτω δὲ ἡμῖν πᾶς πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀφθόνως. ὁ μὲν γὰρ τοιοῦτος τὰς πόλεις αὔξει, ἀμιλλώμενος μὲν αὐτός, τοὺς ἄλλους δὲ οὐ κολούων διαβολαῖς· ὁ δὲ φθονερός, τῇ τῶν ἄλλων διαβολῇ δεῖν οἰόμενος ὑπερέχειν, αὐτός τε ἥττον συντείνει πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὴν ἀληθῆ, τοὺς τε ἀνθαμιλλωμένους εἰς ἀθυμίαν καθίστησι τῷ ἀδίκως ψέγεσθαι, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἀγύμναστον τὴν πόλιν ὅλην εἰς ἀμιλλαν ἀρετῆς ποιῶν, σμικροτέραν αὐτὴν πρὸς εὐδοξίαν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ μέρος ἀπεργάζεται.

“Let every man among us contend for excellence, [but] without envy. For such a man glorifies the state, because he strives by himself and does not cut down the others with slanderous remarks. But the envious man, believing that he must prevail by means of slander of the others, exerts himself less for true excellence and disheartens his rivals by causing them to be blamed unjustly, and in doing so, by rendering the whole state unfit for a contest of excellence, he diminishes its glory for his part.” (*Leg.* 731a-b)

It is not a coincidence that it is the Athenian who makes this point. In a democracy, the reputation of the state depends on the reputations of a larger number of individuals. The Athenian’s statement is a bold one: not only does an envious man tarnish the competition itself with his poor sportsmanship (as well as the status of his rivals, if his slander is accepted at face value), but he effectively reduces the collective renown of the entire state by failing to contribute

⁵ Plato draws a connection between *philotimia* and *phthonos* at *Resp.* 586c-d as well.

(and by making it more difficult for other to contribute) to its sum total of excellence.⁶ In this way, Plato presents the full range of negative effects: envy is bad for whoever feels it, whomever it is directed toward, and even for those citizens' states at large.

In the *Menexenus*, Plato has Socrates reveal another way in which envy can cause harm to states by identifying envy as the cause of the Peloponnesian War. In reviewing the history of Athens, Socrates describes how the citizens of Athens suffered negative consequences in the aftermath of the Persian Wars: εἰρήνης δὲ γενομένης καὶ τῆς πόλεως τιμωμένης ἦλθεν ἐπ' αὐτήν, ὃ δὴ φιλεῖ ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς εὖ πράττουσι προσπίπτειν, πρῶτον μὲν ζῆλος, ἀπὸ ζήλου δὲ φθόνος· ὃ καὶ τήνδε τὴν πόλιν ἄκουσαν ἐν πολέμῳ τοῖς Ἕλλησι κατέστησεν ("There was peace and the city was honored, [but then] that which is accustomed among men to befall those who are successful came upon her: admiration first, and from admiration, envy. And [envy] set up this city, unwilling, in a war with the Greeks," *Menex.* 242a). In the *Histories*, Herodotus' depiction of Histiaeus and his envy of Darius sheds light on envy's potential for producing effects that ripple outward onto the international stage, but Plato goes a step further. Whereas additional contributing factors were involved in bringing about the Ionian revolt, rendering Histiaeus' envy into more of a cautionary tale than anything else, Socrates' statement in the *Menexenus* is no longer a warning: this is a concrete example of a large-scale war for which he claims envy is the catalyst.⁷

⁶ The idea that personal envy is detrimental to the state can be considered a point in favor of rejecting Harrison's interpretation of Hdt. 5.78, which identifies envy as the reason behind the Athenians' advancement after the deposition of the Peisistratids (see p. 151-52). This passage also reiterates the association we have seen elsewhere between envy and slander (cf. Soph. *Aj.* 148-57; Hdt. 3.80.4, 6.61.1, 7.237.2-3).

⁷ Socrates' description of events also provides insight into his understanding of the relationship between *zēlos* and *phthonos*. Whereas the two can sometimes function interchangeably, here they necessarily refer to slightly different (but obviously related) phenomena. Honor and success (τιμωμένης; τοῖς εὖ πράττουσι) prompt admiration, which in turn mutates into envy; the progression is clear, but the point at which admiration shades into envy is not (Walcot 1978, 15). See also Thuc. 2.64.4 (p. 119 note 16). For a fuller discussion of *zēlos* versus *phthonos*, see p. 169-72.

Interestingly, Socrates' statement points to the idea that envy can be experienced on a statewide level. Herodotus offers a precedent for this, but only a nominal one. In his explanation of how Miltiades came to take control of Lemnos, which the Pelasgians inhabited at that point, he cites Hecataeus' report that the Athenians, envious of the newfound fertility of the land they had previously given to the Pelasgians (λαβεῖν φθόνον τε καὶ ἕμερον τῆς γῆς, 6.137.2), decided to drive them out. The Pelasgians plotted revenge, setting in motion a series of events that led to the seizure of Lemnos. Herodotus also records that the Athenians told a different story in which they acted for just cause (6.137.3). We ought to be cautious about how much weight to give to this account, given that this is the only case of envy being attributed to a state rather than to an individual in the *Histories* and that it comes from another source. Indeed, the assessment of envy as a motive is not Herodotus' own, as it is reported in indirect speech.⁸ Herodotus does not explicitly incorporate envy into any theory of interstate relations; to the best of my knowledge, neither does Thucydides, although further research is needed to confirm this.⁹ Plato's revelation is significant: humans are susceptible to experiencing envy not only individually but also collectively, and clearly, the effects of statewide envy are all the more far-reaching.

The most obvious point of divergence between Plato's depiction of envy and jealousy and what we have seen previously occurs in relation to the divine. Whereas Homer, Hesiod, and Herodotus offer clear examples of the gods acting out of envy and jealousy (toward each other

⁸ Scott (2005), 446.

⁹ One possible explanation for this is that Herodotus considered envy on the state level to fall under the heading of desire for expansionism. I have already discussed the difficulty of categorizing desire for expansionism as a subset of envy (see p. 112-13), but I see less of a problem with categorizing envy as a subset of desire for expansionism. Envy is more specific in the sense that it involves not only a focus (i.e. the desired good) but also an object (i.e. the person who currently has the good), whereas desire for expansionism only necessarily has the former. While a more specific thing can be subsumed under the category of a broader phenomenon, the reverse is more problematic. As for Thucydides, if in fact he makes no mention of statewide envy or jealousy, one possible explanation is that he regarded *phthonos* as a type of *phobos*. He identifies the growth of Athens and the fear (*phobos*) that this growth instilled among the Spartans as the ultimate cause of the Peloponnesian War (1.23.6), but it is not difficult to relate this *phobos* to *phthonos*. The Spartans likely felt a combination of envy and jealousy: envy about Athens' increasing power and jealousy about their resulting decrease in relative standing. Jealousy is at its core related to a fear of loss (see p. 25-28), and envy too can be experienced in conjunction with fear (i.e. a fear of inadequacy).

and/or toward mortals) and even Sophocles alludes to such a possibility, Plato's writings contain statements that categorically deny the existence of divine *phthonos*. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates argues that every good that man possesses is given by the gods (14e), from which it follows that divine envy toward mortals simply cannot occur: of what would they be envious? Thus when Plato uses *phthonos* terminology in reference to the gods' feelings toward mortals, it is more appropriate to translate as "jealousy," since it is still plausible that the gods would want to guard what is theirs and prevent lesser beings from sharing in their privileges. Socrates, however, discounts this possibility as well. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates introduce an allegory in which he describes human souls (in their non-corporeal state) as chariots, guided by a charioteer with one good horse and one disobedient horse. The human souls therefore struggle to follow the gods in heaven, but Socrates notes that the gods neither feel jealousy toward the human souls following them nor do they make any attempt to hinder them: πολλαὶ μὲν οὖν καὶ μακάριαι θεαὶ τε καὶ διέξοδοι ἐντὸς οὐρανοῦ, ἃς θεῶν γένος εὐδαιμόνων ἐπιστρέφεται πράττων ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τὸ αὐτοῦ, ἔπεται δὲ ὁ ἀεὶ ἐθέλων τε καὶ δυνάμενος· φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θεοῦ χοροῦ ἵσταται ("Many and blessed and divine are the passages within heaven on which the race of the gods turns about, each of them doing what is his, and he who is always willing and able follows: for jealousy stands outside the divine chorus," *Phdr.* 247a). This description is often taken in close consideration with a passage in the *Timaeus*.¹⁰ Discussing the demiurge, Timaeus says, Λέγωμεν δὴ δι' ἣντινα αἰτίαν γένεσιν καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε ὁ συνιστὰς συνέστησεν. ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὧν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ ("Let us talk about the reason why the creator created generation and all of this. He was good, and no jealousy about anything ever occurs in a good [entity]. And

¹⁰ Herrmann (2003), 58.

being devoid of this, he wanted all things to resemble himself as much as possible,” *Ti.* 29d-e).¹¹ Plato is unusual in conceiving of a world in which the gods do not feel *phthonos*.¹² This appears to be a deliberate departure, one that relates back to Plato’s ideal of a non-competitive society in which goodness furthers the interests of the community at large, rather than just those of the individual.¹³ In such a society, there is no room for a destructive emotion like *phthonos*, either among men or among gods. Unlike Herodotus, Plato ignores the question of whether there is any way to avoid incurring divine *phthonos*; it simply does not exist. Plato’s treatment of envy and jealousy in relation to the divine is a prime example of a way in which his texts can be more prescriptive than descriptive, as it represents a significant break with popular thinking.

2. Plato on envy, jealousy, and tyranny

Plato’s treatment of envy and jealousy in relation to tyrants, however, is more or less in accordance with what we have seen. While the contexts and approaches vary, the basic premises remain constant: tyrants are especially prone to envy and jealousy, and a tyrant’s position—upon sufficient examination—is not, in fact, enviable. In Book 9 of the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates discuss the nature of the tyrant: the greater, decent part of the tyrant’s soul is enslaved to the smaller, worst part of itself, and as a whole it is unable to do as it pleases (577d-e). Shortly thereafter, he elaborates on the reality of a tyrant’s existence:

Ἄρ’ οὖν οὐκ ἐν τοιούτῳ μὲν δεσμοτηρίῳ δέδεταί ὁ τύραννος, φύσει ὦν οἷον
 διεληλύθαμεν, πολλῶν καὶ παντοδαπῶν φόβων καὶ ἐρώτων μεστός· λίχνῳ δὲ ὄντι αὐτῷ
 τὴν ψυχὴν μόνῳ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει οὔτε ἀποδημῆσαι ἔξεστιν οὐδαμῶσε, οὔτε θεωρῆσαι

¹¹ This is similar to Socrates’ insistence that the gods are purely good in character, which serves as the basis of his criticism of Homer and Hesiod’s poetry and drives his desire to insulate children from the influence of such works (*Resp.* 376e-79b).

¹² According to Yunis, it is only in Plato’s conception of the world that this is the case (2011, 140), but this is not entirely true. Aristotle also denies the possibility of divine *phthonos* (see p. 167 note 24).

¹³ Herrmann (2003), 76.

ὅσων δὴ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἐλεύθεροι ἐπιθυμηταὶ εἰσιν, καταδεδυκῶς δὲ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τὰ πολλὰ
ὥς γυνὴ ζῆ, φθονῶν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πολίταις, εἴαν τις ἔξω ἀποδημῇ καὶ τι ἀγαθὸν ὀρᾷ;

“Hasn’t the tyrant been bound in this sort of prison, being by nature such as we have detailed, full of many and manifold fears and desires; and for him alone of those in the city, although greedy in soul, isn’t it not possible to go abroad anywhere or to see what the other free men also desire [to see], but for the most part he lives hidden away in his house like a woman, being envious even of the other citizens, if someone goes abroad and sees something good?” (*Resp.* 579b-c)

Socrates illustrates here that the tyrant is not, as many would assume, the freest of men, but rather that he alone is restricted in ways that other men—even his own subjects—are not. He can hardly leave his residence, presumably on account of fear for his personal safety, for he knows there are those who would wish to harm him. In the phrase φθονῶν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πολίταις, the καὶ is telling: the tyrant envies even regular citizens (rather than potential rivals among the elite or tyrants in other cities), toward whom it is unnatural for him to feel envy, since they do not belong to the same class. Given how pervasive the idea that like envies like is, this paints a striking picture of how truly aberrant tyrants are: because their fears prevent them from doing ordinary things that bring people pleasure (such as travelling), tyrants are so excessive in their envy that they feel it not only toward potential rivals among the elite (as Otanes suggests in the constitutional debate, *Hdt.* 3.80.4), but also toward ordinary citizens. The idea that tyrants are beset by fear and thus cannot live freely is one that appears in earlier authors’ works as well: this is a common argument against the desirability of one-man rule.¹⁴

In the ensuing lines, Socrates makes abundantly clear that the tyrant is an intrinsically envious and/or jealous man. He asks, ἀποδώσομεν τῷ ἀνδρὶ καὶ ἃ τὸ πρότερον εἶπομεν, ὅτι ἀνάγκη καὶ εἶναι καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον γίγνεσθαι αὐτῷ ἢ πρότερον διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν φθονερῷ, ἀπίστῳ, ἀδίκῳ, ἀφίλῳ, ἀνοσίῳ καὶ πάσης κακίας πανδοκεῖ τε καὶ τροφεῖ (“Shall we also attribute to [the tyrant] what we said before, that he is necessarily *phthoneros*, untrustworthy, unjust, friendless,

¹⁴ Cf. *Soph. OT* 584-93; *Eur. Hipp.* 1009-20; *Eur. Phoen.* 549-54; *Eur. Ion* 621-32 (see p. 87-91). See also Appendix.

unholy, and a host and nurse of every evil, and that he becomes more so than before, on account of his rule?" *Resp.* 580a).¹⁵ His question is met with agreement. The initial placement of *phthoneros* emphasizes its importance in Socrates' extensive list of traits: the tyrant embodies many negative qualities, but his susceptibility to *phthonos* is first and foremost.

The idea that tyrants are unable to do as they please appears in the *Gorgias* as well, but the focus in this context is more on the unenviable position of the tyrant than on the tyrant's own envy of his citizens. After Socrates asserts that orators have the least power of all in the city, Polus counters and makes the comparison that orators are like tyrants, as they both have the ability to put to death, deprive of property, or banish whomever they see fit (466b-c). Socrates reiterates that both orators and tyrants alike have the least power, on the grounds that they act as they see fit, but not necessarily as they wish (466e). Polus fails to see how this is not still a great power, and eventually asks Socrates:

ΠΩΛ. Ὡς δὴ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ ἂν δέξαιο ἐξεῖναί σοι ποιεῖν ὅτι δοκεῖ σοι ἐν τῇ πόλει μᾶλλον ἢ μή, οὐδὲ ζηλοῖς ὅταν ἴδῃς τινὰ ἢ ἀποκτείναντα ὃν ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἀφελόμενον χρήματα ἢ δῆσαντα.

ΣΩ. Δικαίως λέγεις ἢ ἀδίκως;

ΠΩΛ. Ὅποτερ' ἂν ποιῇ, οὐκ ἀμφοτέρως ζηλωτόν ἐστιν;

ΣΩ. Εὐφήμει, ὦ Πῶλε.

ΠΩΛ. Τί δὴ;

ΣΩ. Ὅτι οὐ χρὴ οὔτε τοὺς ἀζηλώτους ζηλοῦν οὔτε τοὺς ἀθλίους, ἀλλ' ἐλεεῖν.

Polus: So you, Socrates, would refuse the ability to do what seems fit to you in the city, rather than not [refuse], and you would not feel envy when you see someone putting to death a man whom he saw fit or depriving him of his property or fettering him.¹⁶

Socrates: Do you mean justly or unjustly?

¹⁵ I have chosen not to translate *phthoneros* here, since it is ambiguous (perhaps intentionally) whether it means "envious" or "jealous" or both: the tyrant is envious of his citizens' freedom (as Socrates has just said), but he could simultaneously be jealously protective of his position. See Otanes' speech for comparison (Hdt. 3.80.4, p. 117).

¹⁶ Plato's use of *zêloun* rather than *phthonein* is surely deliberate, since the focus here is on the alleged desirability of the tyrant's position rather than on any danger the tyrant faces. Furthermore, Polus does not wish to impute anything negative about the mental state of the subject feeling the emotion, since in fact he is all but admitting to it. While *zêlos* sometimes indicates a milder form of *phthonos*, there is nevertheless something sinister in English about the prospect of *admiring* the power to imprison, banish, or put to death. Accordingly, I have chosen to translate *zêloun* here as "envy" rather than "admire," since the Greek term reflects this multivalence in the first place. For more on *zêlos* versus *phthonos*, see p. 169-72.

Polus: Whichever way he does it, is [his condition] not enviable in both cases?
Socrates: Hold your tongue, Polus!
Polus: Why?
Socrates: Because we must not envy the unenviable or the wretched, but pity them. (*Grg.* 468e-69a)

In its most basic sentiment, Polus' stance represents that of the average man: it was a common view in Greek society that positions of power are fundamentally desirable and thus enviable as well.¹⁷ By the fifth century, however, arguments that challenge this view were becoming increasingly common in educated circles, as we can see in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides.¹⁸ By having a boorish character such as Polus express the assumption that a tyrant's position is an enviable one, and by having him do so in a crass manner (i.e. by naming first and foremost his power to spill blood), Plato draws an exaggerated contrast between this basic belief and the more well-reasoned, sophisticated one held by Socrates, thus casting the former in a pedestrian light. Indeed, Polus cannot engage with Socrates on the theoretical level, but resorts to questioning Socrates about how he personally would behave.¹⁹ Socrates goes on to justify his statement that tyrants are not enviable by arguing that the worst of evils is to do wrong and to go unpunished (which he likens to having an illness and not seeking treatment), and Polus reluctantly agrees:

ΣΩ. Κάκιστα ἄρα ζῆ ὁ ἔχων [ἀδικίαν] καὶ μὴ ἀπαλλαττόμενος.
ΠΩΛ. Φαίνεται.
ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὗτος τυγχάνει ὢν ὃς ἂν τὰ μέγιστα ἀδικῶν καὶ χρώμενος μεγίστη ἀδικία διαπράξῃται ὥστε μήτε νουθετεῖσθαι μήτε κολάζεσθαι μήτε δίκην δίδόναι, ὥσπερ σὺ φῆς Ἀρχέλαον παρεσκευάσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τυράννους καὶ ῥήτορας καὶ δυνάστας;
ΠΩΛ. Ἦτοικε.

Socrates: Then the man who has [injustice] and who is not delivered from it lives the worst life.

¹⁷ Wohl argues that although the official stance toward tyranny in Athens was one of hostility, the figure of the tyrant nevertheless represented the autonomy and dominance that every Athenian desired (2002, 185).

¹⁸ The counterargument to the idea that a tyrant's position is enviable subsequently receives even more extensive treatment in Xenophon's *Hiero* (see Appendix).

¹⁹ Dodds (1959), 237.

Polus: It appears so.

Socrates: Therefore this man happens to be the one who, committing the greatest wrongs and practicing the greatest injustice, manages to not be admonished or to be punished or to pay the penalty, as you say that Archelaus has contrived, and the other tyrants and orators and dynasts?

Polus: It seems so. (*Grg.* 478e-79a)

As mentioned above, the conclusion that a tyrant's position is the opposite of enviable is one that various characters in tragedy have promulgated, but the approach to forming this conclusion differs significantly in Plato's *Gorgias*. Rather than focusing on the external threats that endanger a tyrant, Socrates highlights the internal wretchedness created by the tyrant himself for his own soul. Thus the *Gorgias* puts forward ideas about envy and tyranny that follow in the footsteps of those expressed by authors in the previous century, but with a distinctly philosophical flavor. The same can be said generally of the collection of passages discussed here: despite the fact that Plato's works belong to a separate and distinct genre, there is a high degree of continuity regarding envy and jealousy. Although differences exist—e.g. Plato's characters seem to stress more vehemently and explicitly the detrimental effects that envy can have on the state as a whole, and there is greater attention paid to the question of the tyrant's own well-being—these differences reflect a natural development and progression of ideas over time, as well as the philosophical nature of Plato's works. The most notable difference is that Plato represents the divine as being free from *phthonos*, which stems more from Plato's own ideals than a change in popular societal beliefs. Plato has various characters espouse a view of the divine that admits of no wrongdoing or negative traits, which relates to Socrates' statement in the *Republic* that poets such as Homer and Hesiod propagate falsehoods by depicting the gods as flawed or as responsible for human suffering (376e-79b). By having Socrates challenge the fitness of such canonical works, however, Plato implicitly acknowledges that Socrates' is not the majority or popular opinion.

3. Aristotle on envy and jealousy

Aristotle discusses emotions more extensively and directly than Plato or any of the other authors included in this study. Even in Aristotle's treatment, however, the emotions as such are not the main focus, but rather, he includes them in his accounts of other topics, such as rhetoric or morality, and accordingly, he does not provide an entirely systematic exposition.²⁰ Most of the passages in this section come from the *Rhetoric*, which contains the fullest analysis of emotions, although certain emotions (e.g. jealousy) are largely absent.

Conceptually, Aristotle groups together the emotions of pity, indignation, and envy, and after establishing that pity is a pain experienced in relation to the undeserved misfortunes of another (*Rh.* 1385b13-14) and that indignation is a pain experienced in relation to the undeserved successes of another (*Rh.* 1386b9-11), he defines envy: δόξειε δ' ἂν καὶ ὁ φθόνος τῷ ἐλεεῖν τὸν αὐτὸν ἀντικεῖσθαι τρόπον, ὡς σύνεγγυς ὢν καὶ ταὐτὸν τῷ νεμεσᾶν, ἔστι δ' ἕτερον· λύπη μὲν γὰρ ταραχώδης καὶ ὁ φθόνος ἐστὶν καὶ ἐπὶ εὐπραγία, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ ἀναξίου ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἴσου καὶ ὁμοίου (Envy would also seem to lie in opposition to feeling pity in the same manner, on the grounds that it is similar and the same as feeling indignation, but it is different: for envy is also a troublesome pain and [experienced] in relation to success, but not [the success] of an undeserving man, but an equal and similar man, *Rh.* 1386b16-20).²¹ Three pieces of information emerge from this definition that are important for our purposes, and each will be examined in

²⁰ Ben-Ze'ev (2003), 105.

²¹ Aristotle defines envy similarly in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: ὁ μὲν γὰρ νεμεσητικὸς λυπεῖται ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀναξίως εὖ πράττουσιν, ὁ δὲ φθονερὸς ὑπερβάλλων τοῦτον ἐπὶ πᾶσι λυπεῖται (For the indignant man is vexed at those who have success undeservedly, while the envious man, surpassing him, is vexed at all [those who have success], 1108b3-5). So too in the *Eudemian Ethics*: φθονερὸς δὲ τῷ λυπεῖσθαι ἐπὶ πλείοσιν εὐπραγίας ἢ δεῖ (καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἄξιοι εὖ πράττειν λυποῦσι τοὺς φθονεροὺς εὖ πράττοντες) (The envious man [is characterized] by being vexed at more successes than one ought to be, for even those who are worthy of having success vex the envious when they have success, 1221a38-40). In this definition, the comparative phrase ἐπὶ πλείοσιν εὐπραγίας ἢ δεῖ points to the idea that envy is a deviant and improper emotion (see p. 173-74).

turn: the idea that indignation and envy are distinct emotions, the idea that envy is not concerned with desert, and the idea that envy has to do with individuals similar to oneself.

According to Aristotle, the key difference between indignation and envy is that the former is concerned with undeserved good fortune, while the latter pays no attention to whether the good fortune is deserved. This distinction is more pronounced in Aristotle's works, however, than elsewhere. First, Aristotle is unique in employing the phrase *to nemesan*, and he also uses the noun form *nemesis* significantly more than other classical authors; its relative scarcity in Herodotus' *Histories* has already been noted.²² Second, as both Konstan and Sanders suggest, outside of the Aristotelian corpus, *phthonos* can at times convey a sense of righteous indignation.²³ The examples they cite come from authors not treated here (e.g. Isocrates 8.124, 4.184; Demosthenes 28.18), but Herodotus' portrayal of the type of divine *phthonos* that targets the arrogant points in a similar direction. By the fifth century, *phthonos* had begun to have an occasional moral aspect in certain contexts, thus aligning it more closely with Aristotle's concept of indignation than his own discussion would lead us to believe.

If envy and indignation are not entirely distinct, the claim that only indignation pays attention to whether the object deserves his or her good fortune begins to collapse. At any rate, let us ignore this complication for the moment and independently evaluate the idea that envy has nothing to do with the object's desert. This seems to be valid, for the most part.²⁴ For example, Oedipus imagines that others envy him because of his position (*OT* 380-89). There is no difficulty in having Oedipus himself label it as envy, because doing so implies nothing about his worthiness to rule, an issue about which he is evidently sensitive, because in the same passage,

²² Konstan (2006), 114; Sanders (2014), 76. For Herodotus' use of *nemesis*, see p. 141.

²³ Konstan (2006), 121; Sanders (2014), 77.

²⁴ Of course, a subject may try to justify or mask his or her feelings by insisting that the object does not deserve the good (Sanders 2014, 18, 24). If a neutral third party agrees that the object does not, the emotion is more akin to indignation (see p. 24). If the third party disagrees, the subject is likely misrepresenting the situation in some way.

he emphasizes that he did not seek out the position, but rather, it was offered to him. Where this claim falters is in the case of divine *phthonos*. As we have seen, there are two types of divine *phthonos* in Herodotus' *Histories*: one that is believed to afflict humans more or less at random, and one that strikes the overly prideful or presumptuous. With the latter type, there is a definite element of desert: such individuals have transgressed social and cosmic norms and do not deserve to succeed (further). To be fair, Aristotle is not discussing the *phthonos* of the gods specifically in the *Rhetoric*, so perhaps we should not expect his definition to take this phenomenon into account.²⁵

There is still, however, an element of desert involved in envy—that of the subject—and this does not enter into Aristotle's basic definition.²⁶ Indeed, the perception that the subject him or herself ought to possess the good or quality in question is crucial to the essence of envy: this is at the root of Sanders' third requisite condition, namely the wrongness of the disparity.²⁷ If someone notices that another person has a possession or quality that he or she lacks but does not consider him or herself deserving of the same, it is difficult to imagine that he or she will conceive of the situation as wrong, given that the desert of the other person is not relevant. There can be no envy where there is no sense of personal merit. For example, when Odysseus' men surreptitiously open the bag of winds from Aeolus to inspect its contents, he imagines that they do so out of envy, believing that since they have toiled alongside him, they deserve a share of the riches (Hom. *Od.* 10.34-45).²⁸ Aristotle hints at the involvement of the subject's desert elsewhere,

²⁵ In his discussion of the wisdom of first causes and principles, Aristotle addresses the idea of divine *phthonos*, but only to deny that what Simonides and other poets have said is true: Simonides wrote that the gods alone possess this gift of wisdom, and other poets state that the divine is jealous by nature (*Met.* 982b28-83a3). Thus Aristotle, like Plato, refutes the possibility of divine *phthonos*, but in doing so, Aristotle acknowledges that belief in its existence was part of an established tradition.

²⁶ Ben-Ze'ev (2003), 110.

²⁷ See p. 23; Sanders (2014), 15.

²⁸ See also Hom. *Il.* 4.51-67 (p. 39-40). Hera seems to feel a preemptive sort of envy at Zeus' suggestion that Troy be spared and Menelaus return home with Helen (although she says that she will not feel *phthonos* toward Zeus if he

but he does not dwell on it. After describing the types of things that tend to elicit envy, he writes, καὶ μάλιστα ὧν αὐτοὶ ἢ ὀρέγονται ἢ οἶονται δεῖν αὐτοὺς ἔχειν (and especially in the case of those things that [people] themselves reach for or think they ought to have, *Rh.* 1388a3-4). The presence of *malista* is curious, however, as it implies that there are in fact some scenarios in which envy arises over something that the subject does *not* aim to attain or think that he or she deserves. The first part of this statement—that envy is especially likely in the case of those things that people themselves reach for—may refer to the question of specificity. Envy is generally less specific in terms of the desired good than jealousy, but perhaps Aristotle’s point here is that when someone else possesses the exact good we desire, the envy we feel is stronger than when someone else has something merely akin to what we desire.²⁹ If this is indeed what Aristotle means, then that part of his assessment is sound (since there are instances in which this applies and other in which it does not), but to the best of my knowledge, there is no scenario in the works examined here in which the second part—that envy is especially likely in the case of those things that people think they ought to have—does not apply. Aristotle’s definition of envy seems accurate in its emphasis of the idea that the object’s desert is irrelevant, but it largely neglects to mention the key role of the subject’s desert.

The third salient piece of information in Aristotle’s definition is that people feel envy toward those who are similar to them. He later elaborates on what forms of likeness he means: κατὰ γένος, κατὰ συγγένειαν, καθ’ ἡλικίας, κατὰ ἔξεις, κατὰ δόξαν, κατὰ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα (birth, relationship, age, habit, reputation, [or] property, *Rh.* 1387b26-28). The idea that like envies like

destroys her three favorite cities in return for the destruction of Troy). Hera argues that it would not be right for her efforts to help the Greeks to go to waste, given that she shares Zeus’ parentage and also deserves honor as his wife. Thus we can see that she believes she is deserving of that which she envies, namely the power to protect (and the worship received in exchange for protection).

²⁹ For the idea that envy is generally less specific than jealousy, see p. 26.

is prominent and widespread, and has been noted previously.³⁰ Aristotle goes one step further than his predecessors, however, and explains the reason behind this tendency: δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι παρ' αὐτοὺς οὐ τυγχάνουσι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὥστε τοῦτο λυποῦν ποιεῖ τὸν φθόνον (It is clear that they do not attain the good because of themselves, with the result that this [failure], causing pain, creates envy, *Rh.* 1388a19-21). In essence, when those who are in some way similar to us meet with success, it forces us to confront the truth, namely that we too could have the same success, but our own shortcomings have prevented us from achieving it. If someone with whom we have nothing in common meets with success, the comparison does not arise as naturally, and so we are generally spared the pain of envy.

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle not only compares envy with pity and indignation, but also with emulation (*zēlos*). He describes the distinction between the two:

εἰ γάρ ἐστιν ζῆλος λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένη παρουσίᾳ ἀγαθῶν ἐντίμων καὶ ἐνδεχομένων αὐτῷ λαβεῖν περὶ τοὺς ὁμοίους τῇ φύσει, οὐχ ὅτι ἄλλω ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐχὶ καὶ αὐτῷ ἔστιν (διὸ καὶ ἐπιεικές ἐστιν ὁ ζῆλος καὶ ἐπιεικῶν, τὸ δὲ φθονεῖν φαῦλον καὶ φαύλων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν παρασκευάζει διὰ τὸν ζῆλον τυγχάνειν τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ὁ δὲ τὸν πλησίον μὴ ἔχειν διὰ τὸν φθόνον)

For if emulation is some pain at the apparent presence of goods [that are] honored and possible for a person himself to gain in the possession of those similar [to him] in nature, not because they belong to another, but because they do not also belong to him (and for this reason, emulation is decorous and characteristic of decorous men, while feeling envy is base and characteristic of base men: for on account of emulation, the one man prepares to obtain the goods for himself, while the other, on account of envy, [tries to arrange that] his neighbor not have them)... (*Rh.* 1388a32-38)

The crucial difference, then, is one of action tendency (i.e. the impulse to behave in a particular way in reaction to an emotion). According to Aristotle, emulation motivates subjects to acquire the desired good for themselves, while envy motivates them to deprive the objects of the good, and this difference is what leads him to categorize emulation as a virtuous emotion, whereas

³⁰ For the appearance of the same in Plato's works, see p. 154-55. For a summary of its appearances elsewhere, see p. 186.

envy is base. Such an explanation seems plausible enough at first glance, but upon closer scrutiny, the distinction between *phthonos* and *zēlos* is often more complicated.³¹ In some cases, it holds true. For instance, when Hesiod writes, ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων / εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ' (the neighbor emulates the neighbor who strives for wealth, *Op.* 23-24), the point is that the first neighbor, seeing the second, takes it upon himself to work harder so that he too can amass wealth; he is not actively seeking to take away from what his neighbor has.³² When Metaneira attempts to persuade the disguised Demeter to look after her infant son, she promises her gifts that will cause other women to feel *zēlos* (τίς σε ἰδοῦσα γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων / ζηλώσαι· τόσα κέν τοι ἀπὸ θρεπτήρια δοίην, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 222-23). Their intent is to convince her of the value of what she will be receiving by emphasizing that other women will want to acquire the same for themselves, not that she will have to worry about other women taking away what she has been given. Even so, however, Helene Foley translates, “any woman who saw you would feel envy at once.”³³ Similarly, Susan Shelmerdine translates, “surely any of the tender women, seeing you, would feel envy.”³⁴ I prefer this translation of *zēlos* as well, because “emulation” is a relatively archaic term in English (in a way that *zēlos* for the hymn’s audience would not have been).³⁵ Moreover, in common English usage, “envy” can—but does not always—carry with it a destructive sense, and that is precisely the point: *zēlos* seems innocent enough in this context, but there is always still the possibility of a more dangerous

³¹ Walcot (1978), 14-15. For an evaluation of the claim that envy drives subjects to deprive the objects of the good rather than to acquire it for themselves, see p. 174-75. The question at hand in what immediately follows is whether *phthonos* and *zēlos* are in fact separate entities.

³² Curiously, several lines later, Hesiod says that beggars envy beggars and singers envy singers, using a form of *phthonein*. It appears that *zēloun* and *phthonein* are working synonymously, but the fact that *phthonein* typically carries a negative connotation raises questions, to such a degree that some editors suggest removing the lines with *phthonein*. At any rate, the use of *zēloun* is clearly intended to be virtuous, given the context.

³³ Foley (1994), 10, 12.

³⁴ Shelmerdine (1995), 42, 45.

³⁵ Schoeck (1969), 16.

meaning lurking beneath the surface. There is enough fluidity between the concepts of *zēlos* and *phthonos* to justify translating either one as “envy.”

There are cases in which *zēlos* has a clearly pejorative connotation and others in which *phthonos* and *zēlos* shade into one another, making it difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. In describing the horrors that will come to afflict men living in the Age of Iron, Hesiod laments, Ζῆλος δ’ ἀνθρώποισιν οἰζυροῖσιν ἅπασι / δυσκέλαδος κακόχαρτος ὁμαρτήσῃ στυγερῶπης (Discordant, horrible Envy who rejoices in misfortunes will walk beside all of miserable mankind, *Op.* 195-96). *Zēlos* is obviously more nefarious in this instance than Aristotle’s definition of emulation suggests, and accordingly must be translated as “envy” rather than “emulation.” The *zēlosunē* that causes Hera to keep the goddess of childbirth away from Leto in her time of need is similarly less about virtuous emulation than it is about aggravated envy or jealousy (*Hom. Hymn Ap.* 99-101). Sanders notes that *zēlos*’ meaning was less sharply distinguished in the archaic period and thus could appear in more detrimental contexts, but even in the classical period a close connection remained between *zēlos* and *phthonos*.³⁶ Oedipus’ musings provide a glimpse into this connection: ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνη τέχνης / ὑπερφέρουσα τῷ πολυζήλῳ βίῳ, / ὅσος παρ’ ὑμῖν ὁ φθόνος φυλάσσεται (“Wealth and kingship and skill surpassing skill in the much-admired life, how great is the envy stored up in you,” *Soph. OT* 380-82).³⁷ Clytemnestra speaks and acts in a duplicitous manner, but she nevertheless sheds light on the idea that *phthonos* and *zēlos*—while not identical—are inseparable: ὁ δ’ ἀφθόνητός γ’ οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει (“The unenvied man is not admirable,” *Aesch. Ag.* 939).³⁸ Plato too highlights the natural progression from *zēlos* to *phthonos* in the *Menexenus*, when describing

³⁶ Sanders (2014), 47. Grimaldi notes that this pejorative meaning can be found in later authors as well, such as Diogenes Laertius and Stobaeus (1988, 173).

³⁷ For the full discussion of this passage, see p. 84.

³⁸ For the full discussion of this passage, see p. 97-98.

how Athens became embroiled in the Peloponnesian War (242a).³⁹ *Zēlos* may at times indicate a milder, less invidious emotion than *phthonos*, but nevertheless, these cases collectively raise the question of whether *zēlos* is ever wholly positive, thus complicating the neat division that Aristotle sets out.

One final, related emotion deserves mention, and this is jealousy. Jealousy does not enter into Aristotle's discussion in the *Rhetoric* as a separate emotion from envy, nor does it appear elsewhere in his works.⁴⁰ Aristotle does, however, address one important element of its nature under the heading of envy, which in turn reaffirms what we have already seen, namely that *phthonos* covers scripts that correspond to both envy and jealousy in English.⁴¹ He writes, καὶ οἷς μικρὸν ἐλλείπει τοῦ μὴ πάντα ὑπάρχειν (διὸ οἱ μεγάλα πράττοντες καὶ οἱ εὐτυχοῦντες φθονεροὶ εἰσιν)· πάντας γὰρ οἶονται τὰ αὐτῶν φέρειν (Those who fall a little short of having everything also [feel envy], and this is why those who do great things and those who are successful are envious: for they think that everyone [wants] to carry off what is their own, *Rh.* 1387b28-30). Aristotle here reveals the dual nature of *phthonos*: it can indicate either a pain over what you do not have but wish to have, or a pain over what you already have but are concerned about losing. I have chosen to translate *phthoneroi* here as “envious” because it derives from the same word that Aristotle uses throughout to mean envy, but the idea expressed—that some people are concerned with losing what they have—clearly points to the mentality that we associate with jealousy.

Beyond providing basic definitions, Aristotle's treatment of envy touches on several notable features. First, the relationship between envy and honor is evident in his summary of the things about which people feel envy: ἐφ' οἷς δὲ φθονοῦσι, τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ εἴρηται· ἐφ' οἷς γὰρ

³⁹ For the full discussion of this passage, see p. 157-58.

⁴⁰ Konstan (2006), 222.

⁴¹ Sanders (2014), 39, 44.

φιλοδοξοῦσι καὶ φιλοτιμοῦνται ἔργοις ἢ κτήμασι καὶ ὀρέγονται δόξης, καὶ ὅσα εὐτυχήματά ἐστιν, σχεδὸν περὶ πάντα φθόνος ἔστι (The good things which people envy have been stated: for the deeds and possessions for whose sake people love fame and honor and grasp for fame, and as many things are pieces of success, there is envy concerning nearly all of them, *Rh.* 1387b35-88a3). Aristotle also says that those who are especially concerned with honor tend to be more envious: καὶ οἱ φιλότιμοι φθονερώτεροι τῶν ἀφιλοτίμων (And the ambitious [are] more envious than the unambitious, *Rh.* 1387b31-32). This accords with what we have seen elsewhere.⁴² We should not, however, take this verbal association with *timê* to mean that he considers envy a justified or noble emotion. He goes on to say that the small-souled (μικρόψυχοι, b34) are also prone to it and that it is characteristic of base men (*Rh.* 1388a35-36, quoted above).⁴³

Envy is the only emotion discussed in the *Rhetoric* that Aristotle depicts as unconditionally negative.⁴⁴ As mentioned above, Aristotle considers envy unlike pity and indignation, both of which are suggestive of good character (*Rh.* 1386b11-12); in the case of envy, the object's desert is irrelevant, which paints the emotion in a bad light. Moreover, in the *Eudemian Ethics*, envy is defined as excessive by its very nature: φθονερός δὲ τῷ λυπεῖσθαι ἐπὶ πλείοσιν εὐπραγίαις ἢ δεῖ (καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἄξιοι εὖ πράττειν λυποῦσι τοὺς φθονερούς εὖ πράττοντες) (The envious man [is characterized] by being vexed at more successes than one ought to be, for even those who are worthy of having success vex the envious when they have success, 1221a38-40). The comparative phrase ἐπὶ πλείοσιν εὐπραγίαις ἢ δεῖ is a clear indication that Aristotle regards envy as inappropriate by definition. Indeed, Aristotle posits that indignation is the mean

⁴² Cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 528-48 (p. 90). For the relationship between envy and honor (or more specifically, ambition) in Plato's works, see p. 155-56. See also p. 183-85.

⁴³ Theophrastus' use of *phthonos* in his description of the man who finds fault with everything is in keeping with Aristotle's view. According to Theophrastus, such a man complains upon receiving a portion of meat from a friend that the friend has begrudged him (Ἐφθόνησάς μοι) soup and wine (*Char.* 17.2). Theophrastus does not label the complainer himself as *phthoneros*, but it seems clear that he is prone to envy, even as he accuses another of being stingy out of jealousy.

⁴⁴ Konstan (2006), 113.

(i.e. the proper amount of an emotion), with envy and an unnamed emotion (something akin to malice or spite) as the excessive and defective vices, respectively. He explains, νέμεσις δὲ μεσότης φθόνου καὶ ἐπικαιρεκακίας...ὁ μὲν γὰρ νεμεσητικὸς λυπεῖται ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀναξίως εὖ πράττουσιν, ὁ δὲ φθονερός ὑπερβάλλων τοῦτον ἐπὶ πᾶσι λυπεῖται, ὁ δ' ἐπικαιρέκακος τοσοῦτον ἐλλείπει τοῦ λυπεῖσθαι ὥστε καὶ χαίρειν (Indignation is the mean between envy and malice...for the indignant man is vexed at those who have success undeservedly, while the envious man, surpassing him, is vexed at all [those who have success], and the malicious man falls so far short of being vexed that he even rejoices [at undeserved misfortunes], *Eth. Nic.* 1108b1-6).⁴⁵

Aristotle not only finds fault with envy on the grounds that it pays no heed to desert and is fundamentally excessive, but also on the grounds that, in his view, the subject is concerned with depriving the object of the good, rather than acquiring it for him or herself, as is the case with emulation (*Rh.* 1388a36-38). As we have already seen, the distinction between envy and emulation is not as straightforward as Aristotle presents it to be, but let us now look more closely at the idea that envy drives people to deprive others of the good. William Grimaldi states that Aristotle is incorrect and that envy's aim is not to deprive others of what they possess.⁴⁶ Finding middle ground, Sanders concludes that *phthonos* covers a range of scripts, including both begrudging and covetous envy, which differ in terms of whether the ultimate goal is to deprive or to acquire, respectively.⁴⁷ I agree with Sanders, and thus I find Aristotle's claim overly simplistic in its denial of covetous envy, which seems arguably more common than begrudging, especially in the political realm. For example, in Oedipus' estimation of Creon's motives, Creon envies Oedipus' position and aims to occupy it himself, rather than simply to remove Oedipus from the throne (*Soph. OT* 380-89). Despite the absence of explicit *phthonos* terminology, I have argued

⁴⁵ Cf. *Eth. Eud.* 1233b16-26.

⁴⁶ Grimaldi (1988), 174.

⁴⁷ These goals can also coexist, although typically one is more pressing than the other. See p. 24.

previously Histiaeus' suspicious defense of his motives suggests that he feels envy toward Darius. Herodotus' revelation that he ultimately just wants to leave Susa and return to his seat of power points to covetous rather than begrudging envy (Hdt. 5.35.4, 5.106.3).⁴⁸ If his primary goal were to remove Darius from power or to reduce his holdings drastically, inciting rebellion in Miletus would not be the most direct or effective course of action. These figures act as they do not because they are set on depriving a particular individual of his power, but because they are determined to increase their own, thus running counter to Aristotle's characterization of envy.⁴⁹

In comparing Aristotle's treatment of envy and what Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus say and reveal about it, various points of divergence appear. The distinction between envy and indignation and the distinction between envy and emulation are not as straightforward as Aristotle makes them out to be, and moreover, the idea that envy's aim is to deprive others rather than to acquire for oneself is representative of begrudging envy, but to the exclusion of covetous envy. Some differences are to be expected, however, given that the nature of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is prescriptive, rather than descriptive: Aristotle's goal in discussing the emotions is to enable the orator to arouse and capitalize on the emotional response of the audience, and detailing all their various complexities and idiosyncrasies is not necessarily conducive to this goal. On the other hand, Aristotle's points about the relationship between subject and object (i.e. that they are alike in some respect) and about the centrality of honor are consistent with earlier authors' depictions. Moreover, the way in which Aristotle regards envy as an indicator of a base or flawed character hearkens back to what we have seen in the works of Sophocles and

⁴⁸ See p. 132-33.

⁴⁹ It is possible that Aristotle would have seen in these situations an overlap of envy and a desire for power (something akin to greed or covetousness). If this is the case, situations like these highlight one of the inherent limitations of classifying emotions in such a delineated fashion: in reality, emotions often occur in combination with one another and it is difficult (if not impossible) to disentangle them. Thus classifications of emotions are useful for illustrating general characteristics, but we run into difficulties if we disallow any flexibility and expect them to present binary rather than prototypical categories.

Herodotus in particular, where envy and jealousy are used to characterize various figures in a negative and/or dangerous light.

4. Aristotle on envy, jealousy, and tyranny

Similar to the way in which Plato's representation of envy and jealousy harmonizes with that of previous authors to a greater degree when we look at passages relating to tyranny, Aristotle too paints a familiar picture of envy, jealousy, and tyranny. Plato and Aristotle differed, however, in the approaches they took to studying constitutions; whereas Plato developed his views in a more abstract manner, Aristotle was drawing on information that he and his students collected from over one hundred city-states.⁵⁰ In this way, Aristotle's works can be considered more well-informed, but he too presents idealized or theoretical arguments at times. In Aristotle's view, there are six possible constitutional forms: three proper ones, namely kingship, aristocracy, and polity, and three deviant forms, namely tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy (*Pol.* 1279a33-b10). Of these, he labels kingship as the best and most divine and tyranny as the worst (*Pol.* 1289a39-b5). The difference between the two, in Aristotle's view, comes down to the question of whose interests receive precedence: καλεῖν δ' εἰώθαμεν τῶν μὲν μοναρχιῶν τὴν πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν ἀποβλέπουσαν συμφέρον βασιλείαν... ἢ μὲν γὰρ τυραννίς ἐστὶ μοναρχία πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τὸ τοῦ μοναρχοῦντος (We are accustomed to call the type of monarchy that is attentive to the common interest "kingship"... For tyranny is monarchy according to the interest of the one who is sovereign, *Pol.* 1279a33-b7).⁵¹ *Phthonos* does not play an explicit role in his

⁵⁰ Lewis (2009), 89-90.

⁵¹ Aristotle subsequently expands on this definition, but the question of whose interests reign supreme remains a central issue: τοιαύτην δ' ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τυραννίδα τὴν μοναρχίαν ἣτις ἀνυπεύθυνος ἄρχει τῶν ὁμοίων καὶ βελτιόνων πάντων πρὸς τὸ σφέτερον αὐτῆς συμφέρον, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων (The monarchy that rules, unaccountable, over all equal and better men, according to its own benefit, but not to that of the ruled, must be tyranny, *Pol.* 1295a19-22).

basic definition, although it is not difficult to see how it could fit into this and how it could contribute to the portrayal of tyranny as a loathsome form of rule. Tyranny is rule according to the interest of the ruler, which means that he has the license to indulge his vices, such as *phthonos*.⁵² Moreover, Aristotle notes elsewhere that the affairs of powerful individuals tend to have consequences that ripple outward: ὅλως δὲ αἱ τῶν γνωρίμων στάσεις συναπολαύειν ποιοῦσι καὶ τὴν ὅλην πόλιν, οἷον ἐν Ἑστιαίᾳ συνέβη μετὰ τὰ Μηδικά, δύο ἀδελφῶν περὶ τῆς πατρῶας νομῆς διενεχθέντων (On the whole, the discord of the notables makes the whole city share in its consequences, such as happened in Hestiaea after the Persian Wars, when two brothers quarreled about the distribution of their patrimony, *Pol.* 1303b31-34). Thus if a tyrant experiences and acts out of *phthonos*, that *phthonos* can lead to *stasis* on a statewide level.⁵³

Aristotle's description of the traditional characteristics of tyranny (*Pol.* 1314a1-29), which is embedded within his discussion of how to preserve various types of rule, has much in common with Otanes' speech from Herodotus' constitutional debate, although the terminology differs. For example, both accounts mention that tyrants associate with worthless men. Otanes argues, χαίρει δὲ τοῖσι κακίστοισι τῶν ἀστῶν ("he delights in the worst of the citizens," Hdt. 3.80.4). Similarly, Aristotle writes: πονηρόφιλον ἢ τυραννίς...καὶ χρήσιμοι οἱ πονηροὶ εἰς τὰ πονηρά (Tyranny is friendly to the base...and the base are useful for base things, *Pol.* 1314a1-4). Tyrants' fondness for praise appears in both descriptions as well, and this is one of the examples that Otanes lists after stating that tyrants do many reckless deeds out of *hubris* and/or *phthonos* (Hdt. 3.80.4). Otanes notes that tyrants grow aggravated if they are flattered only moderately (ἦν τε γὰρ αὐτὸν μετρίως θωμάζης, ἄχθεται ὅτι οὐ κάρτα θεραπεύεται, 3.80.5); Aristotle says that they delight in being fawned over (κολακευόμενοι γὰρ χαίρουσιν, *Pol.* 1314a2). Conversely,

⁵² McGlew (1993), 29-30.

⁵³ For an explicit link between *stasis* and *phthonos*, see *Pol.* 1304a33-38 (p. 179-80).

tyrants cannot tolerate the powerful or prominent. For Otanes, this idea is also closely connected to *phthonos*: φθονέει γὰρ τοῖσι ἀρίστοισι περιεοῦσί τε καὶ ζώουσι (“For he feels *phthonos* toward the best men because they excel and [even] exist,” Hdt. 3.80.4). Aristotle does not mention *phthonos* by name, but he writes, καὶ τὸ μηδενὶ χαίρειν σεμνῶ μηδ’ ἐλευθέρῳ τυραννικόν (αὐτὸν γὰρ εἶναι μόνον ἀξιοῖ τοιοῦτον ὁ τύραννος, ὁ δ’ ἀντισεμνυνόμενος καὶ ἐλευθεριάζων ἀφαιρεῖται τὴν ὑπεροχὴν καὶ τὸ δεσποτικὸν τῆς τυραννίδος· μισοῦσιν οὖν ὥσπερ καταλύοντας τὴν ἀρχήν (And it is a tyrannical trait to not delight in anyone proud or free, for the tyrant considers himself alone worthy of being such, and the man who meets pride with pride and acts like a free man takes away the superiority and imperiousness of tyranny. Accordingly, tyrants hate such men as if destroyers of their rule, *Pol.* 1314a5-10). In Aristotle’s estimation, a tyrant views pride and freedom as his own exclusive prerogative that he is unwilling to share with others. This points to a jealous state of mind, as does the mention of detracting from his superiority (τὴν ὑπεροχὴν), a primary concern in jealousy.⁵⁴

The suggestion of envy and jealousy—especially the latter—permeates Aristotle’s description of tyrants. In addition to the points of comparison with Otanes’ arguments noted above, Aristotle states that tyrants are more likely to invite foreigners to dine with them than citizens, on the grounds that citizens are hostile while foreigners do not contend against them (ὥς τοὺς μὲν πολεμίους τοὺς δ’ οὐκ ἀντιποιοιμένους, *Pol.* 1314a11-12), which relates back to the idea that like envies like. This is similar to the defense of Demaratus that Xerxes presents to his

⁵⁴ The tyrant’s preoccupation with superiority appears in the exchange between Thrasybulus and Periander as well, both in Herodotus and Aristotle’s versions (which have the tyrants’ roles reversed; for a discussion of the former, see p. 123). In both depictions, the first tyrant cuts down the tallest stalks of grain (τῶν ἀσταχύων ὑπερέχοντα, Hdt. 5.92.ζ2; ὑπερέχοντας τῶν σταχύων, Arist. *Pol.* 1284a30), which the second interprets to mean that he should destroy the outstanding citizens (τοὺς ὑπειρόχους τῶν ἀστῶν, Hdt. 5.92η.1; τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας ἄνδρας, Arist. *Pol.* 1284a33), presumably on the grounds that their prominence threatens his own superiority. Curiously, Aristotle does not condemn outright the practice of eliminating the prominent, as this issue troubles all forms of government (*Pol.* 1284b3-4), but it is clearly unjustifiable in the case of the tyrant, who by definition acts in his own interest rather than in the state’s. For more on Aristotle’s treatment of Thrasybulus and Periander and the differences between his account and Herodotus’, see Forsdyke (1999).

brother, when he warns Xerxes that Demaratus may be acting out of envy. While Xerxes recognizes that citizens envy one another, he argues that this is not the case with guest-friends (Hdt. 7.237.2-3). Aristotle goes on to say that these tactics (e.g. dining with foreigners) are characteristic of tyranny and provide security for their rule, but not in a morally defensible way (οὐθὲν δ' ἐλλείπει μοχθηρίας, *Pol.* 1314a13-14). In what follows, he identifies three overarching aims of tyranny: to keep its subjects' spirits impoverished, to prevent its subjects from banding together in confidence, and to deprive them of political power (*Pol.* 1314a14-29). Given that Aristotle has already at the outset labeled such aims as morally bankrupt, it should not be a stretch to construe of all three as stemming from a jealous paranoia about retaining power, rather than as legitimate strategies for safeguarding one's rule.⁵⁵

While *phthonos* does not enter explicitly into the description of tyrannical behavior discussed above, Aristotle occasionally points to the impact that the *phthonos* of the citizens can have, either on the state in general or on an individual's rule. For example, he posits a causal relationship between *phthonos* and *stasis*: οἱ δυνάμεως αἴτιοι γινόμενοι, καὶ ἰδιῶται καὶ ἀρχαὶ καὶ φυλαὶ καὶ ὅλως μέρος καὶ πλῆθος ὁποιοῦν, στάσιν κινεῦσιν· ἢ γὰρ οἱ τούτοις φθονοῦντες τιμωμένοις ἄρχουσι τῆς στάσεως, ἢ οὗτοι διὰ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν οὐ θέλουσι μένειν ἐπὶ τῶν ἴσων (Those who are responsible for [increasing a state's] power cause division, whether private citizens or magistrates or tribes or, on the whole, any part or multitude: for either the ones who envy these men because they are honored begin the division, or these men [begin it themselves because they] are unwilling to remain on an equal level with others, on account of their

⁵⁵ As I have noted above (p. 124), concern about security does not by itself indicate a jealous mindset, but there is a difference between defensive and offensive strategies. Aristotle's judgment of a tyrant's methods here as employing every type of baseness places them solidly in the offensive category. Moreover, this entire description of tyrannical traits appears within his discussion of how there are two ways to preserve a tyranny, one good and one bad. The tactics listed in *Pol.* 1314a14-29 are representative of the first way, whereas the second and good way is to make the regime less authoritarian, and he explains how to do this at *Pol.* 1314a30-15b10.

superiority, *Pol.* 1304a34-38).⁵⁶ Aristotle thus draws a connection between power, honor, *phthonos*, and *stasis*: increasing the state's power either leads to honor, which causes others people to feel *phthonos* (thus leading to *stasis*), or else it causes those responsible to demand a privileged status (which also leads to *stasis*). This demand can be considered a variant on the “jealous of my position” script: they expect a privileged status that they clearly do not want others to share. We have seen any number of times the connection(s) between power, honor, and *phthonos*, but *stasis* is a new part of this equation.⁵⁷ This brings with it implications for the state as well, especially when we consider this statement in conjunction with the one mentioned above about how instances of *stasis* among the notables tend to affect the entire city (*Pol.* 1303b31-34). Furthermore, the fact that this passage links *phthonos* and *stasis* makes it even more plausible that *phthonos* may be implied in the earlier one.

Aristotle also draws a specific connection between constituents' envy and the downfall of monarchy. In discussing the strategies by which constitutions may be preserved, he writes, Σώζονται δὲ δηλονότι ὡς ἀπλῶς μὲν εἰπεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων, ὡς δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον τῷ τὰς μὲν βασιλείας ἄγειν ἐπὶ τὸ μετριώτερον. ὅσῳ γὰρ ἂν ἐλαττόνων ᾖσι κύριοι, πλείῳ χρόνον ἀναγκαῖον μένειν πᾶσαν τὴν ἀρχήν· αὐτοὶ τε γὰρ ἥττον γίνονται δεσποτικοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἡθεσιν ἴσοι μᾶλλον, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων φθοноοῦνται ἥττον (Clearly, to speak simply, [monarchies] are preserved by the opposites, but more precisely, by drawing them into a more moderate form. For the fewer

⁵⁶ For the idea that acting out of concern for superiority (τὴν ὑπεροχήν) is indicative of a jealous mindset, see the above discussion of *Pol.* 1314a5-10 (p. 178).

⁵⁷ In Herodotus' constitutional debate, Darius speaks to the danger posed by factions in his argument against oligarchy. He reasons that strong personal enmities arise on account of various men's desire to be supreme and to prevail in their opinions, and these enmities lead to factions, which in turn lead to bloodshed (ἐν δὲ ὀλιγαρχίᾳ πολλοῖσι ἀρετὴν ἐπασκέουσι ἐς τὸ κοινὸν ἔχθρα ἴδια ἰσχυρὰ φιλεῖ ἐγγίνεσθαι· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἕκαστος βουλόμενος κορυφαῖος εἶναι γνώμησιν τε νικᾶν ἐς ἔχθρα μεγάλα ἀλλήλοισι ἀπικνέονται, ἐξ ὧν στάσεις ἐγγίνονται, ἐκ δὲ τῶν στασιῶν φόνος, 3.82.3). The hostility and desire for supremacy hints strongly at the possibility of envy, but no explicit connection is made; Otanes alone discusses envy and Darius alone discusses factions. Asheri notes that it is a prevalent view in fourth-century rhetoric and political philosophy that personal enmities among the elite and/or factions can destroy the state (2007, 475).

things over which they have authority, the longer the whole rule must last: for they themselves become less despotic and more equal in character, and they are envied less by the ruled, *Pol.* 1313a18-23). This indicates that the envy of one's constituents can be a contributing factor to the instability or downfall of one-man rule.⁵⁸ Conversely, when Aristotle comes to the discussion of how to preserve a tyranny (rather than monarchy in general, as is the case in the quote above), he states that a tyrant who is more moderate will have a rule that is more virtuous and worthy of emulation (ζηλωτοτέραν) (*Pol.* 1315b4-6).⁵⁹ As we have already seen, the distinction between *phthonos* and *zêlos* is more complicated in other authors' works than one would think on the basis of Aristotle's treatment, but in the context of Aristotle's own texts, it is nonetheless significant that he uses a word related to *zêlos* here: if a ruler is not moderate, his subjects will feel *phthonos* toward him and this may contribute to his downfall, but if he is moderate, he will inspire others with *zêlos*, which poses no such threat and is in fact a mark of a worthy rule.

Given that Aristotle is very careful to distinguish between kingship and tyranny as the correct and deviant forms of monarchy, it may seem strange at first that he takes the time to detail how to safeguard a tyranny. While he was antagonistic toward tyranny in writing, however, he was perhaps more lenient in real life.⁶⁰ Aristotle and Plato both lived in a time when one-man rule was making a resurgence; philosophers at times had the opportunity to influence these powerful individuals (either directly or else through other people), and so Aristotle likely hoped

⁵⁸ Given that Aristotle does not condone tyranny, one may be tempted argue that this is an example of how envy can actually benefit the state, but Aristotle himself does not go so far as to make this claim. Indeed, we should not expect him to: his focus in this section is how to preserve various types of rule, and he is talking about monarchy in general at this point, rather than about tyranny specifically. Moreover, making such an argument would entail casting the people overthrowing the tyranny in a negative light, as he has elsewhere made the case that envy is a wholly negative and unbecoming emotion.

⁵⁹ It is unclear whether Aristotle means that a moderate ruler's subjects will want to emulate his rule (which seems somewhat dangerous) or his character in general (in which case we can consider ζηλωτοτέραν a transferred epithet), or perhaps that other rulers will want to emulate his rule. At any rate, the general sense is clear: he is doing something right.

⁶⁰ Lewis (2009), 92.

to be able to offer insight into how a ruler who was closer to the tyrant end of the spectrum could transform his rule for the better.⁶¹ Thus while in these passages Aristotle depicts the relationships between envy, jealousy, and one-man rule in a way that accords with what we have seen elsewhere (especially in the case of Herodotus), Aristotle is unusual in offering explicit advice on how tyrants can improve themselves and thereby their regimes as well.

What I have provided here is a selection of and commentary on significant passages, but there is still much to explore regarding envy and jealousy in Plato and Aristotle's extensive writings, particularly as they relate to constitutions, not just to sole rulership but to any form of government. Although Plato does not offer extended narratives about *phthonos* and Aristotle does not mention it explicitly in his discussion of tyrannical traits, I hope to have shown that *phthonos* is nevertheless a pervasive and powerful force in their works, and as such, that it is ripe for and deserving of future study.⁶²

Part II: General Conclusions

1. Envy and jealousy: general characteristics and beliefs

Envy and jealousy were predominantly and nearly exclusively negative emotions in the ancient Greek world, and this is especially true in the political realm. In the works of the authors surveyed here—Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus—several examples do exist of *phthonos* that has the potential to bring about positive effects, but even these are understated and not without complication. They are also so uncommon that they can be easily listed here:

Hesiod's discussion of the good *Eris* depends on envy as a motivating factor; in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the hypothetical envy of other women is touted as a reason to accept the gifts

⁶¹ Idem, 100-1; Simpson (1998), 411.

⁶² Sanders uses the lack of extended narratives about *phthonos* as his justification for choosing not to devote a chapter or any amount of focused attention to Plato's works (2014, 8).

offered by Metaneira, because it functions as an indicator of high value; and divine *phthonos* in Herodotus' *Histories* can sometimes act as an agent for reestablishing justice, as is the case with Pheretime, who died a terrible death after taking extreme vengeance against the people of Barca. Hesiod is the only author who deliberately draws attention to a positive effect, but significantly, this benefit belongs to the economic realm and not the political. Moreover, his diction (specifically, his use of the verb *kotein*) suggests a certain ambiguity, raising the question: even if it can have positive effects in some cases, does it ever come without negative ones? The answer, it seems, is no. *Phthonos* is, at its core, a pain, and whether both the person experiencing it and the person toward whom it is directed suffer ill effects or just one of the parties, there is no situation involving *phthonos* in which everyone stands only to gain. Moreover, within the human realm, the envy and jealousy that sole rulers feel or receive are not shown in any circumstances to bring about positive effects for anyone.

Given the overwhelmingly negative picture of *phthonos* that has emerged over the course of this study, it is not surprising that there have been no firsthand admissions.⁶³ Indeed, more often than not, we cannot rely on the presence of words such as *phthonos*, *zêlos*, or cognates to alert us to the presence of such emotions, which is why it is so important to go beyond a lexical approach. By examining the passages in which these words *do* appear in the early material (namely in the works of Homer and Hesiod), we have been able to identify both the types of scenarios (or scripts) that these terms describe as well as associated words (e.g. *eris*, *megairein*, *agaasthai*) that can signal the presence of envy or jealousy when they are not named explicitly. Many of the instances of envy and jealousy that Homer and Hesiod depict can be traced back to issues of honor or reputation, an association that is evident in the clustering of terms such as *timê*,

⁶³ Two of Sophocles' characters admit (or come close to admitting) that they feel *zêlos*, but never *phthonos* (see p. 81 note 34).

kleos, and *kudos*. Honor and reputation continue to be a point of contention when envy and jealousy arise in the works of Sophocles and Herodotus, despite relatively less frequent appearances of words such as those listed above.

Envy and jealousy may be more difficult or elusive to study than other emotions on account of the social taboo surrounding them, but that has no bearing on their actual incidence. As is the case with any other emotion, they affect every demographic and no one is immune to their influence: immortals, mortals, men, women, the elite, the commoners, etc. Greek gods are far more powerful than mortals and do not face the same realities (such as death, poverty, old age, etc.), but they experience envy and jealousy nonetheless. The role and nature of divine *phthonos*, however, differs considerably from author to author (to be discussed in section 2 below). Just as the gods are subject to feeling the pangs of envy and jealousy, so too all mortals can experience these emotions. In Herodotus' constitutional debate, Otanes makes the case that envy is born in mankind from the start: ἐγγίνεται μὲν γὰρ οἱ ὕβρις ὑπὸ τῶν παρεόντων ἀγαθῶν, φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῇθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ ("For *hubris* is bred in him from the good things at hand, while *phthonos* grows in man from the start," 3.80.3). He draws a contrast (*men...de*) between *hubris*, which is brought on by circumstances, and *phthonos*, which is an innate and universal characteristic of the human condition (although as we have seen, it affects immortals as well).

Indeed, anyone can experience *phthonos*, and Otanes' use of *anthrôpos* (as opposed to *anêr*) indicates that this applies to women as well. Of course, this is not Otanes' point in the debate, and women have been almost entirely absent from the present study by virtue of the fact that the focus has been on envy and jealousy in the political realm, but small pieces of evidence do suggest that women's experience of envy and jealousy is not significantly different from that of men. For instance, in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Metaneira offers the goddess gifts that

will cause other women to feel envy (222-23). It is possible that these other, hypothetical women will be envious simply because of the intrinsic beauty of the gifts, but a gift is, among other things, a token of esteem or honor, and it is likely that women will feel envy on account of what the gifts signify about the status or reputation of the nurse relative to themselves. We see a comparable scenario in the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus' men are thought to have succumbed to envy (and curiosity) regarding the gifts given to Odysseus (*Od.* 10.34-45); this too relates back to honor.⁶⁴ Moreover, in Euripides' *Ion*, Creusa acts out of jealousy on account of the perceived threat to her standing in the royal household that Ion poses, both as an interloper and as a stepson (808ff., 1025). The fact that so many examples of envy and jealousy—regardless of whether an immortal or a mortal, a man or a woman is feeling the emotion—can be traced back to issues of status or reputation strengthens the argument that envy and jealousy are intimately and perhaps even necessarily connected with honor.

With this association in mind, it makes perfect sense that there is such a wealth of examples of envy and jealousy that relate to rulers, since rulers typically have an elevated awareness and concern for their image.⁶⁵ Moreover, being in a position of power increases the likelihood of attracting the envy of others and of experiencing jealousy oneself. Sophocles makes the former clear with statements such as the chorus' explanation of what they perceive to be slander directed at Ajax (πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἔχονθ' ὁ φθόνος ἔρπει, "For envy advances upon the one who has," *Aj.* 157) and Oedipus' complaint against Creon (ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνῃ τέχνης / ὑπερφέρουσα τῷ πολυζήλῳ βίῳ, / ὅσος παρ' ὑμῖν ὁ φθόνος φυλάσσεται, "Wealth and kingship and skill surpassing skill in the much-admired life, how great is the envy stored up in

⁶⁴ For the idea that honor is a key issue for Odysseus' men, see p. 52-53.

⁶⁵ For example, Agamemnon cannot tolerate the idea of not having a prize woman when all the other leaders at Troy do; Creon stands firm in his resolution to punish Antigone because he is afraid to lose face; Croesus is not beset by a particular desire to amass more power or riches or to deprive others of theirs, but he very much cares that others regard him as the most fortunate.

you,” *OT* 380-82). As for the jealousy of rulers, we have seen this borne out in any number of cases, notably Cronus and Zeus among the gods and Oedipus and Periander among men.

One additional characteristic of envy and jealousy that deserves mention is that people are most likely to experience these emotions in relation to those in their own peer group or those with whom they have something in common. We can see this belief expressed in the abstract in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων, / καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ αἰοιδὸς αἰοιδῷ, And potter begrudges potter and craftsman begrudges craftsman, and beggar envies beggar and singer envies singer, 25-26) and in Xerxes’ discussion with his brother (πολίτης μὲν πολίτη εὖ πρήσسونτι φθονέει, “a citizen envies a citizen who fares well,” Hdt. 7.237.2), as well as in the preemptive actions of figures such as Oedipus and Periander, who take steps to neutralize the threats of their rivals. Tyrants and kings have no true peers, but they often perceive potential rivals among the elite. Indeed, Oedipus suspects Creon, another member of the royal household (*OT* 380-89), and Periander kills the leading citizens of Corinth (Hdt. 5.92.η1). Deioices also illustrates this belief that similarity lays the groundwork for envy: to discourage the envy of his former peers, he makes himself seem as dissimilar as possible (Hdt. 1.99.2).

2. The overall role(s) of envy and jealousy

Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Herodotus are more or less in agreement about the association between honor and the emotions of envy and jealousy, the tendency of positions of power to increase the likelihood of incurring envy and exhibiting jealousy, and the idea that like envies like. Thus we can say that the scripts are fairly consistent among these authors. There is significant variation, however, in terms of the overall roles the authors assign to these emotions.

Divine envy and jealousy

Let us consider the role of the envy and jealousy of the gods first, before evaluating these emotions more generally. In epic, the majority of instances of divine envy and jealousy occur in relation to other deities, and honor is the central issue at stake. For example, Hera feels slighted at the prospect of Zeus getting to keep his beloved Troy at the expense of the Greeks whom she has been helping (*Il.* 4.25-29, 4.51-67), Hermes endeavors to carve out a niche for himself like his older brother Apollo has (*Hom. Hymn Herm.* 163-81), and Cronus and Zeus each go to extreme lengths to protect their position as king of the gods (*Hes. Theog.* 459-62, 888-93). There are only a few references to the idea of gods feeling envy or jealousy in relation to mortals: Poseidon complains to Zeus about the Greeks' wall and how it will eclipse the fame of his own (*Il.* 7.446-53), Menelaus mentions that a god must have begrudged Odysseus' homecoming (*Od.* 4.181-82), and Penelope tells Odysseus that the gods begrudged them enjoying their youth together (*Od.* 23.210-12). In contrast, Sophocles only seldom alludes to divine envy or jealousy, and when he does, the comments are made in passing.⁶⁶ This is not to say that the gods are not involved or that they do not cause harm to mortals; they certainly do.⁶⁷ The gods punish violations of *nomoi* and acts of *hubris*, as we would expect, but Sophocles rarely connects these acts of punishment to an envious or jealous state of mind among the immortals. In Herodotus' *Histories*, divine *phthonos* constitutes a powerful force in the universe, and it is directed solely toward mortals. He has characters discuss it in the abstract (as a warning or lesson) more often

⁶⁶ In Sophocles' *Electra*, upon hearing the news that Orestes is dead, Aegisthus proclaims that he must have been brought down by *phthonos* (presumably of the divine sort, although he does not explicitly mention the gods) (1466-67). This remark is inconsequential in terms of sending a message about the dangers of incurring divine *phthonos*, considering Aegisthus is obviously misinformed—Orestes is not dead at all, and certainly not by the gods' doing. Philoctetes also refers to *phthonos* when, giving his bow to Neoptolemus, he warns him to take care to avoid the *phthonos* that (Philoctetes implies) he himself has suffered (*Phil.* 776-78). Again, he does not specifically make reference to the gods, but the way in which he talks about the bow elsewhere suggests that he considers it to attract divine jealousy on account of its supernatural powers (Schein 2013, 241).

⁶⁷ For an extensive list of examples, see Mikalson (2012), 431.

than he identifies actual examples of it, and moreover, no particular deities are named as the responsible parties.⁶⁸ Whereas the (very few) Homeric mortals who are suggested to have suffered on account of the gods' envy or jealousy (namely, Odysseus and Penelope) are not represented as having done anything to deserve it, this is not always the case in Herodotus' depiction. Herodotean examples of divine *phthonos* fall into two categories: one in which divine *phthonos* strikes randomly or in an otherwise unpredictable manner (which highlights the general vulnerability of human affairs), and one in which misfortunes befall prominent individuals because they incited divine *phthonos* with their (mis)behavior.⁶⁹ Thus Herodotus and his characters point to the idea that divine *phthonos* sometimes works as a balancing force or a force of justice; whereas divine retribution certainly exists in the world of Homer and Hesiod, it is not explicitly or systematically connected with the concept of *phthonos*.

Walcot has argued that this depiction of divine *phthonos* as an agent of divine punishment appears in the fifth century—not just in the work of Herodotus, but also in those of Aeschylus and Pindar—because it was then that the Greeks endured increased contact with eastern monarchs, whose opulence could for the first time be legitimately construed as rivaling that of the gods.⁷⁰ This explanation seems plausible enough for the change in how divine *phthonos* is represented, but it does not touch upon the differences in treatment among fifth-century authors. A more comprehensive survey of fifth-century literature is necessary in order to account for the fact that Herodotus includes numerous significant passages about divine

⁶⁸ The lack of specificity concerning the responsible party is also the case in the examples of Odysseus and Penelope, and this is in accordance with Jørgensen's rule, as these assessments of a begrudging god are made by characters in direct speech rather than by the narrator (Jørgensen 1904, 364). Herodotus is not inspired by the Muses and cannot be considered an omniscient narrator, so it is not surprising that he refrains from naming individual gods even when he identifies divine *phthonos* at work.

⁶⁹ Sophocles includes several messages about the unpredictability of human affairs (which effectively constitute an argument about the pointlessness of envying others, since their fortunes could still be reversed), but he does not introduce the idea of divine *phthonos* in these cases (*OT* 1524-30; *Ant.* 1156-65).

⁷⁰ Walcot (1978), 31.

phthonos while Sophocles largely ignores it; of course, we should not discount the possibility that it appeared more prominently in plays that no longer survive. At any rate, this is a noteworthy point of divergence, especially given that the two authors were contemporaries and even friends.⁷¹

Envy and jealousy in general

The appearances of envy and jealousy in epic are generally less pronounced than in the other genres examined here. Taken in aggregate, they seem to have an anecdotal tone: they do not naturally coalesce into a profound or intentional message about the nature or role of these emotions, nor are they used to showcase rulership in a negative light. Nevertheless, they reveal the dangerous nature of envy and jealousy. In the *Iliad*, Odysseus quickly silences Thersites' envious outburst against Agamemnon and orders him not to compete with kings (*Il.* 2.246-64). Left unaddressed, Thersites' complaint could lead to the development of more widespread resistance to Agamemnon's leadership, which would derail the Greeks' war effort. Another example of the harm that envy can cause appears in the *Odyssey*: in Odysseus' understanding of events, it is his men's envy over the gifts given to him by Aeolus that incites them to open the bag of winds, an act which not only fails to lead to their enrichment (as they had hoped) but also thwarts their homecoming once again (*Od.* 10.34-45). Hesiod also contributes to the depiction of envy and jealousy as disruptive emotions (although he also highlights the potential economic benefit of envy, as discussed above). In the *Theogony*, Cronus and Zeus both commit violence against family members in order to secure their kingship, and they do so out of jealousy; while there is no indication that Hesiod's contemporary audiences are supposed to think that Zeus' continued reign is wrong in some way, it is significant nonetheless that the current hierarchy was

⁷¹ Scodel (2012), 32.

established only through a series of turbulent upheavals among the immortals. If the immortals can fall victim to such vicious power struggles, surely mortals are at risk of the same.

In Sophocles' plays, envy and jealousy represent great potential for danger. It would be inaccurate and in any case overly simplistic to say that these emotions constitute the driving force behind the plays in which they appear (namely the Theban plays), but they do have a significant impact on the characterization of several figures and the nature of their leadership, and they make for a highly unflattering depiction of one-man rule. For example, it is Oedipus' jealousy that causes him to turn on Creon in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which marks the beginning of his descent into anger and suspicion; Creon's insistence that the city belongs to him alone and his refusal to consider the will of the people marks him as a jealous and autocratic ruler in the *Antigone*; and Polyneices' willingness to risk so many lives for the sake of his personal honor reveals his envious disposition in the *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Creon in the *Antigone* are well aware that rulers are at risk of harm from envious or otherwise discontent constituents, but they fail to realize that being overly preoccupied with this and trying to circumvent it (i.e. becoming a jealous ruler) likewise places them in harm's way. We also see Creon making an impassioned case to Oedipus about why he does not envy him (*OT* 584-93), the Theban elders announcing Oedipus' unenviable downfall to the city (*OT* 1524-30), and a messenger proclaiming Creon's similarly unenviable reversal of fortune (*Ant.* 1156-65). Taken together, these passages convey a resounding message that feeling envy and jealousy is in some cases pointless and in others destructive (both to others and oneself); being suspected of feeling these emotions is also dangerous, as is being the object of them. In short, Sophocles presents envy and jealousy in the political realm as entirely negative. The instances vary in terms of the severity of consequences, but there are no positive effects.

Like Sophocles, Herodotus too includes a clear warning about the potential consequences when envy or jealousy is involved. As indicated above, however, Herodotus' message is not solely concerned with effects of mortal envy and jealousy, as Sophocles' is, but it encompasses divine *phthonos* as well. *Phthonos* is one of the most prominent and significant components of Otanes' description of the negative aspects of rule by a single individual, and he identifies it as one of two root causes of the evils committed by tyrants (3.80.3-4). The information Herodotus provides about various rulers throughout the *Histories* reaffirms this description (although naturally not every ruler fits the mold), including the close association drawn between rulers and *phthonos*.⁷² For example, Herodotus explicitly identifies *phthonos* as the reason why Cambyses removes his brother from Egypt and sends him back to Persia (3.30.1) as well as the reason why Demaratus maligns his fellow king Cleomenes (6.61.1); he also has Xerxes' brother cast doubt on Demaratus' motives on the grounds that he feels envy toward Xerxes (7.236.1). Collectively, the instances of *phthonos* among men (both explicitly identified and implied) remind Herodotus' audience that envy and jealousy always carry with them the possibility of harm, and given that heads of state are especially prone to these emotions, there is increased potential for their effects to ripple outward. Moreover, the proclivity of sole rulers to these emotions constitutes a serious warning about the innate hazards and instability of autocracy.

In the case of divine *phthonos*, it is clear from Herodotus' work that it is always in an individual's best interest to avoid incurring divine *phthonos*, even if divine *phthonos* in general can at times provide a benefit to society as a whole. While divine *phthonos* can sometimes be avoided by being careful not to overstep boundaries or become too powerful, there is always the

⁷² Gammie (1986), 195; Lateiner (1989), 165. For the idea that Greek tyrants deviate more from the despotic template, see Dewald (2003), 44, 47.

possibility that it may strike at random.⁷³ There is therefore a certain degree of inevitability concerning both divine and human *phthonos*. Among men, *phthonos* is a part of human nature and so cannot be avoided entirely; there are, however, ways to minimize its impact, such as by eschewing autocratic rule, which itself inevitably changes even the best of men (3.80.3). Otanes argues this explicitly, but it seems likely that the examples of envious or jealous rulers throughout the *Histories* are intended to steer readers to the same conclusion about the dangers of sole rulership. Indeed, the warnings about overweening individuals incurring divine *phthonos* point in the same direction, indicating that the gods too find fault with such concentrated power.

There is a higher incidence of explicit discussions about envy and jealousy and about their association with rulers in the works of Sophocles and Herodotus than in those of Homer or Hesiod. Moreover, the idea that power attracts envy had apparently become such a commonplace by the fifth century that it gave rise to a sizable number of arguments that acknowledge the existence of the idea but challenge it (i.e. by highlighting the undesirable aspects of rule or by showing how such envy is ultimately pointless).⁷⁴ There have of course always been individuals who resisted the desirability of tyranny or kingship (e.g. Archilochus, the historical figure of Solon), but the more frequent occurrence of such reactions suggests a shift away from—or perhaps more accurately, a nervousness or discomfort about—the original basic idea (i.e. that power attracts envy) as it appears in the works of Homer and Hesiod.

This growing focus on the association between the emotions of envy and jealousy and one-man rule stems from the change in political climate that took place in the Greek world in the late archaic and early classical periods, which included a heightened aversion to tyranny, as well

⁷³ For the idea that anyone can be a victim of divine *phthonos*, see Solon's advice to Croesus (Hdt. 1.32.1-9) and Artabanus' response to Xerxes (Hdt. 7.46.3-4).

⁷⁴ In addition, we see examples in fifth-century literature of rulers who suspect envy where there is none and those who take advantage of the idea to cast their opponents as envious and themselves as blameless.

as an increased experience with and distrust of envy and jealousy. In the second half of the sixth century, when eastern Greek city-states were being incorporated into the Persian Empire, attitudes toward tyranny began to change and sour.⁷⁵ Condemnation of tyranny grew more intense and pervasive in the aftermath of the Peisistratids' rule and the Persian Wars; in Athens, this antagonism became part of the mainstream ideology, and dissenters kept their opinions to themselves.⁷⁶ Effectively, this anti-tyranny ideology helped to foster cohesion in a society that was heading into uncharted territory after its inauguration of democracy.⁷⁷ Although it is difficult to find evidence in Sophocles' works of his own political preference between democracy and oligarchy, he clearly represents one-man rule as a baser and more problematic option.⁷⁸ Likewise, Herodotus does not state an explicit preference between democracy and oligarchy, but his narrative reveals a more favorable stance toward institutionalized forms of government as opposed to autocracy.⁷⁹ Thus we can see the validity of the idea that tyranny continued to loom large in the fifth century in part because democrats and oligarchs alike viewed it as a flawed and alarming form of rule.⁸⁰ Despite not knowing with certainty Sophocles' or Herodotus' own views regarding the issue of democracy versus oligarchy, nevertheless it is clear from their repeated use of envy and jealousy (among other things) to characterize sole rulers and their affairs that they do not condone one-man rule, and in this way they represent a departure from the worldview that prevails in epic poetry.

Democracy created an environment that likely prompted or at least allowed for the proliferation of envy and jealousy, and accordingly, we encounter explicit discussions about

⁷⁵ Anderson (2005) 210-11.

⁷⁶ Lavelle (2005), 7.

⁷⁷ Raaflaub (2003), 83.

⁷⁸ For the idea that Sophocles does not openly endorse specific policies or even a specific form of government, see Scodel (2012), 33.

⁷⁹ Lateiner (2013), 195. Some scholars have gone further and argued that Herodotus is in fact deliberately engaging with and privileging democratic ideology (see Forsdyke 2002, 542-45).

⁸⁰ Forsdyke (2009), 237.

these emotions more frequently after its emergence.⁸¹ The establishment of political equality paved the way for the masses over time to become more aware of and upset by inequalities in other aspects of their lives (e.g. in the socioeconomic realm) and to feel envy as a result.⁸² Conversely, as envy and jealousy are in many ways two sides of the same coin, while many Athenians were likely feeling envy and wanting more for themselves, others who found the leveling of the playing field disagreeable—namely the elite—likely experienced increased jealousy and fought to retain their privileged status. This is not to say that people who live under kings or tyrants do not experience envy or jealousy, or that they experience it less intensely, since we have seen plenty of evidence to the contrary in the works of Homer and Hesiod. Rather, this offers a possible explanation of why there is an elevated focus on the dangers of these emotions in the works of Sophocles and Herodotus: they lived in a time when envy and jealousy (or awareness of them) were especially prevalent because civic consciousness was burgeoning, and as a result, so were many citizens' hopes of attaining greater equality and prestige in other avenues of life. This was the case not only in the democratic city-state of Athens but anywhere that the base of political power was expanding (such as in a city-state where an oligarchy replaced a tyranny).

Moreover, Sophocles and Herodotus' audiences had a greater vested interest in the well-being of a state in whose government they could participate, and this too helps explain the elevated focus on the dangers of envy and jealousy. As we have seen, these emotions are rarely portrayed as leading to positive effects, and this is particularly true in civic and political contexts. Envy and jealousy had always been regarded as potentially dangerous, but this conviction grew

⁸¹ Furthermore, the early years of democracy coincided with the Persian Wars, which facilitated the interactions between Persians and Greeks that Walcot believes inspired the concept of divine *phthonos* (1978, 31).

⁸² Idem, 64. Walcot suggests that democracy intensified feelings of envy, but it is unclear whether by this he means that they increased in degree or frequency. I believe that the latter is the case, since the degree of envy that an individual experiences is difficult to measure (and likely has much to do with the individual's own temperament).

even stronger in the fifth century. In a time when civic-mindedness (and not simply loyalty to *philoî*) was an increasingly celebrated virtue, envy and jealousy—emotions that failed to benefit the state and that led almost exclusively to detriment—would naturally be discouraged, and indeed this is what we find in the works of Sophocles and Herodotus.

The association between sole rulers and the emotions of envy and jealousy existed well before the development of widespread hostility toward one-man rule in the late archaic period. Already in the works of Homer and Hesiod we see various examples of envy and jealousy's tendency to afflict rulers' affairs. The first extant use of the word *turannis* in the verses of Archilochus again points to this connection, even though the term did not carry a pejorative meaning at that time. Over time, however, as Greeks' antagonism toward tyranny and other forms of sole rulership increased, so did the repetition of this association, which supporters of democracy or of oligarchy could use to help justify their position. The effects of this pairing were bidirectional: envy and jealousy were generally regarded as precarious and unwelcome already at a time when kingship was still a neutral form of rule, but because later Greeks were able to draw on this association in order to justify their aversion to tyranny, not only did the stigma attached to these emotions contribute to the negative characterization of tyranny in the fifth century, but hostile attitudes toward tyranny also contributed to the more vehemently negative characterization of these emotions that appears in the works of Sophocles and Herodotus.

3. Future research

The present study has focused on the works of select authors in the hopes of providing insight into the complexity of the relationship between rulership and the emotions of envy and

jealousy in the overall corpus of Greek literature. There are, of course, many genres and authors that I have been unable to include. For scholars with a continuing interest in the role of envy and jealousy in relation to kings and tyrants, I hope that my research can serve as a starting point from which to explore the works of Aeschylus, Euripides, Thucydides, and Xenophon in particular. Comprehensive studies of these authors' texts will enable us to draw broader conclusions that are representative of the genres of tragedy and historiography as a whole. Moreover, lyric and elegiac poetry, epinician poetry, old comedy, and oratory have much to offer in advancing our understanding of the nuances of these emotions. Additional research on the precise difference between *phthonos* and *zêlos* is also needed. In many cases the two seem more or less synonymous or shade into one another, yet not so in others. Certain authors also display a preference for one term over the other; for instance, Herodotus uses forms or cognates of *phthonos* more than thirty times, but *zêlos* appears only once (apart from its formation of proper names). Native speakers likely understood a semantic distinction, but this remains somewhat unclear for us at present. Intimately entwined with issues of reputation and status, the topics of envy, jealousy, politics, and leadership are of ongoing importance and intrigue even in today's world; this continuity suggests that there is pertinent material to be found in the literature and culture of any time period. I have focused on texts of authors in the archaic and the first half of the classical period, but extending the chronological parameters through the end of the classical and beyond will surely make for a fruitful and illuminating study as well.

APPENDIX: XENOPHON'S *HIERO*

Xenophon was an Athenian and a student of Socrates, like Plato. He wrote works of various genres, but a common theme emerges from many of them, namely an interest in government and styles of leadership.¹ The *Hiero* is believed to have been written after Plato's *Republic*, which also treats the topic of the relative happiness of the tyrant, but Xenophon brings a tyrant directly into the dialogue, a choice that likely resulted from his conviction that a tyrant's firsthand remarks could make the most effective argument that a tyrant's position does not intrinsically bring him joy.² It is simultaneously a story about the meeting of a wise man (the poet Simonides) and a ruler (Hiero I, the tyrant of Syracuse)—a commonly depicted interaction, such as we have seen in Herodotus' account of Solon and Croesus—and a variation on a Socratic dialogue. Perhaps the most obvious departure from the typical Socratic dialogue is the fact that Socrates himself does not appear in the *Hiero*; but moreover, it is the wise man figure of Simonides whose knowledge seems to be put to the test, at least initially.³ After Hiero has demonstrated how the poet's original statements are flawed, Simonides switches into a different mode and gives the tyrant advice. Xenophon thus presents three different views: the popular view (i.e. that tyranny is enviable, which Simonides pretends to espouse in the beginning), Hiero's own view of the misery that tyranny entails, and Simonides' view of how a tyrant can maximize and enjoy his privilege.⁴

¹ Gray (2007), 2.

² Gray (1986), 117, 123.

³ Idem, 116.

⁴ Idem, 117.

The dialogue consists of two parts. In the first (sections 1-7), Hiero lists the ways in which a tyrant's life is worse than a private citizen's. In the second (8-11), Simonides details how Hiero can achieve happiness, which involves securing his position by ruling moderately and benefitting the people, similar to what Aristotle mentions in his discussion of how to preserve a tyranny (*Pol.* 1314a30-15b10).⁵ Simonides knows his audience well and caters his questions and suggestions accordingly. In the beginning, his feigned ignorance and astonishment are meant to elicit reactions from Hiero, and to guide him to the realization that he has nothing to lose by considering what Simonides has to say about how to improve his situation. When Simonides transitions into the role of the adviser, he does not belabor issues of justice or righteousness, opting for pragmatism rather than idealism. The measures he proposes will indeed benefit the people, but their happiness is merely a means to the end of the tyrant's own happiness rather than an end in itself.⁶

Explicit mentions of the envy directed at tyrants appear in both the first section and the last—in fact, the very last word of the dialogue is a form of *phthonein*—and this makes abundantly clear that Xenophon considers envy a major theme or concern when it comes to tyranny. In the opening of the dialogue, after Hiero states that tyrants experience fewer pleasures and more pains than private citizens, Simonides counters, εἰ γὰρ οὕτως ταῦτ' εἶχε, πῶς ἂν πολλοὶ μὲν ἐπεθύμουν τυραννεῖν...πῶς δὲ πάντες ἐζήλουν ἂν τοὺς τυράννους; (“If these things were so, how would [it be the case that] many men desire to be tyrant...how would [it be the case that] everyone envies tyrants?” 1.9). Significantly, Xenophon has Simonides use a form of *zêloun* instead of *phthonein*, since his point here is not about the dangers that such a desire poses to the tyrant, but rather it is about the desirability of his position. Moreover, he does not intend to

⁵ Gray (2007), 38.

⁶ Luccioni (1947), 102.

denigrate those feeling the emotion, since technically he too is included in this group of “everyone.” Leo Strauss believes that these questions set Hiero on edge and that all of Hiero’s subsequent arguments against the desirability of tyranny are aimed at dissuading Simonides from harboring envious feelings toward him.⁷ More recently, however, Vivienne Gray has argued that there is no indication that Hiero’s unhappiness is less than genuine.⁸ Indeed, his impassioned and thorough description of all the ways in which tyrants are disadvantaged seems more likely to be the result of sincere discontent rather than practiced rhetorical skill (if for no other reason than that this would encroach upon the wise man’s domain).

At the conclusion of the dialogue, Simonides assures Hiero that if he follows his instructions, he will obtain the most noble and blessed possession among men, namely happiness unmitigated by envy (κἂν ταῦτα πάντα ποιῇς, εὖ ἴσθι, πάντων τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις κάλλιστον καὶ μακαριώτατον κτῆμα κεκτήσῃ· εὐδαιμονῶν γὰρ οὐ φθονηθήσῃ, 11.15). The prominent placement of a form of *phthonein* at the very end reiterates the stakes involved if Hiero does not heed Simonides’ advice and change his ways: as we have seen, *phthonos* is no trivial matter, especially when it comes to tyrants, and they would do well to avoid it. Strauss argues that we must be careful about taking this statement at face value, since Xenophon surely knew that in reality, political power inevitably subjects its holder(s) to incurring envy.⁹ This is likely true, but the fact that envy cannot be wholly eradicated does not mean that a ruler cannot or should not still undertake measures to minimize it.¹⁰ In any case, Simonides advises Hiero in order to help him improve his situation, even if there is no way to perfect it.¹¹ In addition to highlighting the

⁷ Strauss (2013), 45.

⁸ Gray (2007), 38, 211.

⁹ Strauss (2013), 83.

¹⁰ This is what Deioces seems to do (Hdt. 1.99.2, discussed above, p. 120-21).

¹¹ Dillery notes that the advice that Xenophon has Simonides give anticipates the sort of leadership embodied by rulers in the Hellenistic period (2017, 208).

general association between tyranny and envy, the *Hiero* also names specific things that cause a tyrant's subjects to feel envy. They are envious of a tyrant's ability to help their friends and defeat their enemies (ὁ δ' ἐζήλωσας ἡμᾶς ὡς τοὺς μὲν φίλους μάλιστα εὖ ποιεῖν δυνάμεθα, τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς πάντων μάλιστα χειρούμεθα, 6.12), which Hiero argues is unfounded. They are also envious if a tyrant competes with and triumphs over private citizens in a chariot race, because they believe the tyrant's funds are coming from their own households (νικῶν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν θαυμάζοιτο ἀλλὰ φθονοῖτο, ὡς ἀπὸ πολλῶν οἴκων τὰς δαπάνας ποιούμενος, νικώμενος δ' ἂν πάντων μάλιστα καταγελῶ, 11.6), and Simonides thus cautions Hiero to avoid competing with his citizens.

Xenophon has Hiero give a wide variety of reasons why a tyrant's life is not better than a private citizen's life (and thus ought not to be envied), and in doing so, he engages with ideas about the relationship between tyranny and envy that appear in other authors' works. Otanes lists the tyrant's need for admiration but irritation with false flattery as one of the behaviors that stem from *hubris* and/or *phthonos* (Hdt. 3.80.5).¹² Hiero makes no mention of his own *phthonos*, but he echoes the sentiment that flattery brings a tyrant no true pleasure (1.15). Herodotus also has a character name *phthonos* as a reason not to trust Demaratus or heed his advice, but Xerxes insists that he need not doubt Demaratus, as he is a guest-friend: πολίτης μὲν πολίτη εὖ πρήσσοντι φθονέει... ξεῖνος δὲ ξεῖνω εὖ πρήσσοντί ἐστι εὐμενέστατον πάντων ("a citizen envies a citizen who fares well, but a guest-friend is most kindly of all to a guest-friend who fares well," 2.237.2-3). Similarly, Hiero notes that he is better off trusting foreigners than citizens, but with a much more pessimistic conclusion: ἔτι δὲ ξένοις μὲν μᾶλλον ἢ πολίταις πιστεύειν... οὐ πάντα σοι ταῦτα δοκεῖ ψυχῆς ὑπὸ φόβων καταπεπληγμένης τεκμήρια εἶναι; ("And moreover, to trust foreigners

¹² Subsequently, Aristotle discusses tyrants and flattery as well (*Pol.* 1314a2), but without highlighting the emptiness of the experience for the tyrant.

more than citizens...do all these things not seem to you to be evidence of a soul stricken by fears?" 6.5). The contexts of these two scenarios necessitate different translations of *xenos*, but regardless, the point is still that it is safer for a tyrant to trust people other than his own citizens.¹³

Moreover, Hiero's point about being plagued by fear accords with the general arguments made in Sophocles and Euripides' tragedies by characters who either deny that they have any desire to occupy the throne or want to convince others to set aside their designs on the kingship. When Creon defends himself against Oedipus' accusations of plotting against him, he asks whether anyone would good sense would choose to have power, given the fears (φόβοισι) that come with it, and points out that he already enjoys all the same advantages on account of his association with Oedipus, yet without any of the fears (Soph. *OT* 584-93). Similarly, Hippolytus claims to be happier without the danger (κίνδυνός) that kingship entails (Eur. *Hipp.* 1009-20); Jocasta cautions Eteocles that holding a tyranny means enduring many hardships (πολλὰ μοχθεῖν) (Eur. *Phoen.* 549-54); and Ion justifies his aversion to living in the royal house by twice pointing out how fearful (δεδοικώς, φοβούμενος) kings are (Eur. *Ion* 621-32).¹⁴

Fear is indeed a common theme in Hiero's description of the tyrant's life. As noted above, Hiero argues that a tyrant does not have a greater ability to defeat his enemies than the private citizen (6.12), and he elsewhere points out that putting to death the men whom he fears actually makes him feel more anxious than before (καὶ ὅταν ἀποθάνωσιν οὐς ἐφοβήθη, οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον τοῦτο θαρρεῖ, ἀλλὰ φυλάττεται ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ πρόσθεν, 2.18). This leads to the same conclusion to which Socrates guides Polus in Plato's *Gorgias*, namely that a tyrant is not enviable on account of his ability to put men to death, but Socrates makes his argument in a different manner: he is concerned about the inner turmoil that doing wrong and going

¹³ Aristotle likewise notes that tyrants are more likely to dine with foreigners than with their own citizens (*Pol.* 1314a11-12, discussed above, p. 178-79).

¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion of these passages, see p. 87-91.

unpunished causes to the tyrant's soul.¹⁵ Xenophon, however, has Hiero focus on a more practical aspect—how killing one's enemies actually undermines a tyrant's position (because he rules over fewer people, 2.17) and causes him to fear future consequences of his actions (2.18).

In arguing so vehemently that tyranny is not enviable, Hiero effectively gives us insight into the reasons why a tyrant himself might be envious of private citizens, although no *phthonos* or *zêlos* terms are applied to Hiero's mental state. He laments that he is unable to enjoy sightseeing or attend festivals abroad because of the lack of security (1.12), a limitation that Socrates identifies as a cause for envy among tyrants in the *Republic* (579b-c). Moreover, while discussing honor, Hiero states that he considers happy (μακαρίζω) the man who is honored freely for being a benefactor, which is not the case for tyrants. He explains that such a man is not being plotted against, people are concerned for his well-being, he is untroubled by fear, envy, and the possibility of danger, and he lives a prosperous life (αἰσθάνομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐπιβουλευόμενον, ἀλλὰ φροντιζόμενον, μή τι πάθῃ, καὶ ἀφόβως καὶ ἀνεπιφθόνως καὶ ἀκινδύνως καὶ εὐδαιμόνως τὸν βίον διάγοντα, 7.10). In essence (and ironically), Hiero envies that such a man is not envied.¹⁶

The *Hiero* is the earliest surviving Greek text that focuses exclusively on sole rulership, and the prominent role that Xenophon gives to *phthonos* (both implicitly and explicitly) in this dialogue reiterates the importance, intimacy, and inevitability of the association between envy and tyranny in the Greek worldview. The most maleficent and selfish of tyrants face envy in abundance, but even the most beneficent and selfless of tyrants have to employ constant care so as to minimize the amount they incur.

¹⁵ While we do not have an absolute date for either the *Hiero* or Plato's *Gorgias*, if it is in fact true that Plato's *Republic* predates the *Hiero* and that the *Gorgias* belongs to the early group of Platonic dialogues (Dodds 1959, 18), whereas the *Republic* belongs to the middle, we can then conclude that the *Gorgias* also predates the *Hiero*.

¹⁶ Gray (2007), 134.

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