OVID, VIRGIL AND THE ECHOING ROCKS OF THE TWO SCYLLAS

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Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.18, in which Scylla throws a tiny pebble against Megara's famous sounding tower, contains an exact, unique but unnoticed verbal echo of Helenus' description of the sea-monster Scylla's lair at *Aeneid* 3.432: *resonantia saxa*. The allusion tropes its own intertextual status as an 'echo' and contributes to the ludic confusion of the two Scyllas in this episode and elsewhere. The collision of the 'tiny pebble' with the Virgilian rocks further tropes the episode's elegiac and Callimachean recasting of epic material. The childishness of the game is also part of the self-conscious puerility of the *Metamorphoses*' poetics.

An unheard echo

While setting the scene for the erotic teichoscopy which leads to Scylla's fatal attraction to Minos, Ovid sketches a brief vignette of the young girl's pre-war pastime of throwing pebbles at one of Megara's most famous landmarks:[1]

> regia turris erat uocalibus addita muris,
> in quibus auratam proles Letoia fertur
> deposuisse lyram: saxo sonus eius inhaesit.
> saepe illuc solita est ascendere filia Nisi
> et petere exiguo resonantia saxa lapillo,
> tum cum pax esset.

> There was a royal tower added to the sounding walls,
> on which the son of Leto is said
> to have put down his golden lyre: its sound adhered to the rock.

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1   On the erotics of the gaze in Scylla's teichoscopy see Salzman-Mitchell (2005) 108–11; Lovatt (2013) 234–6.

> Often the daughter of Nisus used to climb up there
> and aim at the echoing rocks with a small pebble,
> then when there was peace.

<div align="right">

(Ov. *Met.* 8.14–19)

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Commentators and critics have had many insightful and illuminating things to say about this passage, praising its charm, citing Pausanias' testimony for the existence in his day of the echoing tower, noting the metrical mimesis of the run of five dactyls in line 18, and identifying the intertextuality with Homer's poignant description of the pools where the Trojan women used to wash their laundry before the war, and with Virgil's similar sketch of Andromache taking Astyanax to visit his grandfather, Priam, in earlier, happier days.[2] Some have probed rather deeper to uncover the scene's implications for Scylla's challenge against paternal authority and the continuities alongside the contrasts with her subsequent actions.[3] What none of them has mentioned is the intertextual resonance of the phrase *resonantia saxa* in line 18. This article will remedy the omission, discuss the ways in which the allusion is, in Stephen Hinds' phrase, 'self-annotating', and explore what it contributes to the themes of epic and elegy, maturity and childishness, authority and rebellion which pervade the Scylla episode, the rest of book eight, and the *Metamorphoses* as a whole.[4]

The silence surrounding the echoing rocks is particularly remarkable considering many commentators', as it were, occupational preoccupation with verbal parallels, for there is only one other occurrence of this *iunctura* in the whole of extant Latin.[5] Moreover, that one instance not only appears in what is arguably the *Metamorphoses*' most privileged intertext, Virgil's *Aeneid*, but is marked by the fact that it refers to 'the other Scylla', the sea-monster, with whom Nisus' daughter was frequently and playfully confused in Latin (and possibly Greek) poetry.[6] It occurs in Helenus' prophecy-cum-instructions to Aeneas at Buthrotum:

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2   Charm: Wilkinson (1955) 170; Paus. 1.42.2: Hollis (1970) 37; Bömer (1977) 20–1; Kenney (2011) 308–9; dactyls: Anderson (1972) 336; Hom. *Il.* 22.153–6: Hollis (1970) 37; Bömer (1977) 22; Kenney (2011) 308–9; Verg. *Aen.* 2.453–7: Hollis. One of *CCJ*'s readers suggests that the intertextuality with this last passage may extend further, encompassing the motif of the tower and the child as well as the peace/war antithesis. This is attractive, but beyond the scope of this article.

3   Authority: Oliensis (2009) 102; continuity: Tsitsiou-Chelidoni (2003a) 46; (2003b) 197; cf. Stein (2004) 88: 'wie zuvor in ihr Spiel mit den Kieselsteinen ist sie nun in den Anblick des bunten Kriegsgetümmels versunken' ('as earlier in her game with the pebble, she has now immersed herself in the spectacle of the colourful hubbub of war').

4   Self-annotation: Hinds (1998) *passim* but esp. 1–16.

5   Bömer (1977) 21 does note that the combination *exiguus lapillus* only occurs elsewhere in the fifth-century theologian Claudianus Mamertus (*anim.* 2.4), but not the Virgilian precedent for *resonantia saxa*; his main concern with the latter phrase is to establish that it is a poetic plural referring to a specific rock rather than the whole tower. The other commentators make no specific reference to the phrase.

6   Two Scyllas: Verg. *Ecl.* 6.74–7; Prop. 4.4.39–40; Ov. *Am.* 3.12.21–2; *Her.* 12.123–4; *Ars am.* 1.331–2; *Rem. am.* 737; *Fast.* 4.500. Kenney's (2011, 222) case for including *Met.* 7.63–5 ('Medea … si mostra completamente a suo agio con i giochi dei poeti dotti', 'Medea shows herself completely at her ease with the games of the learned poets') is not entirely clear. *Ciris* 54–91 elaborately refutes the confusion. The case for a conflation/confusion at Callim. *Hec.* fr.

> praestat Trinacrii metas lustrare Pachyni
> cessantem, longos et circumflectere cursus,
> quam semel informem uasto uidisse sub antro
> Scyllam et caeruleis canibus resonantia saxa.
>
> It is better to go round the turning-posts of Trinacrian Pachynus
> taking one's time, and turn about the long routes,
> than once to have seen, misshapen under an immense cave,
> Scylla and the rocks echoing with dark-blue dogs.
>
> <div align="right">(Verg. Aen. 3.429–32)</div>

It is worth stressing that this is not merely the sole other occurrence of the precise phrase in the accusative plural, but the only extant instance (save one very minor – and late – exception) of any form of *resonare*, finite or participle, being used to modify *saxum* in any case or number.[7] The closest other parallels are Virgil's use of the similar phrase *sonantia saxa* at *Aen.* 6.551 and in the rejected lines from an early draft which Servius claims to preserve in his note on 3.204, a *iunctura* later found at Silius 1.263.

Although the verbal parallel between *Aen.* 3.432 and *Met.* 8.18 is precise, it is notable that Ovid positions the phrase in a different *sedes*, after the penthemimeral rather than hepthemimeral caesura. The effect is to shift the climactic emphasis away from the monumental echoing rocks and throw it – unexpectedly and rather bathetically – upon the pebble (*lapillo*). Moreover, while it is unambiguously with the dark-blue dogs that Virgil's rocks echo, Ovid produces a hint of ambiguity, so that the ablative of means-cum-cause *exiguo … lapillo*, though primarily to be taken with *petit* (Scylla aims at the rocks with the pebble), could also go with *resonantia* (the rocks echo with the pebble). The significance of this shift of emphasis from grand Virgilian rocks to tiny Ovidian pebble, and of the way that the echo looks partly backwards to its elevated antecedents, partly forwards to its more humble future, are points to which we shall return.

Self-annotating allusion and echo as trope

In addition to the uniqueness of the *iunctura* and the connection between the two Scyllas, the phrase *resonantia saxa* signals its own allusiveness, so that the allusion becomes

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288 Pf. = 90 Hollis has been made tentatively by Pfeiffer (1953) ad loc. and more confidently by Peirano (2009) 189–92, but I tend to agree with the scepticism of Hollis (2009) ad loc. and Timpanaro (1991) 116–17 n. 29. In general, see Timpanaro (1991) 116–18; Pierini (1995) 72–5; Peirano (2009).

7 The exception is Porphyrio's paraphrase of Hor. *Carm.* 1.17.10–12: *quandocumque cantu fistulae Fauni Vsticae montis saxa resonuerunt* ('whenever the rocks of Mt Ustica echo with the music of Faunus' pipe'), where the verb glosses Horace's *personuere*. An intriguing near-parallel is Prop. 1.18.31–2: *resonent mihi 'Cynthia' siluae, | nec deserta tuo nomine saxa uacant,* ('may the forests echo "Cynthia" to me, and may the lonely rocks be not free of your name'), where the parallel clauses *resonant … 'Cynthia'* and *nec … tuo nomine … uacant* clearly convey precisely the same idea.

self-annotating. Echoes frequently serve as tropes for intertextuality, appearing in Alessandro Barchiesi's 'top ten' of these, and the 'verbal echo' of course remains one of the commonest (albeit largely dead) metaphors in modern criticism.[8] Sometimes the echo is enacted in the text by means of anaphora, sometimes described.[9] In the oft-discussed example where Valerius Flaccus recalls the description of Hylas in the song of Silenus, both techniques are employed, with an echoing gemination of *rursus* ('again') for good measure.[10] Yet the description of an echo is sufficient to signal an allusion, and there are numerous examples where *resonare* is the verb used. Indeed scholars have not observed that Valerius himself repeats his act of repetition when, in the next book of the *Argonautica*, the grief-stricken Hercules, lulled by soothing nectar from Jupiter, falls asleep 'with his mouth always echoing "Hylas"' (*Hylan resonantia semper ora | ferens*, 4.18–19).[11]

The trope is, however, by no means a Flavian development, but goes back at least to the *Eclogues* themselves, when Meliboeus describes how Tityrus 'teach[es] the woods to echo lovely Amaryllis' (*formosam resonare doces Amaryllida siluas*, Verg. *Ecl.* 1.5), troping Virgil's own intertextual echoes of Lucretius, Theocritus and perhaps Philetas in the poem's opening lines.[12] In the great choral ode on the evils of the Argo's voyage in Seneca's *Medea*, Orpheus echoes the Sirens:

> quid cum Ausonium dirae pestes
> uoce canora mare mulcerent,
> cum Pieria resonans cithara
>   Thracius Orpheus
> solitam cantu retinere rates
> paene coegit Sirena sequi?
>
> What of when the ill-omened plagues the Ausonian
> sea with sonorous voice were soothing,
> when echoing with Pierian lyre
>   Thracian Orpheus

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8   Barchiesi (1995) 65–7 = (2001) 139–40; Hinds (1998) 5–8; Heerink (2015); all citing Hollander (1981) on the trope in early-modern literature.

9   For verbal repetition used to evoke an echo see Wills (1996) 346–7.

10 *rursus 'Hylan' et rursus 'Hylan' per longa reclamat | auia, responsant siluae et uaga certat imago* ('he calls repeatedly again "Hylas" and again "Hylas" throughout the extensive wilderness. The woods reply and the wandering echo competes with him', V. Fl. 3.596–7); *his adiungit, Hylan nautae quo fonte relictum | clamassent, ut litus 'Hyla, Hyla' omne sonaret* ('to these [Silenus] adds at what spring the sailors called on abandoned Hylas, so that the whole bank sounded "Hylas, Hylas"', Verg. *Ecl.* 6.43–4), with Hollander (1981) 13; Malamud and McGuire (1993) 213; Barchiesi (1995) 65–7; Heerink (2015) 7–8 and 124–5.

11 Wijsman (1993) 317 lists these lines alongside *Ecl.* 6.44 and Prop. 1.20.48–9, but only to reinforce the connection between Verg. *G.* 3.269–70 and the story of Hylas' abduction, with no reference to tropes of intertextuality. None of the scholars listed in n. 10 refers to it, nor does Murgatroyd (2009) ad loc.

12 See esp. Breed (2000) 13–16, with further references.

the Siren, accustomed to hold back ships with her song,
almost compelled to follow?

(Sen. *Med*. 355–60)

There is a wider intertextual engagement here with earlier texts about the Sirens and Orpheus, independently and together, but particularly striking are the precise verbal 'echoes' of the phrases *uoce canora* from Ovid's description of the Sirens at *Ars am*. 3.311 and *Thracius Orpheus* from *Ecl*. 4.55, already echoed by Ovid at *Met*. 11.92.[13] This instance is notable since the context is an all-but-explicitly metapoetic one, where one great singer takes on another, but does so by *imitatio* as much as *aemulatio*, paradoxically echoing but surpassing, with Orpheus producing the same effect on the Sirens as that which they usually have on others. Moreover, the passages which the Senecan chorus 'echoes' deal themselves with poetic competition and succession, *Ecl*. 4.55–7 asserting that neither Orpheus nor Linus would surpass Virgil, and *Met*. 11.90–3 connecting the delivery of the captured Silenus to Midas (a combinatorial allusion to *Eclogue* 6) with Orpheus' initiation of the latter into the Bacchic mysteries. Although the notion of echoing is not present in the source texts, the concept of poetic succession through imitation is, so that Seneca is able to combine this motif with the literal and metaphorical echoes of his Orpheus.

Yet there are occasions when, as in the case of the two Scyllas' echoing rocks, the echo is already present in the source text, so that the target text is effectively echoing an echo. As such, it not only self-annotates its own intertextuality, but annotates an echo in its source. Perhaps the most elaborate instance, or rather complex of instances, of the use of *resonare* in this way occurs in a sequence where – as, perhaps, with the Scyllas – Virgil echoes himself and is in turn echoed by Ovid. When Amata commits suicide in the *Aeneid*, the house of Latinus echoes far and wide with lamentations (*resonant late plangoribus aedes*, 12.607). The line is an intratextual allusion to two earlier moments of destruction and lamentation in the poem, when the Trojan women bewail the fall of the city (*cauae plangoribus aedes | femineis ululant*, 'the hollow house wails with female laments', 2.487–8) and when Carthage laments the death of Dido (*resonat magnis plangoribus aether*, 'the sky echoes with great laments', 4.668).[14] The echoing trope is over-determined, being already present in 4.668 and arguably even in 2.487–8, where the vivid personification of the palace ululating in a feminine way coexists with a more naturalistic sense that its apparent wailing is really the resonance of wailing by actual *feminae*. Indeed, if we can trust Servius' claim that this scene is closely modelled on Ennius' description of the fall of Alba Longa,

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13 On *resonare* in this passage see esp. Landolfi (1999) 56–73, noting the *Ars am*. 3 echo but not that from *Ecl*. 4 and *Met*. 11. Boyle (2014) ad loc. notes the more pervasive recurrence of language traditionally associated with Orpheus and the Sirens.

14 Echo has become so dead a metaphor in critical discourse that it is often hard to be sure whether or not a critic is drawing attention to the trope, as when Putnam (2016) 91 comments that 'Virgil creates his own careful echo of two earlier moments'. Tarrant (2012) ad loc. notes the intratexts but unambiguously not the trope ('a double backward reference').

Virgil may even be more subtly troping an intertextual echo here.[15] At the very least, 4.668 'echoes' 2.487–8, and 12.607 'echoes' both, troping one of those echoes by echoing the word 'echo' itself. Ovid in turn picks up on this when he brings the epic lamentation down to the mock-epic, elegiac scale of a quarrel about board games, where 'allegations are made, the air echoes with shouts' (*crimina dicuntur, resonat clamoribus aether, Ars am.* 3.375). Ovid uses the word *resonat* as verbal echo, as trope of that echo and as annotation that the echoed text, *Aen.* 12.607, was already itself performing the same move. Yet, as with Seneca's Orpheus, this is not merely a clever but sterile game of *doctrina*. Rather it tropes (and is troped by) the actions of the text. Virgil draws connections between Amata and Dido, and between the fall of Troy, Carthage and Latinus' city, which echo each other on more than a textual level. Ovid's bathetic redeployment of Virgilian language on the authorial level tropes the incongruously self-aggrandising melodramatics of the gamers within the text.[16]

A similar move may have been made with the two Scyllas. Intriguingly – though it is not clear whether he is suggesting a Barchiesian intertextual trope or merely producing a witty verbal flourish – Nicholas Horsfall hints that the *resonantia saxa* in Helenus' speech might already constitute an 'echo' of Virgil's earlier reference to Scylla in the song of Silenus: 'the sea-dogs barked at *Buc.* 6.75 and now, typically, the cliffs echo to their clamour'.[17] It is an attractive notion that Ovid and his Scylla, like his gamers, are not only troping their own allusion to Virgil, but imitating his own self-allusion. However, Silenus' 'barking monsters' (*latrantibus ... monstris*) have no direct verbal echo in Helenus' 'dark blue dogs' (*caeruleis canibus*) of the kind which tends to feature in instances of this particular trope. For, while memory, tradition, rumour and other intertextual tropes can easily accommodate looser parallelisms of content and form, echo implies a more precise verbal or acoustic repetition.

For this reason, it is more compelling, though still not unproblematic, to conceive of Virgil's echoing Apollonius' description of the Planktai as precisely 'echoing rocks' (πέτρας πολυηχέας) at *Argonautica* 4.963.[18] Of course, since it crosses the linguistic boundary between Greek and Latin, the echo is a semantic rather than an acoustic one, but there are parallels for this as in, for example, Virgil's own echo of the Theocritean 'lovely Amaryllis', mentioned earlier, where ὦ χαρίεσσ' Ἀμαρυλλί resonates as *formosam*

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15 Serv. on Verg. *Aen.* 2.486 with, most recently, Keith (2016) 157–8, who offers extensive further bibliography.

16 Cf. Rimell (2006) 75: 'a civilized pastime can quickly descend into passionate conflict and *tragi-epic display*' (emphasis added).

17 Horsfall (2006) on 3.432.

18 Horsfall (2006) on 3.432 also notes this parallel, but only with an even more concise and enigmatic 'cf.' It is briefly noted by Nelis (2001) 46 and in his table of correspondences at 461. The relatively rare adjective πολυηχής does not have the same exclusive association with resounding as verbs such as ἀντηχέω, ἐπηχέω and ὑπηχέω, and indeed seems to mean more generally 'much-sounding' when describing the wind at Ap. Rhod. 4.609. Yet even wandering rocks do not produce their own sound and so, like the beach in its only secure Homeric occurrence (ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυηχέϊ, *Il.* 4.422; *Od.* 19.521 is disputed), the Planktai are presumably 'echoing' that of the sea.

... *Amaryllida*.[19] The case for the Apollonian allusion is further supported by the context, since the Argonauts' passage through the Planktai is closely connected with that past Scylla and Charybdis (4.922–8). Indeed, Apollonius himself is playing a complex game with the choice whether to face Scylla and Charybdis or the Planktai offered by the Odyssean Circe (Hom. *Od.* 12.55–110).[20] For Homer's Odysseus chooses the former, while Apollonius, in narrative terms at least, focuses on the Argonauts' passage through the Planktai, a passage to which, of course, Circe herself had already referred (*Od.* 12.69–70).[21] We should remember, of course, that Helenus' instructions (themselves modelled on Circe's) are specifically about *avoiding* Scylla. Apollonius' own rocks may thus already be 'echoing' Homer's, so that Ovid is learnedly alluding to Virgil's allusion to Apollonius' allusion to Homer.[22] If a pre-Homeric Argonautic epic lies behind *Odyssey* 12, the echo chamber would stretch even further.[23]

A tale of two Scyllas

It is time to turn from the echo as trope to the source of the echo. As with the possible further allusions to the *Eclogues* and the *Argonautica*, Ovid's rocks do not merely echo, but echo those of the other Scylla. As such they contribute to the on-going ludic confusion of the two homonymous figures in Latin and possibly Greek poetry.[24] This confusion is already present elsewhere in the episode. Ellen Oliensis, in keeping with her Freudian reading of the episode, asserts that the 'homonymy enrolls the monster in the textual unconscious of this episode; ... the one Scylla cannot but take on board some of the other's distinctive traits'.[25] Yet it is not solely homonymy that evokes Scylla the sea-monster, nor even the poetic tradition of playing with that homonymy. During Scylla's tirade against the departed Minos, Ovid draws the reader's attention to 'the other Scylla' in his (or her) deployment of the 'your mother' topos:

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19 Theoc. 3.6 and 4.38; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.5, with Breed (2000) 14–15.

20 For allusions, see Hunter (2015) on 4.922–4 and 924–6, though he has no note on 963. See also Knight (1995) 210–15.

21 The reader coming from *Odyssey* 12 could be forgiven for taking the vague reference to the Planktai as ἄλλοθι ('elsewhere', Ap. Rhod. 4.924) as implying that the Argo does not in fact sail past Scylla and Charybdis, especially since there is only reference to the former's appearance (προυφαίνετο, 922) and the latter's sound (βοάασκεν, 923), and no narration of a passage. However, the identification of the monsters' location as the straits of Messina and the instructions offered earlier by Hera to Thetis (4.823–32) to protect, with her sister Nereids, the Argonauts from Planktai, Scylla and Charybdis, tell against this, *pace* Knight (1995) 214. The overwhelming narrative emphasis on the Planktai in the *Argonautica*, however, does produce the effect of Apollonius the poet choosing a different path from Odysseus the character.

22 This would constitute a special sub-category of what is most commonly termed 'window allusion', on which see esp. McKeown (1987) 37–45 and Thomas (1986) 188–9, though the former calls it 'double allusion' and the latter 'window reference'.

23 For a survey with further bibliography see West (2005), esp. 39–43 on the Planktai.

24 See n. 6 above.

25 Oliensis (2009) 96.

> non genetrix Europa tibi est sed inhospita Syrtis,
> Armeniae tigres austroque agitata Charybdis.

> You do not have Europa as your mother, but the inhospitable Syrtes,
> and Armenian tigresses and Charybdis stirred up by the south wind.
>
> (Ov. *Met.* 8.120–1)

The omission of the name 'Scylla' from her almost invariable pairing with Charybdis would be striking enough in any circumstances, but the close echo of their combination with the Syrtes in Catullus 64 draws attention to it even more strongly, especially since Scylla is here self-consciously enacting an abandoned-heroine monologue in the tradition of Ariadne.[26] Practical-minded commentators tend to assert that Ovid *could not* include Scylla because of 'the similarity of the names', but do not note that he *need not* have included Charybdis and thus put himself in such a position.[27] Among commentators, only E. J. Kenney catches the playfulness of Ovid's self-inflicted compulsion, noting that Scylla, 'having necessarily to omit herself, is forced to allude to the confusion in the tradition between the two Scyllas'.[28] So far from suppressing her namesake, Scylla here draws attention both to the sea-monster's existence and to the potential for confusing the two of them. Philip Hardie has shown how Ovid exploits the ability of names to conjure 'absent presences', but the absence of even Scylla's name here paradoxically makes that absent presence even stronger.[29] Such confusion is not merely a literary game but a means of bringing out the notion that Scylla Nisi is a moral *monstrum* (as Minos calls her at 8.100) just as Scylla Phorci is a physical one.[30]

Tiny pebbles and elegiac poetics

Although it is the phrase *resonantia saxa* which echoes the *Aeneid* and its Scylla, its relocation in Ovid's Megara draws attention to the tiny pebble which is juxtaposed with it, or rather encloses it. The two stones are juxtaposed (*saxa lapillo*) in such a way as to set up a

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26 *quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Charybdis,* ('what Syrtes, what snatching Scylla, what immense Charybdis', Catull. 64.156). The inclusion of the tigresses produces a combinatorial allusion to Dido's employment of the topos at Verg. *Aen.* 4.365–7, though hers are Hyrcanean rather than Armenian. Cf. also Juno at *Aen.* 7.302–3.

27 'Die *Scylla* zu erwähnen verbot die Namensgleichheit': Haupt–Ehwald–von Albrecht (1966) 10, followed by Hollis (1970) 49 ('Ovid avoids the latter, no doubt, because of the coincidence of names'); Anderson (1972) 346 ('Ovid must avoid that ambiguity and limits himself to its usual partner, Charybdis'); Bömer (1977) 48.

28 'Dovendo necessariamente omettere sé stessa, Scilla è forzata ad accennare alla confusione, nella tradizione, tra le due Scille': Kenney (2011) 319.

29 Hardie (2002) 239–57. Particularly relevant is the subsection on 'shared names' (249–51), though he does not mention the Scyllas. The process he describes whereby, in the case of Cycnus, 'the fact that a name is shared carries an association from the first bearer of the name that exerts a pressure on the kind of fate experienced by the second bearer' (249) operates in reverse for the Scyllas.

30 Pierini (1995) 73–5, noting (74) that this is the only metaphorical use of *monstrum* in the *Metamorphoses*. Cf. Tsitsiou-Chelidoni (2003a) 105.

strong implied antithesis between the massive block of masonry and the pebble whose smallness is over-determined by the use of a diminutive noun (*lapillo*) qualified by an adjective emphasising its size (*exiguo*). If the echoing rock carries metapoetic significance, then it seems likely that the tiny pebble does too, especially since it is the latter's collision with the former which produces the echo. The connotations of the echoing rocks themselves are reasonably clear. Oliensis stresses how they represent the masculine authority against which Scylla rebels but which she also desires to possess.[31] This thematic interpretation meshes well with a metapoetic reading whereby an allusion to the *Aeneid*, especially one which evokes lapidary, monumental magnitude, stands synecdochically for the *Aeneid* itself, with all the Bloomian anxiety of influence it exerts, and even the wider epic tradition, the genre of masculine authority. On an individual level, it also stands for Scylla Phorci, not in the transgressive monstrosity that she *shares* with her Megarian namesake, but in her status as epic monster in *contrast* to the neoteric-cum-elegiac maiden. As with Seneca's Orpheus and Ovid's draughts players, we need not privilege either of these approaches over the other, since the personal challenge to patriarchal authority and the generic challenge to epic authority are facets of the same complex. The trope can be reversed, or rather be read in both directions.[32]

If the *resonantia saxa* represent epic and paternal authority, what of the *exiguus lapillus*? By the Augustan period at the latest, there was a well-established association between, not just notions of smallness in general, but specifically the word *exiguus* and the genre of elegy and more broadly Alexandrian poetics (or at least the Roman construction of them), with its ideals of λεπτότης. Such associations between *exiguus* and elegy/Callimacheanism stand on a spectrum from the totally explicit, through contexts where the metapoetic status of the imagery is well established, or at least easily defended, to those where it is more subtle and, sceptics might say, fanciful. Scylla's pebble lies somewhere in the middle. Sometimes, at one end of this spectrum, the adjective is explicitly linked with the genre, as in Horace's inability to identify the πρῶτος εὑρετής of 'little elegies' or Ovid's own self-reflexive comments on the generic impropriety of the *Fasti* in daring to treat the grand themes appropriate to epic in the little metre of elegy.[33] In the latter examples, it is worth noting the specific deployment of *exiguus* in a contrastive context to designate the relationship between elegy and 'grander' genres.

Sometimes, a little further along the spectrum towards Scylla's pebble, the application of *exiguus* to elegy is just short of explicit, being used in a metaphor, but a metaphor with a

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31 Oliensis ([2009](#)) 102: 'the resounding tower is the object both of Scylla's aggression and of her desire, the mirror of an ideal and unachievable self'. It is not clear whether she implicitly sees the tower as a phallic symbol – sometimes a tower is only a tower – but that would certainly fit with her wider interpretation of the episode as a whole, and with the various 'horns' which populate *Metamorphoses* 8 and 9 (ibid. 108–10).

32 On 'reversing the trope' see Hinds ([1998](#)) 10–16.

33 *exiguos elegos* (Hor. *Ars P.* 77), with Freis ([1993](#)) 368–71; *nunc primum uelis, elegi, maioribus itis: | exiguum, memini, nuper eratis opus* ('Now for the first time, elegies, you proceed with greater sails; recently, I remember, you were a little work', Ov. *Fast.* 2.3–4); *ause per exiguos magna referre modos* ('Dare to recount great things by means of little metres', *Fast.* 6.24), with Hinds ([1987](#)) 115–16.

well-established poetological connotation and in a context clearly indicating poetry. Examples include Propertius' rejection of sailing on the swollen sea of epic in favour of a little river and Ovid's retrospective justification for not having his poetic skiff entrust itself to the open sea when it usually plays on a 'little lake'.[34] On other occasions, even the context is not explicitly metapoetic, but the imagery of speech, representation or artistic creation strongly encourages such a reading. Thus Hypermestra recalls expressing her gendered and generic unsuitedness to acts of violence 'with a little mouth/voice'.[35] Lucretia and her maids spin and weave by a 'little light', an embodiment of elegiac qualities in contrast to the epic violence of Tarquinius.[36] Perhaps most suggestive for Scylla's pebble is the scene in *Heroides* 1 where Penelope describes a returned Trojan War veteran recounting his adventures to his wife or girlfriend, 'painting the whole of Troy in a little wine', squeezing epic subject matter into elegiac form.[37]

Scylla's little pebble does make a sound, an echo indeed, and does so by striking 'vocal walls', whose resonance is aetiologised as deriving from contact with the lyre of the poet-god Apollo, but the action does not have quite the overt or established metapoetic associations of drawing and weaving. On the spectrum, it lies somewhere between the Trojan War veteran's 'little wine' and instances where the symbolism derives almost entirely from the metapoetic associations of *exiguus* itself rather than those of the noun it qualifies. Examples of the latter include Celeus' 'little hut' (*exiguae casae*), which matches its elegiac location in the *Fasti* and contrasts with his great, epic palace (μέγαν δόμον) in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and the 'little foot' (*pes . . . exiguus*) of the *puella* in *Amores* 3.3.[38] Instances can also be found within the *Metamorphoses* in the vicinity of the Scylla episode. In the previous book, the ants which will be metamorphosed into Myrmidons to repopulate Aegina after the plague are 'bearing a grand burden in their little mouth' (*grande onus exiguo formicas ore gerentes*, 7.625). The incongruous size of these creatures, who will become the epic companions of the great

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34 *non ego uelifera tumidum mare findo carina*: | *tuta sub exiguo flumine nostra mora est* ('I do not cleave the swollen sea with a sail-bearing ship: I idle safely in the shelter of a little river', Prop. 3.9.35–6), with Gold (1982) 108; *non ideo debet pelago se credere, siqua | audet in exiguo ludere cumba lacu* ('A skiff should not entrust itself to the open sea, just because it dares to play in a little lake', Ov. Tr. 2.329–30), with Myers (2014) 726–7.

35 *exiguo dixi talia uerba sono*, ('I said words like the following in a little voice', Ov. Her. 14.52); 'Schon das einführende *exiguo dixi talia verba sono* . . . deutet statt auf heroischen Entschluß eher auf elegische Beschränkung' ('The introductory *exiguo dixi talia verba sono* already . . . points, instead of to heroic resolve, rather to elegiac constraint'): Spoth (1992) 191–2. The soliloquy itself runs from line 53 to line 66. The contrasts of gender and genre are particularly prominent at 56 (*non faciunt molles ad fera tela manus*, 'Soft hands are not suited to savage weapons') and 65 (*quid mihi cum ferro? quo bellica tela puellae?*, 'What have I to do with a sword? What has a girl to do with warlike weapons?'), perhaps significantly placed in the pentameter and hexameter respectively.

36 *lumen ad exiguum famulae data pensa trahebant*, Ov. Fast. 2.743; 'the standard vocabulary of neoteric poetics': Hejduk (2011) 25.

37 *pingit et exiguo Pergama tota mero*, Ov. Her. 1.32; 'anzi *exiguo mero* quasi simboleggia la riduzione dei *fera proelia* ad una misura da elegia' ('in fact *exiguo mero* virtually symbolises the reduction of the *fera proelia* to an elegiac size'): Barchiesi (1992) 78 ad loc.; 'Als Erzählung für die Geliebte schmilzt die Ilias auf elegisches Format zusammen. Die *exigui elegi* heben den epischen Stoff in sich auf' ('As a narrative for the beloved, the *Iliad* melts down to elegiac size. The *exigui elegi* merge the epic subject matter into themselves'): Spoth (1992) 44.

38 Fast. 4.526 and Hom. Hymn Dem. 171, with Hinds (1987) 112; Am. 3.3.7, with Keith (1994) 37.

Achilles, has an obvious generic dimension.[39] It is further complicated by its intertextual relationship with Virgil's transformation of anthropomorphic bees in the *Georgics* into humans compared to ants and bees in the *Aeneid*, a complex process which Ovid creatively annotates and indeed reifies into literal metamorphosis.[40] The transformation from ant to human is, among other things, one from Callimachean to epic. In book 8 itself, Theodore Papanghelis has argued that the 'small piece from the chine' (*de tergore partem | exiguam*, 8.649–50) of pork which Baucis cuts off for her disguised divine guests should 'be construed as a literary self-comment through which the poet takes an ironical distance from traditional epic modes and places his narrative in the modernist tradition of the Callimachean short epic'.[41]

However, the closest parallel for Scylla's pebble is to be found in the tomb of Corinna's parrot, 'on which a little stone holds a poem equal to it' (*quo lapis exiguus par sibi carmen habet*, Ov. *Am.* 2.6.60). The metapoetics of this poem have been thoroughly explored, and in some ways they climax in the embodiment of elegy and Callimachean poetics in the *lapis exiguus*.[42] The *carmen* is *par* to the *lapis*, not just equal in size but its equivalent in all respects: Callimachean, elegiac, fine-spun, small-scale. Whether we wish to see a (self-)allusion to the parrot's *lapis exiguus* in Scylla's *lapillus exiguus*, or merely take the former as a parallel, either way it constitutes the strongest justification for a metapoetic reading of the little pebble aimed at the echoing rocks. The *lapillus exiguus*, embodying elegiac and Callimachean poetics in its smallness of scale and humility of register, is thrown against the *resonantia saxa* of epic to produce an echo, the hybrid sound created by the impact of elegiac aesthetics upon epic material.[43]

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39 Ovid later used the term *grande onus* to refer to the epic theme of Tiberius' German triumph, which would have been burdensome even for Virgil, and the immense weight of which his soft elegies' metre could not bear on their uneven wheels (*res quoque tanta fuit quantae subsistere summo | Aeneidos uati grande fuisset onus. | ferre etiam molles elegi tam uasta triumphi | pondera disparibus non potuere rotis*, 'The subject matter too was so big that it would have been a large burden for the supreme bard of the *Aeneid* to shoulder it. In addition, soft elegies could not bear so immense a weight of triumph on their unequal wheels', *Pont.* 3.4.83–6).

40 Verg. *G.* 4.156–7; *Aen.* 1.430–6, 4.401–7. 'So Virgil's bees are (metaphorically) transformed into humans in the *Georgics*, and the humans are turned back into bees again in *Aeneid* 1, and then into ants in *Aeneid* 4. That is at least how Ovid seems to have read the sequence of interrelated Virgilian passages, who has then taken the next step by turning the ants back into humans': Heerink (2011) 470. He provides a persuasive metapoetic interpretation ('The phenomenon of metamorphosis can accordingly be seen as a metapoetical statement: Ovid has transformed Virgil') but does not mention the generic dimension.

41 Papanghelis (1996) 281.

42 'Ovid is alluding to the frequent use of the term to characterize the elegiac couplet': McKeown (1998) 143; 'we are meant to recall . . . the Callimachean connotations of smallness as part of an artistic creed': Boyd (1997) 177. On the metapoetics of Ovid's parrot more broadly see also Boyd (1987); Houghton (2000); Kronenberg (2016).

43 *CCJ*'s editor, Oliver Thomas, suggests to me that there may be a further evocation of the genre *lithika*, Hellenistic epigrams (most famously those of Posidippus) describing gemstones and sometimes bringing epic subject matter down to a tiny scale. This is an extremely attractive notion, though its implications run parallel to, rather than intersecting with, the interpretation of Ovid's imagery developed here, and it would thus be beyond the scope of this article to explore it in any depth. On the use of epic subject matter in epigram see Harder (2007).

Epic and elegy in Scylla's teichoscopy

The reduction of epic subject matter to an elegiac scale, symbolised on various levels by the echoing rocks and the little pebble, is exactly what Ovid (and Scylla) do in at least the first half of the episode.[44] William S. Anderson is of course right to interpret the pebble-throwing vignette as 'a picture of the innocent pleasures of Scylla before war brought Minos and the corruptions of passion to her', and the transition from peace to war, punctuated by the caesura of line 19 and sharpened by the aforementioned Homeric allusions, is also a turning point in Scylla's development.[45] Yet, as so often in this *carmen* which is both *perpetuum* and *deductum*, there are continuities in tension with the discontinuities.[46] As Chrysanthe Tsitsiou-Chelidoni has pointed out, the 'pendant of this habit … is to be found in her new custom of watching wild battles during times of war from the same tower. The daughter of Nisus seems to be equally entertained by both situations.'[47] The thoughts expressed in her first monologue are, like her pebble-throwing, 'girlishly playful and naïve'.[48] Her erotic teichoscopy turns epic, and specifically Homeric, material to elegiac ends, reinterpreting Iliadic arming scenes as opportunities to judge how well different outfits set off Minos' good looks.[49] Indeed, Gabriele Stein draws a direct parallel, further supported by Scylla's location in the tower, with the women of the *Heroides*, like whom she 'looks from an elegiac perspective at the epic world'.[50] We saw earlier how Penelope's vignette in *Heroides* 1 of a Trojan War veteran drawing Troy in a little wine for his beloved combined in one image the symbolic reduction of generically great to small (specifically *exiguus*) with the enactment of epic material being retooled as

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44 On elegiac elements in the Scylla episode, esp. intertextuality with Prop. 4.3, see Tissol (1997) 143–53. The case for its epic qualities, in contrast with epyllia like Catullus 64 and the *Ciris*, made by Otis (1970) 62–5, is not compelling. The bathos, extended monologues and compressed and elliptical narration make it hard to agree that it 'has (unlike all elegiac and neoteric narrative) the symmetry, elevation and other characteristics of epic' (65).

45 Anderson (1972) 335. Homeric allusions: see n. 2 above.

46 On the motivic interconnectedness of book 8 in particular see Crabbe (1981).

47 Tsitsiou-Chelidoni (2003b) 197; cf. (2003a) 46.

48 '[M]ädchenhaft spielerische und naive', Tsitsiou-Chelidoni (2003a) 80.

49 'Her viewing takes the epic arming scene … and gradually changes its character to make it more obviously erotic': Lovatt (2013) 234. Cf. Hollis (1970) 39 on the 'piquant humour depend[ing] on recognition of the Homeric parallels' and the 'mingling of epic and love-poetry'.

50 'Sie blickt aus elegischer Perspektive auf die epische Welt, in der der von ihr geliebte Mann seine Heldentaten vollbringt, und es steht zu erwarten, daß sie ebenso wie die Frauengestalten der Heroides diese epische Welt mit ihren eigenen Maßstäben messen wird' ('She looks from an elegiac perspective at the epic world in which the man beloved by her accomplishes his heroic deeds, and it is to be expected that, just like the female characters of the *Heroides*, will measure this epic world by her own standards'): Stein (2004) 87–8. Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 109) makes a similar point about how teichoscopy 'allows the reader to see the scene through the woman's eyes' but, while there is indeed an inversion of the usual male gaze upon the female, I would qualify her assertion that the 'main point of the warrior's existence is not to be looked at'. The foundation of memorialising *kleos* is the initial spectacle of valorous deeds. Cf. Sarpedon's assertion to Glaucus at *Il.* 12.312 that 'all look at [us] as at gods' (πάντες δὲ θεοὺς ὣς εἰσορόωσι). So the distinction is rather between being looked at as an (epic) warrior and as an (elegiac) object of desire.

elegy.[51] In *Metamorphoses* 8, symbol and enactment are juxtaposed rather than merged. Scylla hits rocks embodying Virgilian epic and her own grandiose alter ego with a tiny pebble which produces an elegiac echo, *then* interprets epic arming scenes as elegiac stripteases.

To throw Ovid's technique in this passage into relief, it is worth briefly glancing at the depiction of the echoing rocks in the *Ciris*. It is far beyond the scope of this article to discuss the date of this epyllion or its relationship to *Metamorphoses* 8 and any shared antecedent, such as Parthenius' version of the story. If the *Ciris* could be taken as evidence for how Ovid innovated and diverged from such a version which perhaps the former might have followed more closely, that would undeniably strengthen the case for a distinctively Ovidian slant here. However, at the very least, the *Ciris* can be used as a contrasting parallel version, showing how another poet could and did treat this motif in a way very different from Ovid:

> deus namque affuit illi,
> unde etiam citharae uoces imitatus acutas
> saepe lapis recrepat Cyllenia murmura pulsus
> et ueterem sonitu Phoebi testatur honorem.
>
> For the god was there to help [Alcathous],
> as a result of which also, imitating the shrill sounds of the lyre,
> often the stone resounds Cyllenian noises when struck
> and bears witness with its sound to the ancient honour of Phoebus.
>
> (*Ciris* 106–9)

The differences from Ovid are numerous and significant. This is a piece of touristic lore like that of Pausanias and its present tenses are not even necessarily historic, signifying rather what 'often' (*saepe*) happens to this day. There is no mention of Scylla herself indulging in the pastime, in contrast to Ovid's version where it is she who 'often' did so.[52] Indeed this mini-ecphrasis comes right at the start of the *Ciris*' narrative proper, setting the scene in a Megara under siege (101–6), and is separated from any mention of Scylla by further backstory about Minos' expedition and Nisus' lock (110–28).[53] Ovid's Scylla only 'aims' (*petit*) her tiny pebble at the echoing rock and there is no indication of whether she hit it

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51 See n. 37 above.

52 It is tempting to see a further intertextual trope in Ovid's assertion that she 'was often accustomed' (*saepe . . . solita est*) to climb up there. Both *saepe* and *soleo* often trope allusions, especially – but not exclusively – to the earlier literary career of the same character. This trope is a particular favourite of Seneca in his tragedies and finds probably its most famous use when his Medea self-annotates her repetition of her Euripidean self's exit in the dragon-chariot: *sic fugere soleo* ('this is how I usually flee', Sen. *Med.* 1022). On Senecan *soleo* as Alexandrian footnote: Boyle (1997) 132; (2014) 384; Cowan (2011) 363; Bexley (2016) 35; *pace* Armstrong (1982). Ovid might be signalling an allusion to Scylla's pebble-throwing in Parthenius or other earlier versions (evidently not followed by the author of the *Ciris*), but this can only be speculation.

53 Kayachev (2016) 56–9 offers an ingenious explanation for the deracinated mention of Apollo's stone, arguing that it is a learned indication that Alcathous' was a refoundation of Megara after the sack by Minos and the whole *Ciris* 'an allegory of the origin of music, and by extension, poetry'.

or, if she did, what sound was produced. The rock in the *Ciris* is struck (*pulsus*) and the emphasis is very much on the imitative (*imitatus*) sound which results, and which reproduces the precise tone of the lyre which Mercury gave to Apollo (*recrepat Cyllenia murmura*). Not only is the acoustic effect a replicative, non-distorting one, but so is its import. By bearing witness to the honour bestowed on Alcathous and his city by Apollo, it serves the function of epic, memorialising by repetition the noble deeds of men, including city foundation, and the favour granted by the gods. The contrast to the effect produced by the Ovidian Scylla's tiny pebble could hardly be greater.

Child's play in Megara

Yet the elegiac, or more specifically the erotic elegiac, is not the only category which the *Metamorphoses* sets in opposition to ideas of epic, and neither is it the only association of Scylla's pastime with the tiny pebble. Critics repeatedly emphasise the childishness of the game and, by extension, that of the girl who plays it.[54] Just as the overemphasised smallness of the pebble is emblematic of Callimachean poetics and elegy, so the game of throwing it at the tower suggests a childishness in Scylla which can also be connected to Ovid's subversion of epic decorum. Llewelyn Morgan has persuasively shown how the dominant metaphor of epic as 'man' can be challenged by playing, not only with the familiar gendered antithesis of masculine and feminine, but also with the age- or maturity-defined contrast between adult and child. As he puts it, Ovid 'is as conscious of and explicit about the childishness of his epic as he is of its compromised masculinity'.[55] This childishness is not only manifested in puerile jokes and wilful transgressions of 'grown-up' seriousness, but reified in various child-figures who mimetically disrupt the dignified projects of adult, male authority figures. Moreover, these children – all boys in Morgan's discussion, but there is no obvious reason to exclude girls like Scylla – consistently indulge in some form of 'play' (*lusus*).[56] Morgan's examples include Cupid's enamouring of big brother Apollo, Phaethon's joy-riding of his father Sol's chariot, and, from book 8 itself, Icarus' messing around with Daedalus' prototype wings. Yet he makes no claim to comprehensiveness and admits that '[t]here are no doubt many other

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54 '[A] childish, unsophisticated Scylla': Hollis (1970) 36; 'playful tossing': Anderson (1972) 336; 'kindlichen Spielen ... [Scylla] scheint hier bei ihrem ersten Auftreten kaum dem Kindesalter entwachsen' ('childish games ... [Scylla] seems here, in her first appearance, scarcely to have outgrown childhood'): Stein (2004) 88; 'un accenno a una Scilla più giovane ... che si contentava di innocenti giochi da fanciulla' ('a reference to a younger Scylla who contents herself with the innocent games of a girl'): Kenney (2011) 309.

55 Morgan (2003) 74.

56 '[T]he component elements of this scene – a boy, *lusus*, and a figure representing fatherly authority whose superlative undertaking suffers interference from them – correspond point after point to the imagery for which writers instinctively reach when describing the epic genre and what Ovid's *Metamorphoses* does to it': Morgan (2003) 79.

instances where the childishness of the poetic exercise finds some kind of reflection in the plot of the *Metamorphoses*'.[57] Scylla's pebble-throwing is just such an instance.[58]

Minos' expedition against Megara can be read as not only a practice run before the main attack on Athens, but a first draft of his (never-to-be-fulfilled) attempt to write himself as a hero of martial epic. Just as Calliope, making a first attempt at her song of Proserpina, 'tried out in advance the complaining/elegiac strings with her thumb' (*querulas praetemptat pollice chordas*, *Met.* 5.339), so Minos 'tried out in advance the might of his own warfare/epic' (*praetemptatque sui uires Mauortis*, 8.7).[59] Unfortunately for his generic pretensions, Scylla's fatal attraction drags the focus of the episode onto her elegiac passion. Yet it is not just Minos' masculine, epic narrative which is derailed into a teenage erotic fantasy. Scylla's own attempt to compose herself as first a war-prize – a Helen, a Lavinia or an Iole – and then as an abandoned heroine – an Ariadne, a Medea, or any of the heroines of the *Heroides* – also veers into bathetic humour.[60] From the comical ease with which she persuades herself of her moral duty to commit parricide and treason, to her petty but witty rationalisation of the myth of Europa and the bull, Scylla, like Ovid, is 'flippant, playful, and given to puerile sexual humour'.[61] The metapoetics of the tiny pebble and of the child who throws it do not merely reduce grand epic to the erotics of elegy and the scale of Callimacheanism; they bring it down to the uniquely childish level of the *Metamorphoses*.

Conclusion

Ovid's allusion to Virgil's Scylla in the echoing rocks which his Scylla pelts with a tiny pebble operates on numerous levels. It is self-annotating through its employment of the common intertextual trope of the echo, and may perhaps also annotate the use of the same allusive trope in its source text, *Aeneid* 3. It contributes to the on-going play which Augustan poets had with the confusion between the two Scyllas, but it has particular significance in this episode for constructing the ethical monstrosity of its anti-heroine. The metapoetic connotations of pebble and rock also trope the relationship of this sometimes elegiac, sometimes Callimachean, sometimes childish episode with the epic subject matter off which it bounces. Yet none of these intertextual or metapoetic moves should be taken as the only or even the primary game in town. As Hinds has shown, and as we have already

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57 Morgan (2003) 89; he discusses Cupid at 74–5, Phaethon at 75–7, and Icarus at 77–9.

58 Caitlin McMenamin points out (*per litteras*) that the childish interference of Phaethon and Icarus has disastrous results for them (as does Cupid's for Daphne, though not for himself), which is a further parallel with Scylla.

59 'Calliope, a Muse of grand poetry, begins her song with an aspiration to grandeur and . . . rises to sing in a grand sort of way: so why is it that the strings of the lyre which she tunes are *querulas* (*Met.* 5.339) – more suited, one would think, to the humbler strains of elegy?' So Hinds (1987) 132, though he does not mention *praetemptat*.

60 On the humour of the episode: Hollis (1970) 35, 39 and 47; Hutchinson (1988) 338–40; Holzberg (2005) 697. For humour in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole: Frécaut (1972) 237–69; Galinsky (1975) 158–209; Solodow (1988) 101–9; Peek (2001); Morgan (2003).

61 Morgan (2003) 68, but without reference to Scylla.

noted, the tropes of intertextuality, and by extension those of wider generic and metapoetic play, can be reversed, so that they can serve to explore the themes and actions within the world of the text which, on another level, trope them.[62] The generic play with the epic code dramatised when 'a figure representing fatherly authority whose superlative undertaking suffers interference from' a girl and her *lusus* parallels on a different level Scylla's 'assault on her father' or rather on the compounded father-figure that is the 'fusion of Minos and Nisus'.[63] The reduction of epic to an elegiac and childish level can thus provide a means of representing and examining Scylla's complex erotic and rebellious desires, her youth and immaturity, just as much as the other way round. Echoes do not resonate in only one direction.

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62 See n. 32 above.

63 Quoting respectively Morgan (2003) 79; Oliensis (2009) 102 and 100.

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