

Textiles and clothing imagery in Greek and Latin literature: structuring, ordering and dissembling.

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This volume is the result of two Symposia held at the Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen, in 2012 and 2013. The idea of getting together a set of interested scholars to discuss the role of textiles, dress and modes of production in literature grew out of conversations between Mary Harlow and Marie-Louise Nosch which considered the similarities of textile-related tropes across a range of different time frames and contexts. We decided to set up a workshop to discuss these ideas and were quite unprepared for the range of topics which were offered and presented. The discussions were erudite, energetic, informative, and often funny. There was a real exchange of ideas and knowledge: for those with a purely literary background the ramifications of understanding the technique and craft behind metaphorical and other figurative use of textiles, clothing and cloth production has enhanced their work; for those whose knowledge was in modes and methods of production have been alerted to the ways in which the language is influenced by textile techniques at very fundamental levels.

The two Symposia were inspiring days and we thank our colleagues for their time and hard work on the production of the papers that make up this volume. We also apologise to them for taking so long to produce the book, and hope the final production will allow them to forgive us.

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Introduction

The range of textile and clothing imagery in classical literature is immense. The chapters in this volume explore its diverse ramifications by positioning patterns of poetic and literary images within their specific context, as well as by looking at their wider material and cultural implications. What emerges is that an awareness of the craft and technology of weaving and spinning, of the production and consumption of clothing items, and of the social and religious significance of garments is key to appreciating how textile and clothing imagery and metaphors work, their suitability to conceptualize human activities and represent cosmic realities, and their potential to evoke symbolic associations and arouse generic expectations. In brief, the breadth of figurative language that the craft(s) of fabric-making generates invites us to ‘take textiles seriously’.¹ This is all the more so when we regard

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¹ Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück (this volume) raise this point through a discussion of the ‘outsourcing’ of textiles from intellectual history, in both ancient and modern authors. See the contributions in Harich-Schwarzbauer 2015 for recent

imagery as a conceptual device, and not just an ornament of style. Viewing poetic creation or philosophical inquiry in terms of weaving, or representing emotions in terms of garments, are ways of conceptualizing one process in terms of another. One implication of this, as the contributions in this volume show, is that knowledge of the structure of one process (the ‘literal’ meaning of the image) gives access to the structure of the other process (the ‘figurative’ meaning): thus, investigating, for example, the mechanism and features of weaving and spinning technology, their symbolic import as crafts, and the cultural assumptions of clothing, sheds light on the concepts these illustrate, enhancing the interpretation of particular passages and complex images.² This afterword positions textile imagery in classical literature within ancient and modern discussions on figurative language; our emphasis is on views of metaphor as a conceptual device, from Aristotle to cognitive linguistics: while this sets the theoretical premises on which several chapters in this volume are grounded in a broader frame, it is further argued that in the specific case of archaic Greek literature, different approaches to poetic metaphor may be applied to the analysis of a particular sample of textile and clothing imagery.

The centrality of textiles and clothing in the material life and conceptual universe of the Greeks and Romans is further reflected in literature by the distinctive polysemy of their symbolic and metaphoric associations. Literary textiles seem to bring with them an inherent tension between ‘positive’ concepts of social cohesion on the one hand, and ‘negative’ concepts of deception and ambiguity on the other. This represents a recognizable pattern in both the domains of craft (spinning and weaving) and clothing (cloth-making and garments):³ it thus lends support to the idea of considering these two semantic areas, and their interaction, as a unitary subject in this volume. Spinning imagery, grounded in the concept of continuity (of time and thread), stands as a symbol for both life and death, seen as processes through the myth of the Fates and the conception of cosmologic threads. While invested with similar symbolic connotations as spinning,⁴ weaving features a crucial opposition at the very root of its technological principles, *i.e.* division/separation and union/combination:⁵ a similar pattern of opposition emerges at the level of poetic imagery, where the craft of weaving generates metaphors for both poetic composition and the ‘weaving’ of wiles.⁶ In turn, clothing imagery exploits the peculiar symbolism of garments, which may reveal or conceal the identity of the wearer. Drawing on these oppositions and on further patterns of literary imagery both within and outside the range of material explored in the contributions to this volume, the final section of this afterword presents and briefly discusses categories of textile and clothing imagery, and some of their ramifications.

Definitions

scholarly interest in the significance of textiles in several domains of ancient culture (both material and intellectual) and literature.

² A complementary approach, encompassing a shift of focus from the ‘figurative’ to the ‘literal’ element of a given image, allows for the possibility to explore textile imagery for what it reveals about ancient weaving technology (and the cognitive patterns this generates: see Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück in this volume, and Harlizius-Klück 2004 for a book-length investigation of the cognitive role of weaving in Plato’s conception of *epistēmē*), or for what it suggests about the production of dyed fabrics (see Bakola in this volume).

³ See Goldhill 1996 (review of Scheid & Svenbro 1996) on the opposition between, and compresence of, normative assumptions and an element of “trickery” and “untrustworthy” in weaving imagery. See Swalec (this volume) on the symbolism of *chlaina* in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*. On the multi-faceted (symbolic, economic, anthropological) ambiguity of textiles in ancient Greek society, culture and literature see Jenkins 1985. Cf. Nosch 2014 for the association of weaving and women in ancient literature.

⁴ See Bakola in this volume on instances of ‘generative symbolism’ associated with fabric-making and textile production; Guilleux (this volume) discusses areas of overlapping imagery and shared metaphorical networks between spinning and weaving, grounded on contiguities and analogies at the level of craft and technology.

⁵ Famously illustrated by Plato in the *Statesman* 281a, 282b-c, 283a.

⁶ A recognizable pattern of imagery surfacing in both Old Iranian literature and archaic Greek poetry seems to attest to the interaction between the poetological metaphor of weaving and formulations of poetics ‘embedded’ into the image and semantics of ‘poetic thread’: the continuity in textile poetic imagery among Indo-European literatures that such a patterns demonstrated suggested us to bring into this volume a discussion of Vedic and Avestan instances of weaving and thread metaphors for poetic composition (see chapter by Andrés-Toledo; see Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück for the emergence of this pattern in archaic Greek poetics).

For the scope of the present volume, our notion of ‘textile and clothing imagery’ includes metaphors, similes, analogy, metonymy, and all literary images referring to the conceptual, symbolic and material features associated with textiles, garments, and the craft of fabric-making.

In the definitions offered by classical rhetoric, metaphor and simile are features of literary language, first systematically investigated by Aristotle in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*:⁷ while metaphor (μεταφορά) is defined as the “transference (to a thing) of an alien term” (*Poet.* 1457b), simile (εικών) is a metaphor modified by some expression explicitly denoting likeness (*Rhet.* 1406b21-22, where “he was a lion in his attack” gets expanded into “he was *like* a lion in his attack”). A different view of the relationship between the two devices informs the account of later theorists, who see metaphor as an abbreviated simile (Quint. 8.6.8 *In toto autem metaphora brevior est similitudo*): this is also the time when metaphor and simile find their place within an apparatus of *tropes* (τρόποι, *tropi/modi*, single-word deviations from normal linguistic usage) and *figures* (σχήματα, *figurae*, encompassing a large number of rhetorical devices at the level of the sentence), with metaphor listed among tropes (together with metonymy),⁸ and simile associated with figures (Cic. *De Or.* 3.205).⁹

Before moving to more modern definitions of metaphor and simile, it is interesting to observe how ancient rhetoric made a sustained use of clothing imagery to illustrate the nature and function of metaphor, and in general to conceptualize the distinction between style and content in the practice of literary prose.¹⁰ Quintilian (*Inst.* 8 *proemium* 20) uses a metaphor when comparing *elocutio* (‘style’ in the technical terminology of rhetoric) to a variegated cloth: “that translucent and iridescent style of some authors renders effeminate the subject-matter that is cloaked in the verbal costume”.¹¹ Cicero (*De Or.* 3.155-156) provides a historical account of the birth and development of metaphor, which was commonly considered among the *ornamenta* of style, in terms of clothing as *ornamentum* to the body, making use of an extended simile:

The third mode [of elevating the style through a single-word rhetorical device], that of using words in a metaphorical sense (*transferendi verbi*), is widely prevalent, a mode of which necessity was the parent, compelled by the sterility and narrowness of language; but afterwards delight and pleasure made it frequent; for as dress was first adopted for the sake of keeping off the cold (*frigore depellendi causa*), but in process of time began to be made an ornament of the body and an emblem of dignity (*ad ornatum etiam corporis et dignitatem*), so the metaphorical use of words (*verbi translatio*) was originally invented on account of their paucity, but became common from the delight which it afforded (*frequentata delectationis*).¹²

Modern critics generally tend to view both simile and metaphor as figures of speech,¹³ in consideration of the fact that the metaphorical sense affects the whole sentence rather than just being associated to a single word (a characteristic of the trope).¹⁴ As a general definition, metaphor implies viewing one thing in terms of another. In 1936 I.A. Richards coined a new terminology for the constitutive elements of metaphor and established a helpful kit of critical tools for the literary and linguistic analysis of imagery, as the fortune of the terms ‘tenor’, ‘vehicle’ and ‘ground’ in later

⁷ See below for a more detailed account of metaphor in Aristotle. For simile, some of the relevant Aristotelian passages are *Rhet.* 1406b21-22 (metaphor transformed into simile), 1406b24-25 (simile being poetic and to be used rarely in prose) 1410b18 (simile differing from metaphor by the addition [πρόθεσις] of a word, and also by the fact that “it does not say that this is that”).

⁸ On metonymy (a deviation based on association or contiguity) and its relation with metaphor (a deviation based on similarity or analogy) in ancient and modern theorists see Silk 2003 and the opening remarks in Nagy 2015, 0§01-0§7.

⁹ We draw here on Silk 1996.

¹⁰ See Rosati 1999, 246. For a modern version of the same stance, see Conte 1986, 47. Conte applies the theoretical frame of the figure of speech to literary allusion, with special reference to Virgil: he sees allusion working in the same way as a rhetorical figure, and in the same semantic area.

¹¹ *illa translucida et versicolor quorundam elocution res ipsas effeminat quae illo verborum habitu vestiuntur.*

¹² Transl. J.S. Watson 1878. On this passage see Martin 2015, 278-279.

¹³ Silk 1996, 967 observes that the category of ‘imagery’ is largely used by modern theorists in relation to metaphor, simile, comparison and informal analogy.

¹⁴ Cf. Steiner 1986, 6 on the distinction between ‘figure’ and ‘trope’ and Aristotle’s confusion of the two categories in his account of metaphor

scholarship attests.¹⁵ In a given metaphor (and simile),¹⁶ the ‘tenor’ is (in Richards’ words) the “underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means”,¹⁷ while the ‘ground’ describes the conceptual relation between tenor and vehicle.¹⁸ By defining metaphor not as a device of rhetorical ornamentation but as “the omnipresent principle of language”,¹⁹ Richards called into question the traditional theory of metaphorical expression as a rhetorical trope, arguing that “fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts”.²⁰ Such a reorientation of the mechanism of metaphorical expression led critics to regard metaphor as a ‘figure of thought’, as well as of speech: a new meaning is produced via the interaction of tenor and vehicle, and metaphorical thought is seen as a “distinctive mode of achieving insight”.²¹ The pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday language is a further element that modern theorists (in areas such as linguistics, philosophy of language and cognitive studies) regard as evidence for seeing metaphor as structuring our thoughts about a large number of abstract concepts. Textile and clothing metaphors, which we consider in this volume, recur in both literary texts of antiquity and in the everyday speech of a number of modern languages, producing systems of images (or ‘metaphorical matrixes’, see Nicole Guilleux this volume) in a cross-linguistic and diachronic range.

In the terminology of the cognitivists (‘conceptual metaphor theory’), metaphors are conceptual mappings from a ‘source domain’ to a ‘target domain’.²² Such a framework works as well for similes, seen as “metaphorical comparisons composed of two nominal terms one of which belongs to the target and the other to the source domain”.²³ Similes generally observe the principle of directionality which characterizes conceptual metaphors, in that more concrete concepts are mapped onto more abstract ones.²⁴ This is generally valid for the most prominent sample of literary similes in classical literature, namely Homeric similes. In their narrative extended version, these tend to provide a detailed and imagistic description of a situation familiar to the audience as a means to illustrate events, feelings and concepts:²⁵ the typicality of Homeric similes has invited critics to analyse them according to thematic classes or families.²⁶ The phenomenology of literary similes in ancient literature is far wider than we can attempt to describe here,²⁷ and as a closing example for this section we would like to point to one of the few instances of Homeric similes drawing on the domain of textile activity, *Il.* 23.758-764: here, a detailed description of a woman weaving on the warp-weighted loom is the vehicle image for illustrating the closeness of two heroes engaged in a running race; on the occasion of the funeral games for Patroclus, Odysseus is described as running very close behind Ajax:

ᾠκα δ' ἔπειτα

¹⁵ Richards 1936, 89-112, in part. 96-101 for the explanation of the technical terms. See Garner 1990, 5 for the application of Richards’ terminology, and thus of the mechanism of metaphor (as rhetorical figure in this case), to the phenomenology of poetic allusion in archaic and classical Greek poetry, building on Conte 1986.

¹⁶ For the terms as applied to a simile see Hutchinson 2012, 277

¹⁷ Richards 1936, 97.

¹⁸ See Silk 1974, 9 on Richards’ term ‘ground’, meant “to denote the likeness, the feature of features held in common between tenor and vehicle. This ‘ground’ might seem to be inherently a conceptual, not a verbal, matter”.

¹⁹ Richards 1936, 92.

²⁰ Richards 1936, 94, who in the remainder of the passages argues that “[*T*hought is metaphorical, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom”, thus anticipating, at least partly (by giving logical prominence to metaphor in thought), the assertions of the cognitivists.

²¹ Black 1962, 237, in the context of a comparison between metaphor and (scientific) model, one of the difference being that “[A] memorable metaphor has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation” (236); Black builds on Richards to elaborate his ‘interaction’ theory of metaphor (38-47).

²² The classic formulation of this theory is in Lakoff & Johnson 1980; a helpful account of conceptual metaphor theory is Kövecses 2002. See below for a more detailed account of the cognitive approach to metaphor.

²³ Shen 2008, 297.

²⁴ For a recent discussion of similes in terms of cognitive approach to figurative language, see Bark 2011, 18-22, 34-36.

²⁵ In this regard, Homeric similes cover two of the functions that Silk 1996, 967 and 2003, 126 sees metaphor and simile perform in ancient poetic usage: a) “to make clearer, as through a diagram, usually by appeal to familiar experience”, and b) “to exploit the associations, including the contrary associations of the vehicle, beyond any limited point or ground of comparison”.

²⁶ Cf. Scott 1974 for a systematic treatment of Homeric similes as a device of oral poetics. Scott divides Homeric similes by creating a typology according to location and subject matters. de Jong 1999, III, 299-382 is a collection of reference scholarship on Homeric similes.

²⁷ See for instance the recent discussion of Pindar’s grammar of comparison, and his use of ‘condensed similes’ as devices of conceptualization, by Maslov 2015, 156-166.

ἔκφερ' Ὀϊλιάδης· ἐπὶ δ' ὄρνυτο δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
ἄγχι μάλ', ὡς ὅτε τῆς τε γυναικὸς ἐϋζώνοιο
στήθεός ἐστι κανών, ὃν τ' εὖ μάλα χερσὶ τανύσση
πενίον ἐξέγκουσα παρὲκ μίτον, ἀγρόθι δ' ἴσχει
στήθεος·

Then speedily the son of Oileus forged to the front, and close after him sped noble Odysseus, close as is the weaving rod to the breast of a fair-belted woman when she deftly draws it in her hands, pulling the spool past the warp, and holds the rod near to her breast, so close behind.²⁸

Aristotle on metaphors

As it is well known, Aristotle's highly influential treatment of metaphor in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* laid the foundations for the elaboration by later rhetoricians of what is known as the 'classical' theory of metaphor as an ornament of style – a *trope*.²⁹ The two grounding notions around which the theory is built are substitution (or deviation) and similarity (or analogy), both of which surface prominently in Aristotle's designations of *metaphora* (a term which, as we will see, does not correspond entirely to what we mean by 'metaphor'). Interestingly, however, these two principles do not exhaust the breadth and complexity of Aristotle's account,³⁰ which features formulations of significant cognitive and conceptual import.

Itself a metaphor, the term μεταφορά 'transference/carrying across' conveys "the basic idea that a term is transferred from its original context to another",³¹ as illustrated by the well-known definition in *Poetics* 1457b6 "metaphora is the application/transference (to one thing) of a word that belongs to another thing" (μεταφορὰ δὲ ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ).³² The four-folded classification immediately following such definition ("(a transference) either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy")³³ illustrates with four examples that Aristotle's *metaphora* is a more comprehensive category than that which we call 'metaphor', as it includes different types of

²⁸ Translation by A.T. Murray revised by William F. Wyatt 1925 (Loeb). On aspects of this simile related to textile technology and terminology see Barber 1991, 267 and Edmunds 2012, § 24.

²⁹ An excellent recent overview on the topic, which explores the range of ancient formulations of metaphor as a rhetorical trope, also bringing them in relation to modern views, is offered by Innes 2003. For a semiotic approach to Aristotle's theory of metaphor see Kirby 1997. On the cognitive implications of Aristotle's view of metaphor see Martin 2015, 274-284, who sets it against ancient (the rhetoricians) and modern (Hobbes, Locke) approaches. Lloyd 1996 discusses the use of metaphorical language in Aristotle's account of metaphor in *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Silk 2003 focuses on Aristotle's elaboration of a theory of poetic metaphor, and points to some apparent flaws of the theory when seen against actual literary usage. The bibliography on Aristotle's theory of metaphor is massive (Kirby 1997, 518 n.3 provides a helpful orientation): for the scope of the present discussion, Kirby, Martin, Lloyd and Silk represent three particularly interesting approaches to the topic. English translation of *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* are adapted from the most recent Loeb editions (respectively Halliwell 1995 and Freese 1926).

³⁰ It should be noted that Aristotle's discussion in *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* has a pronounced focus on the use of metaphor in poetry and literary prose/oratory. A different concern and attitude towards metaphor is shown in works like *Topics* and *Metaphysics*: see Lloyd 1987, 183-186, and 1996, 205-222 on Aristotle's critique of the use of metaphor in philosophical demonstration and formal logic.

³¹ Innes 2003, 7, who remarks how such "vocabulary of movement, change/exchange, and place/domain" is a recurring one in antiquity for conceptualizing the mechanism of metaphorical transfer, and it reflects the divide between content and style (as ornamentation) fundamental to ancient rhetoric's view of language; interestingly, this distinction is in turn illustrated by rhetoricians in terms of clothing imagery (cf. Cic. *Brut.* 262).

³² Translation: Silk 2003 adapted. A more concise translation is offered by Innes 2003, 7: "(metaphor is) the introduction of an alien term". Kirby 1997, 531-533 discusses in particular the semantics of the term ἐπιφορὰ, built as μεταφορὰ from the root of the verb φέρω 'carry'.

³³ *Po.* 1457b7-9 ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ τὸ γένος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον. The two latter categories cover usages that we normally associate with our idea of metaphor: as an instance of the 'species to species' type, Aristotle quotes Empedocles fr. 138 DK 'drawing off the life with bronze' and fr. 143 DK 'cutting with slender-edged bronze', observing that "here he has used 'drawing off' for 'cutting' and *vice versa*, as both are kinds of removing" (1457b14-16); the analogical metaphors are explained as "cases when *b* is to *a* as *d* is to *c*: one will then speak of *d* instead of *b*, or *b* instead of *d*", and illustrated by the famous example "the wine bowl is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares: so one will call the wine bowl 'Dionysus' shield' and the shield 'Ares' wine bowl'" (1457b16-23). On this metaphor see Di Campobianco in this volume.

transfer.³⁴ The passage as a whole seems to make clear that the notion of *metaphora* is grounded on the underlying principle of ‘substitution’ (*i.e.* using one term *instead* of another); this, in turn, presupposes the view that a term has a single, ‘standard’ meaning, and that any other usage is therefore ‘non-standard’, deviant. This aspect emerges as early as *Poetics* 1457b1-2, the first occurrence of the term μεταφορά in Aristotle, where it figures in a list of word categories which, in relation to poetic language, seems to set a standard/ordinary word (κύριον ὄνομα) in opposition to a number of ‘non-standard’ usages: “every word is either a standard term, or a loan-word (γλωττα), or a *metaphora*, or an epithet (κόσμος),³⁵ neologism, lengthening, contraction, or modification”.³⁶ The suitability of metaphor to prose is spelled out in a passage of *Rhetoric* (1404b32-35) which refers back to the previous one in *Poetics* and positions μεταφορά alongside τὸ κύριον (‘the standard’) and τὸ οἰκείον (‘the appropriate’), on the grounds that the three word-types “are alone to be employed in the style (λέξις) of prose; for all use *metaphorai* in conversation (διαλέγονται), as well as appropriate and standard words”. The observation that metaphor is a feature of ordinary speech, which “may be seen as actually prescient of the cognitive approach”,³⁷ surfaces again at the end of the discussion on *metaphora* in the *Poetics* (1459a10-14), where it is preceded by a couple of further significant assertions about what it is implied, cognitively, in one’s capacity to use metaphors (1459a5-7): such a skill (τὸ μεταφορικόν), labelled as “much the greatest asset” (πολὸν δὲ μέγιστον), is the only one that cannot be learnt from another, and “is a sign of natural gifts (εὐφυΐα): because to use metaphor well (τὸ εὖ μεταφέρειν) is to discern similarities (τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν)”.³⁸ The ability to perceive likeness (on the part of both the poet crafting *metaphorai* and the audience decoding them) positions metaphorical language and thinking within the sphere of cognition – a reflection developed in a number of passages in the *Rhetoric*, especially in relation to the sphere of ‘learning’ (μάθησις). Given that “all words that make us learn something (μανθάνειν) are the most pleasant (ἡδίστα)” (1410b14), metaphor achieves this effect at full scale (μάλιστα): recognizing the relationship between species and genus that metaphor effects is thus generating learning (μάθησις) and the acquisition of knowledge (γνώσις, 1410b15). A further linguistic and conceptual function that Aristotle sees *metaphora* performing, beyond the realm of rhetorical and poetic ornamentation, is related to its capacity to fill a lexical gap by “giving names to things that have none” (1405a36 μεταφέρειν τὰ ἀνόνομα ὀνομασμένως).³⁹ The metaphorical nature of the technical terminology for metaphor itself may be regarded as an obvious application of this feature, which in turn seems to adumbrate Hans Blumenberg’s view of metaphor as a technological device,⁴⁰ and the idea, grounded in the conceptual metaphor theory, that there are cases when the *only* linguistic expression of a concept is metaphorical.⁴¹ The creation of such ‘name-giving’ metaphors should rest on the same guiding principle of analogy (“by deriving the metaphor from what shares the same genus [ἐκ τῶν συγγενῶν] and the same species [ἐκ τῶν ὁμοειδῶν]” 1405a37) that defines the prominent status of *metaphora* within the array of ornamental devices and ‘deviant’ usages available to the poet (*Poetics* 1459a5-8).

³⁴ Silk 2003, 116-117, who observes how the first two illustrative examples provided by Aristotle (“from genus to species, from species to genus”) includes a ‘normal usage’ (or a ‘dead metaphor’) in Hom. *Od.* 1.185 where ἔστηκεν ‘stands’ is used of a ship lying at anchor, and metonymy (or, more precisely, *hyperbole*) in Hom. *Il.* 2.272 where “ten thousand (deeds)” is used instead of “many”.

³⁵ For this interpretation of *kosmos*, which normally indicates ‘ornament (of style)’, see Martin 2015, 280-282, and *passim*.

³⁶ A further passage in the *Poetics* (1458a22-23) locates *metaphora* within a list of ‘exotic’ (ξενικόν) usages, with the explicit remark that ‘exotic’ is “anything that diverges from the standard” (πᾶν τὸ παρὰ τὸ κύριον). A ‘parallel’ passage in *Rhetoric*, when the reference is to prose, asserts that “it is *metaphora* above all that gives clarity (τὸ σαφέες), pleasure (τὸ ἡδύ), and foreign air (τὸ ξενικόν)” (1405a8-9).

³⁷ So, aptly, Kirby 1997, 539, who considers Lakoff’s objection to the ‘classical’ theory of metaphor (*i.e.* the fact that this distinguishes between ‘figurative’ language and every-day usage) and remarks that “while it is true that Aristotle has a notion of *kuria* or ordinary terms, he by no means restricted metaphor to poetic or extraordinary contexts”.

³⁸ The perception of likeness is elsewhere regarded by Aristotle (*Top.* 108b7-14) as fundamental to dialectic and logic: see Kirby 1997, 536-537. See Martin 2015, 282-283 on Aristotle’s treatment of metaphor “as a *cognitive* tool, an aid to instruction”.

³⁹ This seems to amount to a conception of the nature of metaphor as, originally, a ‘necessary’ device for generating new terms: such a view is then developed by Cicero (*De Oratore* 3.155) into an ‘evolutionary’ theory of metaphor: “necessity was the parent [of metaphor], compelled by the sterility and narrowness of language; but afterwards delight and pleasure made it frequent”.

⁴⁰ On Blumenberg’s conception of metaphor see chapter by Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück in this volume.

⁴¹ See Cairns 2014, 6 who argues that certain concepts are “inherently metaphorical” *i.e.* “metaphorically constructed” (3 with n.3)

The notion of an *a priori* underlying analogy between the two members of a metaphor has been questioned by modern theorists,⁴² and Michael Silk has shown that, in relation to ancient poetic usage, analogy is “rarely of central importance”,⁴³ whereas vividness and immediacy, features that Aristotle sees as “bringing things before the eyes” (*Rhet.* 1411b24), are more prominent in poetic metaphors.

Aristotle’s wide-ranging discussion of *metaphora*, fundamental to the elaboration of the ‘classical’ theory of metaphor by later rhetoricians, represents an unavoidable frame of reference for modern approaches to the topic, some of which it seems to have ‘anticipated’ in various ways. Considering classical and contemporary views of metaphor, and their suitability as theoretical frameworks for the interpretation of imagery in ancient literature, particularly in reference to textile metaphors, will be our concern in the next section.

A short overview on theories and approaches to metaphor in classical literature. The case of textile and clothing metaphors

Any discussion of textile and clothing imagery in classical literature is bound to engage with the prominent role of metaphor in expressing the imagistic and conceptual potential of the craft(s) and technology of fabric- and cloth-making to generate ways of thinking about realities, processes and experiences that fall into the sphere of the unseen and abstract – and as such cannot be ‘directly’ thought of or represented. At the outset of a lucid account of ancient and modern views on metaphor which introduces her investigation of the device in Pindar’s victory odes,⁴⁴ Deborah Steiner presents the semantic domain of crafts (*technai*) as a significant source of terminology for the functioning of the world, with weaving and spinning singled out for their generative force in “describing the working of such intangibles as fate and fortune”.⁴⁵ Indeed, the case of the weaving, spinning and garment metaphors in archaic Greek poetry provide us with a unique vantage point to reflect on how different (and often perceived as competing) approaches to the nature and functioning of metaphor can be (and have been) fruitfully applied to certain patterns of imagery. One of the reasons for this might be the special status of archaic Greek poetry in terms of ‘literacy’: factors like orality and formulaic language (in epic), pragmatics and performance context (in lyric) suggest ways of production and reception of imagery (and metaphor in particular) that can be analysed along the lines of the classical theory of tropes as well as of modern approaches to language and cognition.⁴⁶ To borrow a recent formulation of the issue at stake, what interests us here is a particular aspect of the broader “dilemma of cognitive universalism and historicism in the study of figuration”.⁴⁷ Typically, this will invite considerations on broader aspects of metaphor theory⁴⁸ – among which is the crucial question of the relation between metaphor in literature and in everyday language –⁴⁹ as assumptions regarding the origin and the structure of metaphorical thinking are going to ground the interpretation of poetic

⁴² See Ricoeur 1978, 86 for the view that it is metaphor that creates the similarity, rather than expressing an underlying likeness.

⁴³ Silk 2003, 126; for Silk, analogy should be regarded as the ‘logical basis’ of metaphorical expression, “irrespective of whether that logical basis is central or peripheral to the instance in question” (124).

⁴⁴ Steiner 1986, 1-17. Though the theory of conceptual mappings (which was still in its very infancy at the time) does not feature in Steiner’s overview of modern linguistics approach to metaphorical language, the author shows full awareness of the cognitive potential of metaphor.

⁴⁵ Steiner 1986, 1; see 52-65 for a treatment of craftsmanship as vehicle for song/poetry in Pindar’s victory odes. On the richness of the metaphorical networks activated by the semantic fields of spinning and weaving in a cross-linguistic and diachronic perspective, see Guilleux’ chapter in this volume. From a different perspective see Lloyd 1966, 192-193 and 1987, 174-176 on the extent to which it is possible to draw the distinction between literal and metaphorical in the Homeric account of the working of fate as spinning, weaving and binding.

⁴⁶ Pindar’s metaphors (especially in the *epinikia*) represent a case in point: for different approaches see Silk 1974, *passim*; Steiner 1986, 18-27; Bonifazi 2001, 76-87; Hutchinson 2012; Maslov 2015, 117-177.

⁴⁷ Maslov 2015, 177, stating that such a dilemma “cannot be resolved in aprioristic terms. Any such debate must be conducted with reference to the particulars of the given literary-historical episode”: this is what Maslov aims to do in his exploration of the function of metaphor as an emergent conceptual device in Pindar (117-177).

⁴⁸ In the last thirty years, research into metaphor within a vast array of academic fields and disciplines, ranging wider than just rhetoric, linguistics, philosophy and cognitive studies, has seen an explosion of scholarly work from both a theoretical and an experimental, applied approach: for the purpose of the present discussion refer to Gibbs 2008b and Cairns 2014, 2-8 with further bibliography; see also Ortony 1993.

⁴⁹ See on this topic Semino & Steen 2008, esp. 244.

imagery.⁵⁰ We shall briefly consider a few different approaches to metaphor and to poetic metaphor in particular, and see how these can be applied to samples of textile imagery in archaic Greek poetry.

A first possible divide, at the risk of oversimplifying, can be drawn between views of metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon, encompassing varying degrees of engagement with the conceptual cargo of the image, and an approach that sees lexical metaphors as projections and reflections of a cognitive process, a cross-domain mapping of concepts. In turn, the two focuses generate different views about the nature and function of poetic metaphor.

Metaphor as poetic device: the ‘hymnos of song’ in context

At one end of the spectrum, based on language-oriented analysis and grounded in the classical theory of metaphor as a trope, we may position Silk’s ‘interactional’ approach to archaic Greek poetic imagery.⁵¹ He explores the varied and subtle ways through which the relationship between tenor and vehicle (and the linguistic elements that effect this relation and that represent the ‘interaction’) is exploited at the level of poetic diction and style in authors such as Pindar and Aeschylus, whose fondness for complex textures of imagery and elaborate metaphors was recognized in antiquity. Crucial to such an approach, which sees imagery as deviant “from the terminological norm”,⁵² is the theoretical apparatus of criteria according to which a reconstruction of categories such as ‘normal usage’, ‘live metaphors’, ‘dead metaphors’, and ‘cliché’ can be attempted. The distribution and spread of the usage of a term throughout ancient authors will often decide whether an image is a metaphor or not.⁵³ The consistent application of these criteria leads Silk to shed light on the meaning and context of a large sample of imagery, and on the relationship between conventional and creative diction in a historical perspective. Interestingly enough, he takes the spread (Homer, Bacchylides and Pindar) of the metaphor of ‘weaving a hymn/song’ (ὕφανας ὕμνον in Bacch. 5.9; other occurrences: Bacch. 19.8, Pi. fr. 179 S-M; 955 PMG)⁵⁴ as evidence for arguing that the use of *hyphanein* in these instances should not be considered a cliché, but rather a live metaphor making use of the device of ‘alliterative linking’ – thus proposing an explanation that is alternative to the *communis opinio* that ‘weaving a *hymnos*’ is a word-play on the seemingly common etymology between *hyphainein* and *hymnos*.⁵⁵

The metaphor of ‘weaving the poem/song’ may indeed provide us with a helpful image-type for illustrating how approaches to metaphorical expressions that are attentive to the literary, historical, and performative specificities of an image in its immediate context can enhance our perception of the functioning of metaphor, aptly integrating views that account for the cross-linguistic and universal significance of certain patterns of imagery or conceptual metaphors.

A concern for the development of imagery within the history of literary genres informs the ‘historical poetics’ approach. A recent work by Boris Maslov traces the emerging conceptual (and cognitive) import of metaphor in Pindar, where for the first time in Greek literature metaphor is used as a device of conceptualization and of abstract thought – thus effecting a detachment from the ‘mythopoetic’ use of images in personifications and genealogical metaphors in previous authors.⁵⁶ In the case of the ‘weaving a *hymnos*’ metaphor, considerations of the semantics of the term *hymnos* as “choral cult

⁵⁰ See the chapters by Guilleux, Cairns, Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück, Papadopoulou and Johncock in this volume for marked theoretical premises to the analysis of particular patterns of metaphorical language in poetry.

⁵¹ Silk 1974. See in particular pp. 6-14 for the decision to adopt Richards’ categories *tenor* and *vehicle*, “reinterpreted as matters of words” (9), at the service of a ‘terminological’ approach to the analysis of poetic imagery.

⁵² Silk 1974, 27. As for the classical theory of tropes, the concept of ‘deviant usage’ presupposes an aesthetic statement on the part of both the modern critic and ancient audience; see Silk 2003, 123: “[T]he essence of deviation is that it is *perceptible* deviation.”

⁵³ The criterion of ‘distribution’ encompasses three sub-criteria establishing the quality (*i.e.* in which authors and texts the word appears), the quantity (how often it appears) and the period of usage of the given word (Silk 1974, 34). For a similar historical concern for tracing the originality of a poetic image, but in the different perspective of detecting a *série métaphorique*, cf. Taillardat 1965, 15-24.

⁵⁴ Silk 1974, 180-181 considers part of the spread of this metaphor also the Homeric instance of *Il.* 3.212 which refers to the weaving of a speech (μύθους ὕφαινον).

⁵⁵ See Fanfani & Harlizius-Klück in this volume.

⁵⁶ Maslov 2015, 117-177, who argues that “Pindar’s poetics inaugurates the conceptualization of poetic image”, and this can be considered as “one particularly consequential episode in the history of poetic language” (119).

song” particularly suited to epinician performance⁵⁷ should be linked to a further core feature of the genre, namely the authority of the choral voice to utter metapoetic statements.⁵⁸ Thus, the weaving of the *hymnos* on the part of the choral persona is likely to be referring to the performative and pragmatic context of the execution of the poem. While the ‘pragmatic’ approach to metaphor sees it as a matter of ‘utterance meaning’ rather than ‘sentence meaning’,⁵⁹ the peculiarity of the epinician performance in terms of pragmatics rests on its being ‘occasional’, embedded in the specific circumstances of the event: on the one hand, the conversion of the event into choral song is effected through the presence of poetry as a favourite metaphorical target (as in the ‘weaving a *hymnos*’ image);⁶⁰ on the other, material objects (or places) included in the performance become important elements at the level of poetic expression. This is the case, for instance, of *stephanos* (‘crown’) in phrases like ‘I interlace a crown of song’, especially given the presence of garlands crowning the *victor* athlete and the dancers.⁶¹ Turning back to the ‘weaving a *hymnos*’ metaphor, the chorus may be here hinting at the nexus between weaving and chorality that is a recurrent motif in archaic Greek poetry, and that may have been reflected in performance through the rhythmic and dancing patterns of the song, conceptually associated to weaving patterns.⁶²

Universal and specific: conceptual metaphors reconsidered

A different focus on textile and clothing imagery is offered by approaches which look for semantic networks of images in a cross-linguistical and diachronic perspective (‘metaphorical matrixes’), or for the cognitive mechanism of broad conceptual mappings generating metaphorical systems (‘conceptual metaphor theory’). As Nicole Guilleux points out in her chapter, the two approaches reflect an epistemological convergence: both explore (semantic and conceptual) associations organized in larger systems of metaphors that pervade both everyday language and poetic imagery, and in both approaches the recourse to concrete referents for expressing (and constructing) abstract concepts, processes or activities is rooted in human and bodily experience and then projected onto the target domain through metaphor.⁶³

The cognitive theory of metaphor, famously formulated by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, is grounded on the notion that metaphor is a universal feature of language, “pervasive in everyday life”,⁶⁴ and that it is generated by a mapping between two conceptual domains, with a direction that goes from the more concrete to the more abstract domain.⁶⁵ A fundamental import of the theory is that linguistic metaphor is basically the reflection of the cognitive process at the conceptual level. A further crucial consequence of the theory is that many complex concepts are constructed metaphorically. The three constituents of a given metaphor are the *target domain* (an abstract concept to be described metaphorically), the *source domain* (a relatively concrete concept which will be mapped onto the target), and the *mapping* (the cognitive process that project the *source* onto the *target*).⁶⁶ Any metaphorical mapping consists of “slots in the source-domain schema, which get

⁵⁷ Maslov 2015, 288, who does not treat the weaving metaphor for song in his discussion of *hymnos*. See pp. 294-307 for a comprehensive investigation into the generic archaeology of *hymnos*; as for the hypothesis of a common Indo-European poetics as a single poetic tradition, which he rejects, Maslov submits that (299) “the Proto-Indo-European metapoetic apparatus survived as part of the genre of cult (choral) song whose likely designation in Greek was *hymnos*”.

⁵⁸ Cf. Maslov 2015, drawing on D’Alessio 1994.

⁵⁹ Morgan 1993, 124-125 (referring to Searle 1993). See Bark 2011, 18 on the area of *discourse-pragmatics* in current metaphor research, and Bonifazi 2001, 53-54.

⁶⁰ See Hutchinson 2012, 279-280.

⁶¹ Cf. Bonifazi 2001, 79, who points out that Pindar’s metaphors describe often processes and actions. See pp. 81-83 for further interesting features of Pindaric metaphors in relation to the pragmatics of the performance, among which the necessity for the poet to draw on his audience’s competence (*sophia*) in order for the image to be interpreted correctly.

⁶² Cf. Steiner 1986, 54.

⁶³ For the semantic approach to metaphorical networks, in the context of the imagery system of Aristophanes, cf. the fundamental Taillardat 1965. The foundational work for the cognitive approach to metaphor theory is Lakoff & Johnson 1980. For poetic metaphors in a cognitive perspective see Lakoff & Turner 1989.

⁶⁴ Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 3.

⁶⁵ See Bark 2011, 7: “[M]etaphor then is not a lexical ornament designed to elaborate a pre-existing concept, but a cognitive relationship *between* concepts.”

⁶⁶ Bark 2011, 10.

mapped onto slots in the target domain”, together with relations, properties, and knowledge.⁶⁷ The conventional representation of the mapping uses small capitals, *e.g.* LIFE IS A JOURNEY. When it comes to poetic metaphors, the cognitive theory sees them as using the same mechanisms of everyday, basic conceptual metaphors, but extending, elaborating and combining them in novel ways.⁶⁸ An interesting instance of weaving technology providing the source domain for a complex cosmological concept, namely the structure of atomic compound, is discussed by Matthew Johncock in this volume for Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*; this is suggestive of two elements related to the function and nature of weaving technology: a) it must have been a familiar and widely accessible technology, if Lucretius decided to exploit its conceptual import for his didactic purpose, and b) it must have been a complex enough technology to be capable of creating, through analogy and conceptual mapping, the invisible structure of atomic compound.⁶⁹ As a corollary of this, it could be noted that the technology of the warp-weighted loom, with its constraints and peculiar features, also seems to play a role in structuring the concept of atomic compound in Lucretius’ account: we see in this case the suitability of the conceptual metaphor model to be applied to historical and context-specific cases of metaphorical use. The cognitive theory of metaphorical mapping is often associated with a claim of universalism, in that it seeks to position individual metaphors within larger systems of conceptual mappings, and to trace the peculiarity and novelty of literary imagery to broader patterns of conventional metaphors in everyday language and thinking. In fact, as Douglas Cairns illustrates in his chapter about the role of garment metaphors in conceptualizing emotions in ancient Greek, the universal cognitive mechanism of the formation of abstract concepts from concrete experiences needs to be investigated in relation to culture-specific factors - the linguistic and symbolic ‘codices’ of a given culture, the dynamics of the interaction between the body and the environment - in order for a metaphorical system to be accessed and understood. He shows in particular how ritual and non-verbal gestures associated with the performance of emotions (*e.g.* grief and the ritual of mourning, implying the covering of the dead body and of the mourners’ heads) interact with the physical and bodily symptoms in generating concepts of emotions through metonymy and metaphor.

The weaving metaphor as ‘myth’ in Scheid and Svenbro

One further approach to textile imagery in classical literature, though not primarily concerned with the application of a specific theoretical model to its source material, deserves a mention at this point. In the introductory remarks to their influential investigation of the weaving metaphor in Greek and Roman cultures, John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro argue in favour of a terminological shift from ‘metaphor’ to ‘myth’, in order to account for some specific features of the pervasive “metaphor of weaving and fabric” within the Greco-Roman civilization.⁷⁰ They observe how a distinctive trait of the weaving metaphor – indeed the main reason for proposing to categorize it as ‘myth’ – is that it is “a shared one” rather than “an individual creation”. More specifically, it is “a figure of thought used by an entire civilization, repeated, modified, and resurrected over time without ever becoming fixed or

⁶⁷ Lakoff & Turner 1989, 63. Interestingly, the notion that features of the source domain are being mapped onto corresponding features of the target domain is an integral part of the ‘interaction’ view of metaphor proposed by Max Black; see Black 1993, 28: “[T]he maker of a metaphorical statement selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the primary subject by applying to it statements isomorphic with the members of the secondary subject’s implicative complex.”

⁶⁸ Lakoff & Turner 1989, 67. Hutchinson 2012, though not endorsing the theory of conceptual metaphor, adopts the view that poetic metaphors derive from basic “underlying equivalences” (277) that they develop in various and complex ways: he discusses Pindar’s favourite targets, poetry and victory, showing the range of variations in the ‘fame is light’ image. To refer back one last time to the ‘weaving a *hymnos*’ metaphor, this would normally be investigated as vehicle within the category of ‘craftsmanship imagery’ (see *e.g.* Steiner 1986, 52-65): the emphasis on targets (‘poetry’, in this case), which in the case of epicinian poetry are particularly rich in attracting and generating conceptual images, shows the potential of the conceptual metaphor theory for analysis of genre-specific patterns of imagery.

⁶⁹ On the notion of ‘gestalt metaphor’, which Johncock applies the sustained employment and the complex structure of the weaving in Lucretius’ poem, Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 77 observe that it is a means of “structuring one experience in terms of another”, by way of “superimposing the multidimensional structure” of one concept “upon the corresponding structure” of the other concept (81).

⁷⁰ Scheid & Svenbro 1996, 2-4 (also for the quotations that follow); the authors’ stance in relation to this shift of category is clearly reflected in the subtitle of their book, “Myths of weaving and fabric”. Their focus is on the craft aspects of textile production, of spinning and weaving, and less on clothing metaphors (despite chapter names such as ‘Peplos’ and ‘Khlaina’).

dead”. While Scheid and Svenbro make a good case for associating these features to their nuanced concept of ‘generative mythology’ as encompassing stories, images, and ritual, it could be observed that, in fact, the notion of ‘conceptual metaphor’ (as we have delineated it earlier in this section) may as well account for most of those same elements. Indeed, one of the ‘myths’ of weaving explored by Scheid and Svenbro is the image of the ‘fabric of the city’, which is representative of the fundamental function of ‘myth’ as “a kind of commonly shared *idée fixe* by means of which the member of a culture constantly try to explore and organize reality”.⁷¹ in providing a conceptual image (fabric) through which a civilization makes sense of, and construct its view of another domain (civic life), the ‘myth’ of the ‘fabric of the city’ is again invested with a function typically attributed to conceptual metaphors. One of the best known application of the ‘fabric of the city’ image in classical literature, the paradigm (*paradeigma*) of weaving in Plato’s *Statesman*, is interpreted by Scheid and Svenbro as an instance of ‘political weaving’ grounded on the concept of the interlacing (*sumplokē*) of opposites (the two virtues of *andreia* and *sophrosyne*, ‘courage’ and ‘moderation’, that needs to be woven together by the art of good government, *politikē*) as reflecting the crossing of warp and weft in the fabric.⁷² Integral to the normative dimension of the metaphor of the ‘fabric of the city’ is the use of weaving as a ‘model’ (*paradeigma*) for statesmanship.⁷³ here, the opposition on which the technology of weaving is based, namely the principles of combining and dividing, is presented by Plato as the key concept on which the sustained structural analogy illustrating the nature of kingship is grounded – the implication being that *paradeigma*, as a device of investigation of the underlying analogies between two domains, is invested with an important cognitive function.⁷⁴

Conclusions: understanding textile expressions over two millennia?

The aim of the original two workshops and the papers that have made up this volume has been to investigate how the imagery of textiles (through simile, analogy, metaphor) worked in ancient literature. The collection has identified a range of analysis and interlinked connections that have woven together in a complex fabric of text. This complexity should not, and indeed, cannot be unravelled but in order to guide the less-textile-dress-initiated we have identified a series of categories, all of which are covered in one aspect or another by the chapters in this volume.

Language, terminologies, concepts and categories

In dealing with ancient – or dead – languages, we rely heavily on dictionaries where one term equals another term. In research into textile terminologies, the greatest effort is put into understanding textile, garment and textile-tool terms in their contexts and translating them correctly so that both the technology and the concept which the term encompasses are expressed. A too flat-footed or over-simplified use of dictionaries tends to lose the multiple layers of meaning, and particularly the metaphorical sense of textile and garment terms. While dictionaries and lexeme lists are useful sources of information, the fluidity of textile and garment metaphors and expressions must be sought in context and in the author’s choice of terms and concepts.

In recent years, a series of systematic surveys and analyses of textile terminologies have been undertaken. These have focussed on textile terms as part of general or specialised vocabularies; on etymologies and evolution; on verbal and non-verbal expressions; and on the ontologies of specialised languages.⁷⁵ The impetus behind the workshops that created this volume was a desire to focus beyond the literal meanings of textile terms, and to understand their symbolic and figurative connotations. From the large body of textile and garment imagery in classical literature we identified three distinct

⁷¹ Scheid & Svenbro 1996, 3.

⁷² Scheid & Svenbro 1996, 22-31.

⁷³ A figure of speech and thought grounded on the principles of similarity and comparison, and especially suited to philosophical demonstration and inquiry, *paradeigma* (παράδειγμα, ‘paradigm’, ‘model’, ‘example’), is a concept whose semantics is rooted in the notions of ‘model’ (of an artist or architect) and ‘precedent’ (as an example in the moral sphere); cf. Pender 2003, 64-65, with further bibliography.

⁷⁴ The relationship between παράδειγμα (‘model’) and εικόν (‘image’, ‘comparison’ and even ‘metaphor’) in Plato is discussed by Pender 2003 in terms of the cognitive import of the two concepts. On the function of weaving technology in Plato’s *Statesman* see Harlizius-Klück 2004.

⁷⁵ Del Freo, Nosch, Rougemont 2010; Michel & Nosch 2010a; Michel & Nosch 2010b; Nosch 2012; Lervad, Dury, Nosch 2012.

semantic and conceptual areas, each containing a series of inter-linked, and sometimes, oppositional, sub-categories:

I Textile craft: spinning, weaving, stitching

- Spinning as metaphor of life and death, destiny, and time
- Spinning and weaving as metaphor for speech and narrative genres; spinning and weaving imagery and their (semantic and metaphorical) associations with the performance and composition of song and poetry; mechanical and functional affinities between weaving implements and musical instruments
- Spinning and weaving as producing ruse and wiles, cheating and plotting
- Weaving (and spinning) as a connecting force, symbolizing social and ritual cohesion (conceptual images in this realm of imagery: society is a fabric of people, weaving as metaphor for intercourse, *symplokein*)
- Weaving and spinning as technological devices illustrating processes of cosmological creation

II The moral values of/associated with textiles and textile producers

- Spinning and weaving as the litmus test for female virtue
- Spinning and weaving as markers of a lack of masculinity
- Association of low status with low morals

III Garments as markers of identity and emotional expression

- Clothing and textiles as metaphor of identity and personification and characterisation of the wearer
- Clothing as expression of emotions
- Clothing as metaphor for concealing and revealing
- Clothing as a vehicle of illness, disease.

These categories could undoubtedly be further extended and finessed, and there are many ways in which they can be blurred and nuanced. We would refer readers to chapters in the current volume to continue their own analysis. Creating lists has the danger of inferring a finite collection: this is not our aim, and even a cursory reading of the volume will demonstrate the diversity of textile and garment imagery.

There remain a few points worth reiterating. The erudite, male Greek or Roman author had a bodily and visual experience of textiles and textile production, he was rarely as withdrawn from textile production as we are in the modern world. One of the effects of this disengagement with the processes of production is our inability to understand the ramifications of what we are reading in ancient texts. This issue is amplified once we stop reading texts in their original languages and refer to translations, particularly when modern translators no longer possess or recognize the technical terms for textiles and garments of antiquity. The problem is compounded by readers who are also no longer familiar with ancient textile techniques, technical textile vocabularies or garment construction.⁷⁶

And should they be? This is one of the dilemmas that translators face. It might be correct to describe a woman at her warp-weighted loom, but to the modern reader of epics, this probably does not make sense or even blurs the message of role and status of the elite woman, as intended by the epic narrator. Perhaps the old and erroneous translations of a lady embroidering at her loom conveys better the notion of leisure, luxury and domesticity to the modern reader. On the other hand, the weaving woman conveys the idea of value of textile labour and the female contribution to a household in a pre-industrial economy. Thus, the choice of how to translate textile words will modify the interpretation of a scene.⁷⁷ Textile expressions can be viewed as useful literary tools and cognitive devices stemming from a concrete materiality and visual experience, and used to express and construct more abstract concepts. Many scholars, however, seem to consider textile expressions as archaisms and detached from a concrete memory or experience. They have become frozen metaphors of the past, and

⁷⁶ Harlow 2016.

⁷⁷ Wace 1948; Droß-Krüpe, K. and A. Paetz gen. Schieck 2014, 207-35; Harlow 2016.

may not even work well as metaphors anymore since they refer to clothing or techniques, which are forgotten and unknown to a (modern) reader.

We have tried to discern certain patterns: threads, across ancient literature, express bonds, relationships, birth and life; cosmic phenomena are viewed as bindings and interlacings of elements; garment metaphors express identity, they conceal and reveal both emotions and character traits. A significant dimension of our research has been, and continues to be, to explore the role of textile technology in the mental universes of the past, whether in cult, ritual, mythology, metaphors, political rhetoric, poetry and the language of the sciences – urban tissues, the fabric of the universe, the outskirts of the city, the common thread, the time warp, the world wide web – all belong to the figurative and metaphorical language which persists today, and make it blindingly apparent that textile expressions are not merely stylistic tools but rooted in cognitive and experiential realities in the past and the present. They inform us of technical terms and textile practice in daily life in antiquity, and thus have a strong didactic and rhetorical value in ancient literature which we need to recognise in order to understand past cultures and present experiences.

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