Journal of Hellenic Studies CV (1985) 11–31

IMAGO MUNDI: COSMOLOGICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

(PLATES I, II)

THE Homeric description of the shield made for Achilles by Hephaestus (*Il.* xviii 478–608) is the type for all later ecphrases of works of art in ancient literature. It stands out as an extravagant example of the epic poet's powers of elaborate and vivid description, so extravagant that one notable ancient critic at least, Zenodotus, felt that it was more comfortable simply to athetize the greater bulk of the passage. More symphathetic commentators of modern times have sought ways of integrating the scenes displayed on the divine artefact with the primary subject-matter of the *Iliad*; the most common approach is to take the Shield as a summary of all human life, a mirror of society in all its aspects, against which to measure the significance of the narrow range of warfare and death that dominates the rest of the poem.[1]

The requirements of internal coherence and external relevance also guided the interpretative strategy of ancient critics less austere than Zenodotus. This paper is an inquiry into the ways that antiquity perceived and exploited the Homeric Shield of Achilles. In the first section I examine early Greek responses to the question of the contextual function of a decorated shield such as that of Achilles. The obvious connection is that between emblem and the person of the shield-bearer, that is to say, the decoration is made appropriate to the nature of the hero. One component of the Shield, the astronomical, turns out to be particularly important. The second section deals with the intellectualist schematizations of the scholars and philosophers of the Hellenistic period, and with the development of a convenient formula by which the manifold aspects of the original text could be securely grasped. Scholarly exegesis feeds back in to literary and artistic re-creations of the Shield; there remains the question of the relevance of the newly interpreted shield to its bearer. In the third section emphasis switches once more from form to function. The shield of the greatest Homeric hero is appropriated by the historical ruler; the image of the cosmos becomes an emblem of the power, actual or anticipated, of the king.

I. THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES AND THE EARLY GREEK TRADITION OF STAR SHIELDS

The scenes on the Homeric Shield of Achilles fall into two groups, defined both by their content and by the scale of their treatment. The first group (*Il.* xviii 483–9, 607 f.) consists of briefly detailed scenes of the main features of the universe: first, introducing the whole ecphrasis, the three divisions of earth, heaven, and sea, together with the sun, moon, and the constellations which bedeck the heavens; and, concluding the description (607 f.), the stream of Ocean running along the outer rim of the Shield. The second group (490–606), framed by the first, consists of scenes of human life in the town and country, and constitutes the great bulk of the ecphrasis. The general impression of this group is of a teeming abundance, and schematization does not readily suggest itself; an unbiased observer might suspect that a simple principle of addition, rather than any more elaborate pattern of symmetry, had been responsible for the final conglomeration of subjects. The first group, by reason of both its positioning and its brevity, is the most easily remembered part of the Shield, and its universalizing character tends to determine the

A version of this paper was read to the Corpus Christi College Classical Seminar in Oxford, and I am grateful to the participants for their comments. I am also grateful to R. R. R. Smith for guidance in matters art-historical, and to the Craven Committee for a grant towards the cost of a visit to Italy to examine some of the monuments discussed.

[1] E.g. W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*[3] (Stuttgart 1959) 352 ff.; recently in English O.P. Taplin, 'The Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*', *G & R* xxvii (1980) 1–21.

interpretation of the second group of scenes when these are brought under scrutiny.[2] The whole Shield is a highly imaginative literary composition, but of the two groups of subjects it is the first that comes closer to the possibilities of real shield decorations. In particular the astronomical features of 484–9 may be compared with other evidence for the popularity of the heavenly bodies as an ornament of shields both real and imaginary; such astronomical images may have the function either of expressing the heroic pretensions of their wearer or of enhancing the military efficacy of the piece of armour they decorate.

Homer frequently compares his heroes, or the armour of his heroes, as they go into battle, with heavenly bodies, a star, or the sun, or moon.[3] While the flash and glitter of arms, in an age when metal was scarce, is the primary point of reference, such comparisons have a further function. Almost all the instances of celestial imagery in Homer apply to objects of particular significance or value: the palace of Alcinous, the veil of Hera, and so on; many of these objects have associations of divinity. One need not revive former interpretations of the Homeric epics as solar, lunar, or astral allegories,[4] to see that the comparison of a hero to the sun, moon, or a star, carries an allusion to non-aesthetic qualities, in particular to the pre-eminence of the great heroes, the 'stars' of the epic, and, in some cases, to their great power, destructive or otherwise; this is particularly clear in such things as the comparison of Hector to an *οὔλιος ἀστήρ*.[5] This literary usage may be related to the frequent representation in the visual arts of shields bearing stars or other heavenly bodies.[6] Robert Eisler collected examples from classical and other sources of shields with stars, and suggested that they were evidence of an apotropaic magic; the warrior, by bearing the image of a star, draws on its power in his own confrontations.[7] A psychological rather than a magical efficacy might be posited; the idea that the appearance alone of armour and its decoration can instil fear may be seen in the panic that grips the Myrmidons in Homer when they first set eyes on the newly-forged arms of Achilles.[8] One may compare the device of the thunderbolt often used on shields; this also finds an analogy in the Homeric image of the *στεροπή*, applied to the flash of armour,[9] where visual effect and symbol of prowess again coincide. Modern parallels, even in an age of scientific warfare, are close at hand.

In the *Iliad* this astral imagery clusters particularly thickly around the armour brought to Achilles by Thetis in Book xviii. As Achilles arms in Book xix we hear of the moon-like flash of the shield (374)[10] and the starry radiance of the helmet (381); the final picture of Achilles in his panoply compares him to the sun (398). The starry or solar appearance of Achilles is again emphasized as he confronts Hector in Book xxii.[11] In the *Iliad* as we have it these things should not be too closely linked with the fact that the sun, moon, and stars actually figure on the Shield of Achilles, for they are there presented as part of a catalogue of the natural world, and the visual dazzle is not stressed. But it is possible that in earlier and less elaborate versions of the epic the

[2] The sequence of (i) scenes of the widest divisions of the universe, followed by (ii) more specific scenes, is a frequent and popular pattern of ecphrasis. See J. T. Kakridis, *Homer revisited* (Lund 1971) ch. 6.

[3] H. Fränkel, *Die homerischen Gleichnisse* (Göttingen 1921) 47 ff. on similes of stars, lightning, fire. Note *Il.* v. 5 f. (flame from the helmet and shield of Diomedes like *ἀστὴρ ὀπωρινός*); vi 506 ff. (Paris like sun); xi 62 f. (Hector's shield reappears like *οὔλιος ἀστήρ*).

[4] For a modern version see N. Austin, *Archery at the dark of the moon: poetic problems in Homer's Odyssey* (Berkeley etc. 1975) ch. 5; *ibid.* 284 n. 18 for earlier approaches.

[5] *Il.* xi 62.

[6] Stars on shields: G. H. Chase, 'The shield devices of the Greeks', *HSCP* xiii (1902) 122 f.; N. Yalouris, *AJA* lxxxiv (1980) 315 f. Roman examples: S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford 1971) 377, with n. 5. Stars (and lightning) adorn the shields of two of the giants on the Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamum: see E. V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamum*[2] (Ithaca etc. 1971) 329 n. 197; E. Simon, *Pergamon und Hesiod* (Mainz 1975) 13.

[7] *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt* (Munich 1910) 84; *cf.* also 309 ff.

[8] *Il.* xix 14 f.

[9] Thunderbolt: a later example is found in Val. Flacc. *Arg.* vi 53 ff. (probably with a historical allusion to the Twelfth Legion, the *Fulminata*). In Virgil there is another association of shield and thunderbolt: the Cyclopes turn aside from the manufacture of Jupiter's *fulmen* to the making of the Shield of Aeneas (*Aen.* viii 426 ff.).

[10] The moon-simile was taken up by Milton in the description of the shield of Satan, *P.L.* i 286 ff.; see also the shield of Radigund in the *Faerie Queene* v 5.3.

[11] 26 ff.; 135. The heavenly fires of the Shield of Achilles are imitated by Virgil at *Aen.* x 271 ff., but with the substitution of the less auspicious rays of comets and of Sirius for the moon (drawing on the Dog Star of *Il.* xxii 26 ff.).

astronomical symbolism of the Shield was more prominent; we shall see that it was stressed in later visualizations of the Shield.

In Homer there are no other examples of star-studded shields, but stars probably adorn another item of armour, the breastplate of Achilles which Patroclus fatally puts on (*Il.* xvi 133 f.):

> δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνε
> ποικίλον ἀστερόεντα ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο.

LSJ take ἀστερόεντα to mean 'like a star, sparkling' (the only other example adduced for this sense being the application of ἀστερόεις to the house of Hephaestus at *Il.* xviii 370). The original and dominant meaning of the word, however, is 'adorned with stars', and I take it as the likely meaning here. A late imitator of Homer, Nonnus, uses the word of a shield[12] which we have shortly before been told bears a depiction of the 'chorus of stars',[13] thus delivering his contribution to a question the echoes of which can be traced in the Homeric scholia and Eustathius.[14] The same grammarians' question may lie behind Virgil's ambiguous use of *sidereus* at *Aen.* xii 167 (Aeneas comes out to make the treaty with Latinus): 'sidereo flagrans clipeo et caelestibus armis'. Lewis and Short and the *OLD* give this passage as the first instance of the meaning 'bright, glittering', but this is too simple. Elsewhere Virgil uses *sidereus* in its primary sense of 'starry' (e.g. x 3, *sideream in sedem*, modelled on the Homeric οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα),[15] and in xii 167 the juxtaposition with *caelestibus armis* indicates that *sidereo* means more than 'bright'; it includes the notions of 'brought down from the sky', and 'divine'. There may also be an allusion to the comparison of the fire-belching shield to a comet or the dog-star at *Aen.* x 272 ff. But, over and above these connotations, it should be noted that the Shield of Aeneas does indeed bear a prominent representation of a star, the *patrium sidus* (*Aen.* viii 681).[16]

In early Greek literature the grandest star-shield, with the exception of the Shield of Achilles, is that of Tydeus in Aeschylus' *Septem* 387 ff.:[17]

> ἔχει δ' ὑπέρφρον σῆμ' ἐπ' ἀσπίδος τόδε,
> φλέγονθ' ὑπ' ἄστροις οὐρανὸν τετυγμένον.
> λαμπρὰ δὲ πανσέληνος ἐν μέσῳ σάκει,
> πρέσβιστον ἄστρων, νυκτὸς ὀφθαλμός, πρέπει.

Eteocles refuses to be impressed (397 f.):

> κόσμον μὲν ἀνδρὸς οὔτιν' ἂν τρέσαιμ' ἐγώ,
> οὐδ' ἑλκοποιὰ γίγνεται τὰ σήματα.

The implication is that Tydeus intends his blazon to be a symbol of his power to destroy, and we are hence justified in looking for a meaning in this area, a meaning rejected by Eteocles when he scoffingly rationalizes the blazon as an omen of the 'night' of death that will fall on Tydeus. We may turn to Sappho for a peaceful application of the image of the full moon outshining the stars,[18] but a pre-eminence consisting in beauty or appearance alone is hardly apt for Tydeus. A

[12] *Dion.* xxv 352.

[13] *Ibid.* 338.

[14] ἀστερόεις is used of οὐρανός in the sense 'starry' eleven times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Leaf compares, for the formation, ἀνθεμόεις used of works of art in metal adorned with flowers. Schol. Tb on *Il.* xvi 134 refer ἀστερόεντα to a decoration of stars; *contra* Eust. 1050. 16, ὡς ἄστρῳ ἐοικώς. *Cf.* schol. D *ad loc.*, ἤτοι ἀστέρας ἐμπεποικιλμένους ἔχοντα ἢ λαμπρόν. Further bibliography in H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum* (1885) s.v. ἀστερόεις.

[15] *Cf.* also *Aen.* iii 585 f., *lucidus aethra | siderea polus.*

[16] *Cf.* Serv. Auct. *ad Aen.* viii 681, 'ipse vero Augustus in honorem patris stellam in galea coepit habere depictam'.

[17] For recent discussions see P. Vidal-Naquet, 'The shields of the heroes' in J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Tragedy and myth in ancient Greece* (Brighton 1981), =*Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1972), ch. 6; F. I. Zeitlin, *Under the sign of the shield: semiotics and Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes* (Urbino 1982), which is in substantial agreement with a number of my points.

[18] *Fr.* 34 LP ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν / ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος / ὅππότα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπῃ / γâν. *Cf.* also *fr.* 96. 8 f. On the encomiastic *topos* of the comparison of a person to a heavenly body see R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A commentary on Horace Odes Book I* (Oxford 1970) 162 ff.; E. Doblhofer, *Die Augustuspanegyrik des Horaz in formalhistorischer Sicht* (Heidelberg 1966) 17 ff.

much later parallel may indicate the way in which we are to understand Tydeus' claim to celestial qualities, namely the ithyphallic hymn composed in Athens in honour of Demetrius Poliorcetes, probably in 291/90 BC:

σεμνόν τι φαίνεθ', οἱ φίλοι πάντες κύκλῳ,
ἐν μέσοισι δ' αὐτός,
ὅμοιον ὥσπερ οἱ φίλοι μὲν ἀστέρες,
ἥλιος δ' ἐκεῖνος.[19]

Other evidence, to some of which I shall return, makes it quite clear that this astronomical comparison, so far from being merely a literary *topos*, was central to the ruler-ideology of Demetrius. Aeschylus was well-acquainted with the Eastern models of kingship on which such Hellenistic notions partly depended. The hybris of Tydeus consists in a claim to embody or represent the forces of the heavens in his attack on Thebes; Eteocles may allude to this in the first word of his reply to the Messenger's report (397): 'κόσμον μὲν ἀνδρὸς οὔτιν' ἂν τρέσαιμ' ἐγώ'. κόσμον means obviously 'adornment', but there may be a pun here: κόσμος was used at this time to refer to the ordered structure of the universe as a whole, and possibly to refer more specifically to the heavens; a late testimonium tells us that Pythagoras was the first to call the heavens κόσμος.[20] It is fitting that this, the first shield in the Aeschylean catalogue, should allude to the whole universe, thus functioning as a grand opening to the rehearsal of the pretensions of the Seven as expressed on their shields. Compare, in terms of structure, the Shield of Achilles, where cosmology also acts as an introduction to representations of more localized scenes. Aeschylean and Homeric shield-astronomy possibly come out of a common tradition; the question of Aeschylus' originality in his account of the blazons is an open one, but on a late sixth-century Etruscan amphora showing the attack on Thebes one warrior bears a shield showing a crescent moon amidst stars.[21] If this is Tydeus, then both Aeschylus and the vase-painter are presumably drawing on the same epic tradition.

Euripides describes the σήματα on the ἀσπίς of Achilles, at *El.* 455 ff. This is the shield from the original armour with which Achilles went to Troy, but it nevertheless plainly alludes to the Homeric Shield[22] (note especially the echo of *Il.* xviii 486 in line 468), without repeating the overall composition of the latter. The outer scenes depict Perseus and the Gorgon,[23] escorted by Hermes, with the sea as background (the presence of the sea here on the rim of the shield recalls the placing of Ocean on the Shield of Achilles); in the centre are astronomical scenes (464 ff.):

ἐν δὲ μέσῳ κατέλαμπε σάκει φαέθων
κύκλος ἀελίοιο
ἵπποις ἅμ πτεροέσσαις
ἄστρων τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί,
Πλειάδες, Ὑάδες, Ἕκτορος
ὄμμασι τροπαῖοι.

The Euripidean shield presents a combination of the mythological and the cosmological, the

[19] Hermocles 9 ff. (J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* [1925] 174). On Demetrius and the hymn see L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Le culte des souverains dans la civilisation greco-romaine* (Tournai 1957) 173 ff. (with bibliography). A clear comment on the ideological content of such a comparison is found in a much later work, Ps.-Callisthenes (recension C) 1.20 (hymn to Alexander), ἀνατείλας γὰρ κατεγλαίσεν Ῥώμην . . . καὶ πάντας ἡμαύρωσε λοιποὺς ἀστέρας . . . Ἀλέξανδρος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ κοσμοκράτωρ.

[20] D.L. viii 48 (=28 A 44 DK). On the history of the word κόσμος: W. Kranz, 'Kosmos als philosophischer Begriff frühgriechischer Zeit', *Philol.* xciii (1938) 430–48; H. Diller, 'Der vorphilosophische Gebrauch von κόσμος und κοσμεῖν', in *Festschr. B. Snell* (Munich 1956) 47–60; J. Kerschensteiner, *Kosmos*, Zetemata xxx (Munich 1962). It is unlikely that κόσμων at Aesch. *Ag.* 356 refers to stars (see Fraenkel *ad loc.*).

[21] R. Hampe and E. Simon, *Griechische Sagen in der frühen etruskischen Kunst* (Mainz 1964) pl. 9.

[22] See J. D. Denniston on Eur. *El.* 442–51.

[23] The Gorgon's head (Gorgoneion) is one of the commonest of shield devices, with an obvious apotropaic function. See Chase (n. 6) 106 ff. Perseus and the Gorgon also appear on the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum* 216 ff.

whole designed to have an apotropaic effect on the Trojans (456 f., δείματα Φρύγια); particularly interesting is the specific reference to the terrifying efficacy of the scene of sun and stars (Ἕκτορος ὄμμασι τροπαῖοι), which both in general and in verbal detail[24] recalls the Aeschylean shield of Tydeus. The decoration of both the Aeschylean and the Euripidean shields thus functions as an expression or enhancement of the heroic power inhering in their bearers.

II. Hellenistic Interpretations: The Cosmic Shield of Achilles

(i) *Scholarship and literature*

From the poets I turn to the more self-conscious and thorough interpretations of the grammarians. The Shield of Achilles naturally came under the scrutiny of the grammarians who, from a very early date, busied themselves with the interpretation and defence of the Homeric poems. The first extant allusion to such commentary on the Shield of Achilles occurs in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which mentions the problem of the order in which its metal layers were put together.[25] But there are no good grounds for believing that the allegorical exposition of its scenes is earlier than the Hellenistic period. The most extensive allegorization is preserved in the *Homeric Problems* ascribed to Heraclitus,[26] and in Eustathius.[27] I summarize the main points. The god of fire, Hephaestus, is an allegory of the demiurgic fire which creates the universe; the account of the making of the circular shield is an allegory of cosmogony, of the creation of the spherical universe.[28] The four metals of which the Shield is made represent the four elements. Lines 483–5 of the Homeric ecphrasis, taken at their face-value, yield the three world-divisions of earth, sky, and sea,[29] followed by the heavenly bodies. The two cities, one at peace and one at war, are allegories of Empedocles' cosmological principles of Φιλία and Νεῖκος. The five layers of which the Shield is constructed represent the five zones into which the earth is divided.[30] Eustathius further records an allegorization of the ἄντυξ, the rim, of the Shield as the circle of the zodiac; that it is said to be 'triple' alludes to the breadth of the zodiac; that it is called 'gleaming' refers to the fact that the bright sun moves within it;[31] the τελαμών, or shield-strap, is allegorized in Eustathius as the axis which supports the universe.[32] The diversity of the Homeric description has been rigidly reduced to a simple schema, while the suggestions of universality present in the original text have been made the foundation for an interpretation of the Shield as a comprehensive symbol of the cosmos.[33] A scholion on Aratus, drawing on the same allegorization, describes the Shield of Achilles as a κόσμου μίμημα.[34] The allegory, transmitted anonymously, is likely to derive from the Pergamene scholar Crates of Mallos, active in the

[24] Note ἐν μέσῳ σάκει, 464, and Aesch. *Sept.* 389.

[25] 1461b1. F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956) 133, suggests that Glaucon may have put forward an allegorical account of the Shield, but for this there is no evidence: see N. J. Richardson, 'Homeric professors in the age of the Sophists', *PCPS* xxi (1975) 76. The same problem is referred to by Aulus Gellius *Noct. Att.* xiv 6.4 (a section on useless scholarly questions), and is probably also the problem referred to by Quintilian *Inst.* vii 2.7 ('qualis clipeus Achillis' cited as an example of a 'conjectural question').

[26] Chs 43 ff.

[27] Eust. 1154.23 ff., where the immediate authority is given as Demo. The standard discussions of the allegory are: K. Reinhardt, *De Graecorum theologia capita duo* (diss. Berlin 1910) 61 ff.; H. J. Mette, *Sphairopoiia; Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des Krates von Pergamon* (Munich 1936) 36 ff. (the *testimonia* for the allegorization are collected under *fr.* 23).

[28] Mette (n. 27) 40 excludes the cosmogonic aspect from the original allegorization on no good grounds.

[29] In Demo's version the three world-divisions represent three of the elements, with the craftsman Hephaestus as the fourth, fire. This looks like a later variant, since it duplicates the four-element allegory of the four metals.

[30] Again Demo reports a variant, that the five layers stand for the five circles of heaven. This is probably the result of contamination from the allegorization of the Shield of Agamemnon (see below).

[31] Eust. 1154.36 ff. (on *Il.* xviii 479 f.). Note the astonomical senses of ἄντυξ, *LSJ* s.v. II.3.

[32] Eust. 1154.39 ff.; also 829.12.

[33] Eust. 1155.2 uses another formulation to mark the universality of the Shield; it is a διάλεξις περὶ θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων. 'Divine and human' is one of a series of pairs of 'polar opposites' used to denote 'the sum of things' in Greek.

[34] Schol. *ad* Arat. *Phaen.* 26 (Maass 343.17).

middle of the second century BC, or from his school, for Eustathius reports a Cratetean interpretation of the Shield of Agamemnon, described in the eleventh book of the *Iliad*, as a μίμημα τοῦ κόσμου.[35] κόσμος is here to be understood of the celestial firmament rather than of the universe comprising both sky and earth; the ten bronze circles of the shield are interpreted as the ten circles of the heavens (the circles of Eudoxus, with the addition of the Milky Way and the Horizon[36]); the white tin bosses adorning the shield are referred to the stars of the heavens. If Crates had elaborated the astronomical interpretation of the Shield of Agamemnon, it is very probable that he had developed the richer hints of cosmological significance contained in the Homeric description of the Shield of Achilles.

Representations of the Shield of Achilles in the later epic and artistic tradition appear to draw on a scholarly schematization of this sort. The scenes on the Shield are exploited to rhetorical ends by Ajax and Ulysses in Ovid's account of the quarrel over the arms of Achilles in *Met.* xiii. Ajax denies that such blazons are suitable for Ulysses (110 f.):

> nec clipeus vasti caelatus imagine mundi
> conveniet timidae nataeque ad furta sinistrae.
> 110 concretus *M*

With the words *imago mundi* compare the Greek phrase κόσμου μίμημα, applied to the Cratetean allegorization of the Homeric shields.[37] A defence of the *lectio difficilior, concretus*, in line 110 yields an even closer approximation to the allegory preserved in Heraclitus. The arguments are as follows:

(1) The notion of making or creating present in *concretus*, as applied to the grand shield, is effectively contrasted with the idea of the mean 'birth' of Ulysses' thieving talents in the next line (*natae*).

(2) The construction with *imagine* is difficult, but not impossible: Vollmer took it to mean 'which has come together, been put together, from the individual parts, which make up an image of the universe'.[38] The ablative is frequently used with *concrescere* to express the constituents or previous state of an object created by the action of the verb, but in our passage there is extreme ellipsis. Take *imagine* as an ablative of result, and compare *Met.* v 673 f., (a bird-metamorphosis), 'rigido concrescere rostro ora'.[39] The sense is then 'a shield that has taken on the form of an image of the universe', with a hint that the making of the Shield of Achilles is another special case of metamorphosis.

(3) *Concrescere* is often a somewhat technical term, referring to processes of condensation or the coming-together of parts of a natural body, which may indeed be as large as the whole earth or universe. Note especially Virgil *Ec.* 6.33 f.: '. . . ut his ex omnia primis / omnia et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis.'

(4) The reading *concretus* at *Met.* xiii 110 introduces an idea of cosmogony in addition to the cosmological implications of the phrase *imago mundi*; both aspects, as we have seen, occur in the allegorization preserved by Heraclitus.

Ulysses retorts that the scenes on the Shield are not suited to Ajax either (288–95):

> scilicet idcirco pro gnato caerula mater
> ambitiosa suo fuit, ut caelestia dona,
> artis opus tantae, rudis et sine pectore miles

[35] Eust. 828.39 ff. (οἱ περὶ τὸν Κράτητα). Schol. T *ad Il.* xi 406 attributes it to Crates himself. *Cf.* Buffière (n. 25) 163 ff. What is the source of Philargyrius' comment on Verg. *Ec.* 3.105, 'alii dicunt clypeum Ajacis trium ulnarum, in quo expressa caeli forma fuit' (G. Thilo and H. Hagen, *Servii grammatici . . . commentarii* iii.2 69)? Is *Ajacis* an error for, or corruption of, *Achillis* or *Agamemnonis*?

[36] Mette (n. 27) 34.

[37] The ancient etymology of *imago* stresses its mimetic aspect: Paul. *Fest.* p. 112 M, *imago ab imitatione dicta. Cf.* Heraclit. *All.* 43.1, the Shield of Achilles described as τῆς κοσμικῆς περιόδου . . . εἰκόνα.

[38] *Ap.* H. Magnus, *P. Ovidi . . . Met.* (1914) 485.

[39] So Bömer *ad loc.* The notion of solidification often present in *concrescere* might be referred to the hardening of the Shield from its molten state; *cf.* Eust. 1154.30, τὰ . . . τηκόμενα of the four constituent metals.

indueret? neque enim clipei caelamina novit,
Oceanum et terras cumque alto sidera caelo,
Pleiadasque Hyadasque inmunemque aequoris Arcton
diversas urbes nitidumque Orionis ensem:
postulat, ut capiat, quae non intellegit,[40] arma.

Ovid selects the same features of the Homeric ecphrasis that Heraclitus had singled out: the cosmological representations and the two cities. The Homeric *Ὠκεανός* which comes at the end of the ecphrasis (*Il.* xviii 607 f.) is here conflated with the *θάλασσα* of the opening line. The celestial aspect of the Shield is particularly emphasized, and may be further strengthened by a pun in the word *caelamina* in line 292. Varro, drawing on Aelius Stilo, derives *caelum* from *caelare*;[41] note especially his suggestion that the Latin *caelum* corresponds in the semantics of its etymology to the Greek *κόσμος*.[42] The pun seems to have caught on, for there are a significant number of passages in later Latin poetry in which *caelare* and its cognates are used figuratively of the stars of the heavens.[43] It is perhaps natural that of the other scenes only the two cities (*Il.* xviii 490–540) receive a mention here, since the remainder of the Homeric scenes form a rather miscellaneous collection, difficult to summarize; but the epithet *diversas* in line 294 points to an exegesis like that in Heraclitus, in which the great variety of activities in the two cities of the Homeric Shield[44] is reduced to a stark dichotomy of the opposites of peace and war.[45]

Similar schematization characterizes the version of the Shield of Achilles in the *Posthomerica* of Quintus of Smyrna (v 7–101); as in Ovid the ecphrasis occurs during the *ὅπλων κρίσις*. Quintus repeats some of the Homeric subjects, and adds others; most important, he reduces the variety of Homer to an easily comprehensible scheme, which may be summed up as an image of the universe, with illustrations of the opposites of war and peace in both the natural and human worlds.[46] The cosmological and human sections of the Homeric Shield are integrated; the parts of the universe are presented through the objects and events that are located in them; it is clear that line 7, *οὐρανὸς ἠδ' αἰθήρ· γαίῃ δ' ἅμα κεῖτο θάλασσα*, is a summary of the scenes which are then described in detail, rather than a description of independent, schematic representations of the divisions of the universe.[47] Quintus retranslates into verse an allegorizing interpretation of the Shield close to that found in Heraclitus.[48]

[40] The charge that Ajax cannot understand the significance of the scenes alludes cheekily to the reaction of Virgil's Aeneas to the scenes on *his* shield (*Aen.* viii 730), *rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet*.

[41] *TLL* iii 78.80 ff. Varro *LL* v 18 (reporting Aelius), [caelum] 'quod est caelatum aut contrario celatum, quod apertum est'. Serv. *ad Aen.* i 640 derives *caelare* from *caelum*, the reverse of Varro's etymology. *Caelamen* seems to be a coinage of Ovid's.

[42] *Men.* 420, 'appellatur a caelatura caelum, graece ab ornatu *κόσμος*, latine a puritia mundus'.

[43] *TLL* iii 78.10, *de caelo vel stellis*. E.g. Ovid *Fast.* ii 79, 'quem modo caelatum stellis Delphina videbas'; Manil. i 679 f., [of the zodiac] 'sed nitet ingenti stellatus balteus orbe / insignemque facit lato caelamine mundum', v 235; Germ. *Ar.* 602; Val. Flacc. vi 53 f.; Claud. *6 cos. Hon.* 167 f. (the last two examples not noted in *TLL*). Cicero uses the pun to rhetorical effect, *Verr.* iii 129, 'Verres novus astrologus, qui non tam caeli rationem quam caelati argenti duceret'. This use of *caelare* and cognates is related to the application to the heavens of other words describing decorative artefacts: cf. *balteus* used of the zodiac, Manil. i 679, iii 334; *limbus* of the zodiac, Varro *Men.* 92; compare the use of *ζώνη*, *zona*. The assimilation of the heavens to a human artefact is very common in pre-scientific (and indeed scientific) thought; the allegorization of the Shield, manufactured by the demiurge Hephaestus, as an *imago mundi* can be understood as an inversion of this way of thinking.

[44] Homer says simply *ἐν δὲ δύω ποίησε πόλεις* (*Il.* xviii 490).

[45] Instructive is the difficulty in which Philostratus Iunior finds himself in his description of a painting of the Shield of Achilles, which aims to reproduce the literary original in a detailed, non-schematic, form, while at the same time attempting to incorporate the war/peace dichotomy in a characterization of the two cities. In his description of the legal quarrel in the 'city at peace' he has to resort to the uneasy formulation *μέση τις πολέμου καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν οὐ πολεμουμένῃ πόλει κατάστασις* (*Imag.* 10.8).

[46] War and peace explicitly signposted at v 43 f., *καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄρ πολέμοιο τεράατα πάντα τέτυκτο·/ εἰρήνης δ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔσαν περικαλλέα ἔργα*.

[47] This representation of the major divisions of the universe through the medium of objects or activities located in each is also made explicit by Philostr. Iun. *Imag.* 10.5; *cf.* also the ecphrasis of the universe on the doors of the Palace of the Sun, Ov. *Met.* ii 5 ff., closely modelled on the Shield of Achilles (see n. 56).

[48] *Cf.* F. Vian, *Quintus de Smyrne* ii (Paris 1966) 7. The universal Shield of Achilles is also found in genres other than epic. (i) Lucian *Icar.* 16, scenes on earth seen

(ii) *Some artistic representations*

The Shield of Achilles is a popular subject in early Greek vase painting, but no attempt is made to represent the totality of scenes in the literary model; the device or devices on the Shield usually bear no relation to the Homeric text.[49] Schematic universality appears only in Roman works which are likely to draw on an iconography developed in Hellenistic times. Two types of cosmic shield appear: that in which the universe is represented by an image of the heavens, and that in which divisions of the universe other than the sky are explicitly depicted.

The subject of Thetis in the forge of Hephaestus is a favourite one in Pompeiian wall-painting. Eight versions are known,[50] and in all the large circle of the finished Shield is the focal point of the composition. It is probable that all versions go back to a common model, presumably Hellenistic, although the subsidiary figures in some versions may owe something to contamination from other models.[51] Only in two is the transmitted composition significantly remodelled. It is convenient to follow V. Scherf and consider these last two separately, and to label them type B; the other six examples constitute type A.

The main features of the composition of type A are as follows: on the left stands Hephaestus, half-naked in his smith's clothes, his left hand supporting the Shield, which rests on the anvil and occupies the centre of the picture space. On the right is the seated figure of Thetis, who is gazing intently at the Shield. At her shoulder stands a winged figure who is pointing at the shield with a rod. All examples are dated to the Fourth Style. The relationship between the several versions, and between them and their presumed model, is not at all clear, and several schemes have been proposed, all based on rather arbitrary, and often conflicting, stylistic criteria. Since the representation of the decoration of the Shield, where this is still discernible, is not entirely constant, a certain doubt must remain as to the precise form of the Shield in the original composition and the significance of its decoration.

On the most elaborate Shield,[52] from the 'Domus Uboni' (PLATE I*a*), the edge of the convex surface of the central field, set within a plain outer ring, was ringed with the signs of the zodiac running anti-clockwise, for the most part still distinguishable. On the central field were formerly visible three stars, four busts, and, running obliquely from left to right through the centre, a long winding snake. These last two features are puzzling: four is the number of the seasons, who in

from space-flight like those on the Shield, with stress on the variety (κυκεών) of activities (in opposition to the simplifying synthesis of the philosophical allegorizations; but note Eustathius' comments, 828.43 f., on πολυδαίδαλον applied to the Shield of Agamemnon, *Il.* xi 32) (ii) In the long recension of the Egyptian (?) Jewish *Testament of Abraham* (prob. 2nd cent. AD) (M. Delcor, *Le Testament d'Abraham* [Leiden 1973] 127) the activities on earth viewed by Abraham from the archangel Michael's chariot are based on those on the Shield of Achilles: see F. Schmidt, *RHR* clxxxv (1974) 122 ff. Schmidt suggests Lucian *Icar.* as the immediate source, but the presence of some Homeric activities in the *Testament* not in Lucian points to a common source, possibly Menippus: see R. Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* (Leipzig etc. 1906) 109. (iii) The author of the *Cohortatio ad gentiles* (Migne *PG* vi 294) uses the parallelism between *Il.* xviii 483 and the first sentence of *Genesis* to argue that Homer plagiarized the teachings of Moses during a stay in Egypt: see Buffière (n. 25) 165. (iv) Max. Tyr. 9.6 Hobein takes the two cities on the Shield as the two Platonic residences of the soul, earth (the city at war) and heaven (the city at peace) (I owe this reference to M. J. Trapp).

[49] In general on artistic representations of the Shield see K. Fittschen, *Der Schild des Achilleus, Archaeologia Homerica* N, Bildkunst, Teil 1 (Göttingen 1973); K. F. Johansen, *The Iliad in early Greek art* (Copenhagen 1967) 92 ff., 178 ff. Vase-painting: F. Brommer, *Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensage*[3] (Marburg 1973) esp. 366 ff., 416 ff. In a few examples on vases stars adorn the Shield: these may allude to the presence of stars in the Homeric ecphrasis (*Il.* xviii 485 ff.), but stars are in any case a frequent shield device in early Greek art (see n. 6). Over thirty separate devices are found on representations of the shield of Achilles (see the selection in Chase [n. 6] 83 n. 1).

[50] K. Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis* (Berlin 1957) index s.vv. *Thetis bei Hephaistos*. In June 1983 I personally examined all the examples that survive, and am grateful for their help to the Direzione del Museo Archeologico Nazionale at Naples and to the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei.

[51] A recent discussion of the problems in V. Scherf, *Flügelwesen in römisch-kampanischen Wandbildern* (diss. Hamburg 1967) 166 ff.; 166 n. 290 for references to earlier discussions.

[52] P. Herrmann–F. Bruckmann, *Denkmäler der Malerei des Altertums* pl. 139; S. Reinach, *Répertoire de peintures grecques et romaines* (Paris 1922) 19.2. The painting has now deteriorated to the point where nothing can be made out on the surface of the shield.

later works are found in close association with the zodiac; or of the winds,[53] who are sometimes disposed at the outside corners of a circular representation of the heavens;[54] but within the ring of the zodiac one expects, rather, representations of astronomical bodies, in which case four is an awkward number. The serpent is probably best understood not as a symbol for the earth, but as the constellation of the serpent, Draco, which separates the two Bears of the pole.[55] This celestial diagram can be understood as a two-dimensional representation of the celestial *sphaira*; we remember that in Heraclitus the circular form of the Shield of Achilles alludes to the spherical universe. The feature of the zodiac-ring may derive directly from Crates' interpretation of the Shield, if the allegorization of the triple rim of the Shield as the zodiac goes back to him.[56]

Similar is the shield depicted on a painting from the Casa di Sirico (PLATE I*b*),[57] probably rather later than my first example. The image is less clear; Helbig reported that the signs of the zodiac were to be seen round the edge, and in the centre two serpentine forms are clearly visible; there is more than one snake constellation on the ancient *sphaira*, but it is difficult to see why they should both receive special attention. Two animal forms can also be made out on the central field, which have been identified as dogs, and linked with the dog-star;[58] again the presence of two is awkward, and it is worth considering whether they might instead be the two celestial bears.[59] The decoration of the Shield on the other pictures of type A is even less decipherable, but remains of the zodiac-ring and serpentine forms may be made out in some cases.[60]

A quite different conception of the Shield is found in type B, where the surface of the Shield is shown as a mirror. In the example from the Casa del Criptoportico[61] there is no other decoration of the Shield, and this may be because of the small scale of the painting. In the second, and larger, version (PLATE I*c*)[62] the Shield is not now resting on an anvil, but is supported by Hephaestus on his knee, assisted by one of his workmen. Thetis gazes at her reflection in the mirror-like surface of the Shield, a motif perhaps inspired by a composition of Aphrodite mirroring herself in the Shield of Ares.[63] This is almost certainly a late variation of the original Thetis and Hephaestus composition. Small figures are discernible around the edge of the reflection, where one might expect the signs of the zodiac, but it does not seem possible to fit the traces that can be made out to the zodiac ring.[64]

[53] Scherf (n. 51) 45 claims to make out wings on the heads of two of the busts, thus identifying them as winds.

[54] *Cf.* the Tabula Bianchini (illustrated in F. Boll–C. Bezold–W. Gundel *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*[4] [Leipzig-Berlin 1931] pl. 35).

[55] See n. 119.

[56] The signs of the zodiac are included in the image of the heavens on the doors of the palace of the Sun at Ov. *Met.* ii 17 f., an ecphrasis closely modelled on the Shield of Achilles, and in turn drawn on by the author of the *Ilias Latina* for his description of the Shield (*cf.* esp. *Met.* ii 8 ff. with *Il. Lat.* 871 ff.). The zodiac-ring is also found on a painting of the making of the Shield of Achilles to a design by Giulio Romano (F. Hartt, *Giulio Romano* [New Haven 1958] pl. 395)—coincidentally (the zodiac-ring appears on a wide range of ancient monuments)?

[57] Helbig 1316; L. Curtius, *Die Wandmalerei Pompejis* (Leipzig 1929) pl. 131.

[58] O. Jahn and A. Michaelis, *Griechische Bilderchroniken* (Bonn 1873) 20 n. 137.

[59] *Cf.* the central circle of the Tabula Bianchini which represents the constellation of Draco winding between the two bears; also Verg. *G.* i 244 f., 'maximus hic flexu sinuoso elabitur Anguis / circum perque duas in morem fluminis Arctos' (modelled on Arat. *Phaen.* 45 ff.); Nonnus *Dion.* xxv 402 ff. (see n. 119).

[60] (i) Casa degli Amorini Dorati (Schefold [n. 50] 154): one snake is clearly visible on the upper left of the shield; remains of figures, indistinguishable in detail, survive round the edge of the central field. (ii) Casa di Meleagro (Helbig 1317): one snake is visible on the lower half, with what are possibly the remains of another above. There are also possible traces of figures round the edge of the central field. Two further examples of the composition (Helbig 1318, 1318b) are almost totally destroyed.

[61] Illustrated in V. Spinazzola, *Pompei alla luce degli scavi nuovi di Via dell'Abbondanza (1910–1923)* ii (Rome 1953) 923 (*Εὐάνθη* admires her reflection in the shield, which she has just taken from the seated Hephaestus; Thetis sits to the right).

[62] Helbig 1318c; Curtius (n. 57) pl. 134.

[63] *Cf.* Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* i 742 ff. for this motif in an ecphrasis of a work of art. For the reflecting shield compare the fallen Persian looking at his reflection in a shield on the Alexander mosaic from the House of the Faun at Pompeii. On the motif of the reflecting shield: K. Schauenburg, *Perseus in der Kunst des Altertums* (Bonn 1960) 24 f. M. Robertson, *A history of Greek art* i (Cambridge 1975) 585 suggests implausibly that Thetis is engaged in catoptromancy.

[64] Identification is not helped by the impressionistic manner in which the figures are painted. I make out the following: at 7 o'clock a man on a rearing horse; at 9 o'clock a helmeted figure with right arm outstretched; at 11 o'clock two figures; at 12 o'clock a series of

In some versions of the scene of Thetis in the forge of Hephaestus it is clear that the figures on the Shield relate directly to the concerns of Thetis, and presumably of the future bearer of the Shield, her son Achilles. In the version with her reflection in the Shield Thetis contemplates the surface of the object with a calm detachment; but in three examples of type A she seems to start back in her chair and her hand is raised to a point near her mouth.[65] For this gesture one may compare, for example, the gesture of Amphitryon in a painting of the infant Hercules strangling the snakes;[66] an expression of surprise, but, more than that, of shock and dismay. Thetis' reaction is more than simply one of amazement at the marvellous handiwork of the god, at an artistic *θαῦμα*; it is surely some more disturbed emotion caused by the perception of a *τέρας*. One recalls the terror with which the Myrmidons first behold the divinely-created arms of Achilles in Homer, but such a reaction is perhaps unsuitable for the divine Thetis without some more specific cause. Behind Thetis stands a winged figure pointing out something on the Shield with a rod. Such winged figures are common in Pompeiian wall-paintings.[67] The rod with which our example points to the astronomical Shield is most closely paralleled by the rod, or *radius*, of the astronomer;[68] but it is not clear what it is on the Shield that the rod points at. In the 'Domus Uboni' version it is to a point just under one of the signs of the zodiac, indistinguishable now, but where Aquarius or Pisces should be; in the Casa di Sirico version it is just under the top right tip of the uppermost of the two serpents. The most natural interpretation of the scene is that Thetis' reaction is caused by something which the winged figure has pointed out and explained to her. An allusion to the astral apotheosis of Achilles has been suggested;[69] in that case the winged figure presumably points out some feature in the heavens which indicates this, but no suitable catasterism comes to mind; and a general allusion to celestial Elysian Fields is unconvincing. Alternatively, and to my mind more plausibly, it may be that the Shield displays the horoscope of Achilles; an allusion to his death would explain the reaction of Thetis. This would give the nice irony that Achilles bears as emblem of his powers the image of the heavens themselves, but that this image of his might is also an image of his inevitable subjection to the laws of fate as proclaimed in the stars. That astrology did extend its interest to the horoscopes of Homeric heroes is indicated by the last book of Manilius, and in a famous passage of the *Iphigeneia* of Ennius Achilles is presented as scoffing at Calchas' absorption with the 'astrologorum signa in caelo'.[70] However I know of no example of a horoscope of Achilles himself. The question must end on a *non liquet*; the answer may lie in a lost literary source. Unambiguous, however, is the consistency with which the Pompeiian paintings of type A use the device of the zodiac-ring to symbolize the circle of the heavens; this consistency tends to confirm that this feature, at least, was present in the Hellenistic model, possibly deriving from the allegorization of Crates.

The zodiac ring is also found on the Shield of Achilles as depicted on some of the *Tabulae*

squiggles which might be interpreted as a winged figure. Scenes of battle suggest themselves.

[65] In the Casa di Meleagro example, however, Thetis is seated calmly as in the version with the reflecting mirror.

[66] In the House of the Vettii: Herrmann–Bruckmann (n. 52) pl. 141.

[67] Scherf (n. 51) *passim*.

[68] See O. J. Brendel, *Symbolism of the sphere* (Leiden 1977) 11 ff. (Eng. tr. of 'Die Symbolik der Kugel', *Röm Mitt* li [1936] 1–95) on *radius*, with examples from the visual arts.

[69] O. J. Brendel, 'Der Schild des Achilles', *Die Antike* xii (1936) 285 (Eng. tr. in *id.*, *The visible idea* [Washington 1980] 67–82); H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the iconography of cosmic kingship in the ancient world* (Oslo etc. 1953) 90. Scherf (n. 51) 47 ff. takes the winged figure as a Nike, who announces the future victory of Achilles, and who is not to be closely associated with the devices of the Shield, which Scherf takes simply as an image of the heavens, without further significance. The motif of the rod is then hard to explain, as Scherf admits, and it is surely frigid to explain Thetis' shocked reaction as the product of her foreknowledge of what will be the price of her son's victory.

[70] Ennius *scen.* 242–4 V. Epic or tragic astrologers are more Roman than Greek: H. D. Jocelyn, *The tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge 1967) 326 ff. It may be noted that at Prop. iv 1.109 ff. Horos takes Calchas as an example of a seer who notoriously was *not* privy to the truths contained in the stars. On the later antique tendency to convert epic seers into astronomers see A. Bouché-Leclerq, *Astrologie grecque* (Paris 1899) 550; Buffière (n. 25) 593 f. Note e.g. Virg. *Aen.* iii 359 f., '[Helenus] interpres divum, qui numina Phoebi, / qui tripodas Clarii et laurus, qui sidera sentit'.

Iliacae, but accompanied by representations of parts of the universe other than the heavens.[71] Two of the reliefs (Sadurska 4N, 5O) are fragments of independent circular copies of the Shield.[72] Both have magic squares on the reverse containing the name of Theodorus, who is most reasonably taken as the craftsman of the objects, and are to be dated probably to some time in the first half of the first century AD. Of the most complete (4N; PLATE I*d*) slightly more than half is preserved, broken off at a line running from top left to bottom right of the obverse.[73] A sloping outer rim, which may be compared formally to the plain outer rim of the shield as represented in the wall-paintings discussed above, is engraved with the Homeric text of the Shield of Achilles. This is connected to the convex central field by a more sharply sloping band on which are representations of heavenly bodies: at the top of this band is a fragmentary panel, on the surviving part of which is a human figure above a horse; on the corresponding square panel at the bottom is a figure with a team of two horses. Both groups are moving in a clockwise direction, and may be identified with, respectively, Helios in his *quadriga* and Selene in her *biga*. Between these two groups six rectangular panels are disposed at regular intervals; on the two nearest to the Helios panel are possible (but indistinguishable) traces of representations in relief, but the other four are certainly blank. These panels are reasonably understood as indications of one half of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Around the edge of the central field itself, and framing the main figural scenes, is roughly incised an elongated zig-zag composed of pairs of parallel lines, which Sadurska interprets as a schematic representation of Oceanus. This, the outermost figured circle of the Homeric Shield, is here brought within the circle of heaven in accordance with physical reality, but also in conformity with the possibly Cratetean interpretation of the Homeric outer triple rim as the band of the zodiac.

Activities on earth are represented in the central field, arranged in superimposed bands. The upper and lower halves of the shield are separated by an inscribed band bearing the words *Ἀσπὶς Ἀχιλλῆος Θεοδώρηος καθ' Ὅμηρον*. The interpretation of the following scenes is not in doubt: in the top half on the left are clearly visible the walls and porticoes of a city, in which are scenes corresponding to events in the first of the two Homeric cities (*Il.* xviii 491 ff.): from the top, the judgement of the dispute over the murdered man (497 ff.), and below that the marriage procession (491 ff.). In the middle of the bottom half is a walled enclosure, the *ἀλωή* (vineyard) of 561 ff. Below it and to the right of it are scenes of ploughing, reaping, and binding (541 ff.). The sheaves are being loaded onto a wagon, a detail which is not in Homer, but which is an easy extension of the other harvest activities; to the right of this the harvesters' meal is being prepared under a tree (558 ff.). With the exception of the wagon, all this has a text in Homer. Above the *ἀλωή* nine dancers are arranged in a circle, corresponding to the chorus of 590 ff.

The two enclosures of the peaceful city and the *ἀλωή* appear deliberately positioned; the city at war most plausibly occupied the missing right-hand side of the upper half, and thus completed the symmetry. If this is correct, then we may tentatively posit an overall scheme of a sort that we have seen determining literary reinterpretations of the Shield of Achilles. The upper half is divided between the contrasting scenes of the city at peace and the city at war, while a division between town and country determines the assignment of scenes to the upper and lower halves respectively.[74]

[71] Tabulae Iliacae: Jahn–Michaelis (n. 58) is still a valuable monograph on the subject, not entirely replaced by A. Sadurska, *Les Tables Iliaques* (Warsaw 1964). See also N. M. Horsfall, 'Stesichorus at Bovillae?', *JHS* xcix (1979) 26–48. I adopt Sadurska's system of enumeration.

[72] See P. Bienkowski, 'Lo scudo di Achille', *Röm Mitt* vi (1891) 183–207; Sadurska (n. 71) 43 ff.

[73] I am grateful to the Direzione of the Musei Capitolini for the opportunity of examining this object personally.

[74] This interpretation is made less certain by the problematic nature of the scenes which survive only fragmentarily. (i) The upper half: to the right of the city is a variety of figures. Reading from the bottom: a man wearing what looks to me like a helmet (although the surface is here damaged), with his right arm raised over a shape which is scarcely distinguishable, but could be a falling figure. Above this four animals facing to the right and immediately adjacent to the wall of the city. Above these the figure of a man running to the right, with what appears to be his cloak billowing behind him. Above him the figures of one, and possibly two, animals running to the right, possibly a dog or dogs. And

The Shield of Achilles is also displayed prominently on the Sarti fragment (6B), known only from a nineteenth-century drawing (FIG. 1). In the centre of the registers of scenes illustrating the individual books of the *Iliad*, and above a large-scale representation of a city, presumably Troy, a large figure of Thetis stands to the left of, and supports, the Shield. The fragment breaks off in the right-hand side of the Shield, but originally another figure must have stood on the right-hand side of the Shield, balancing Thetis (a Nereid, Hephaestus?).[75] The Shield itself is of a different model from the independent reliefs discussed above, but it does share the feature of the outer band of the zodiac, representing the heavens. In the centre is a female bust, not certainly identifiable, but most plausibly interpreted as a Gorgoneion (a common shield device), and in the main field are scenes in superimposed registers: to the lower left a city, above which is possibly a marriage procession, and in the top lunette an indistinguishable scene. The ruling principle of distribution of these inner scenes can no longer be discerned, but it cannot have been that of the fragments 4N and 5O.

III The Cosmic Shield as Royal Emblem

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Ajax complains that the cowardly and devious Ulysses is unsuited to bear the image of the universe on the Shield of Achilles (*nec . . . conveniet*). Heraclitus Homericus uses the argument from propriety to a different end, as part of his proof that the Shield is a grand philosophical allegory: had Homer been concerned merely to write a poetic fiction, he would have restricted the ecphrasis to the scenes of war appropriate to the career of Achilles.[76]

But there were heroes who might fittingly bear an image of the universe. Eustathius' report of Crates' allegorization of the Shield of Agamemnon as an image of the celestial firmament continues with an account of its suitability for the king:

> *καλῶς οὐρανοῦ φέρει μίμημα ἡ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀσπίς, ὃν φθάσας Ὅμηρος ὄμματα καὶ κεφαλὴν ἵκελον ἔφη τῷ Ὀλυμπίῳ Διί* [*Il.* ii 478].

The corresponding passage of the scholia[77] provides a list of places in the *Iliad* in which the figures of Agamemnon and Zeus are approximated; particularly interesting is the observation that both the Shield of Agamemnon and the aegis of Zeus bear the device of the Gorgon.[78] The

finally, at the top, the figures of two warriors: the one to the left, who faces to the right, holds a spear in his right arm, raised and bent; to the right, and partly overlapping the first figure, is a (possibly helmeted) figure with shield and spear, who moves to the right. Immediately under these two are vague shapes which have been interpreted as rocks, but might equally be the backs of more animals. These groups most probably represent the scene of the ambush of flocks and herds outside the besieged city, followed in the Homeric text by general battle between besiegers and besieged (520 ff.). There are no dogs in the Homeric description, but, assuming that they are correctly identified on the relief, they are an easy addition to a scene involving herdsmen, just as the wagons are an easy addition to the Homeric scenes of harvesting. Dogs *are* present in another of the Homeric scenes, that in which four herdsmen unsuccessfully set their dogs to fend off the attack of two lions on their cattle (577 ff.), but in other respects there is little correspondence with the groups I have described. (ii) The bottom half: to the right of the *ἀλωή* is a figure facing to the right, apparently wearing a crested helmet, and holding a lance. He faces a shape which could be the front half of an animal; below the human figure is a shape which might also be an animal. This scene, like the fragmentary groups in the top half, has also been interpreted as *either* the scene of battle outside the besieged city (the presence of the helmet, if this is correctly interpreted, would point to this), *or* as the counter-attack by the cowherds against the lions (in which case the helmet is surprising). But if we accept that the ambush and battle are most plausibly represented in the upper half of the shield, we are left only with the second of these alternatives. It may be that the artist has again elaborated on the Homeric text, possibly introducing the more interesting pictorial type of a fight between an armed figure (gladiator?) and beast where the text does not strictly warrant it. The second fragment, Sadurska 5O, shows parts of the city at peace and the harvesting scenes, but does not survive for the areas of the composition in dispute.

[75] Balancing shield supporters: Sadurska (n. 71) 76; A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der geschnittenen Steine im Antiquarium* (Berlin 1896) nos 3827 f.; T. Hölscher, *Victoria Romana* (Mainz 1967) 130 f.

[76] *All.* 48.3, *μυθικῶς μὲν οὖν ἀσπίδα χαλκευομένην ὑποστησάμενος ἁρμόζουσαν Ἀχιλλεῖ τὴν διὰ πάντων ἐνεχάραξε πορείαν.*

[77] Schol. T *ad Il.* xi 36.

[78] *Il.* xi 36 f. (Shield of Agamemnon); v 741 f. (aegis).

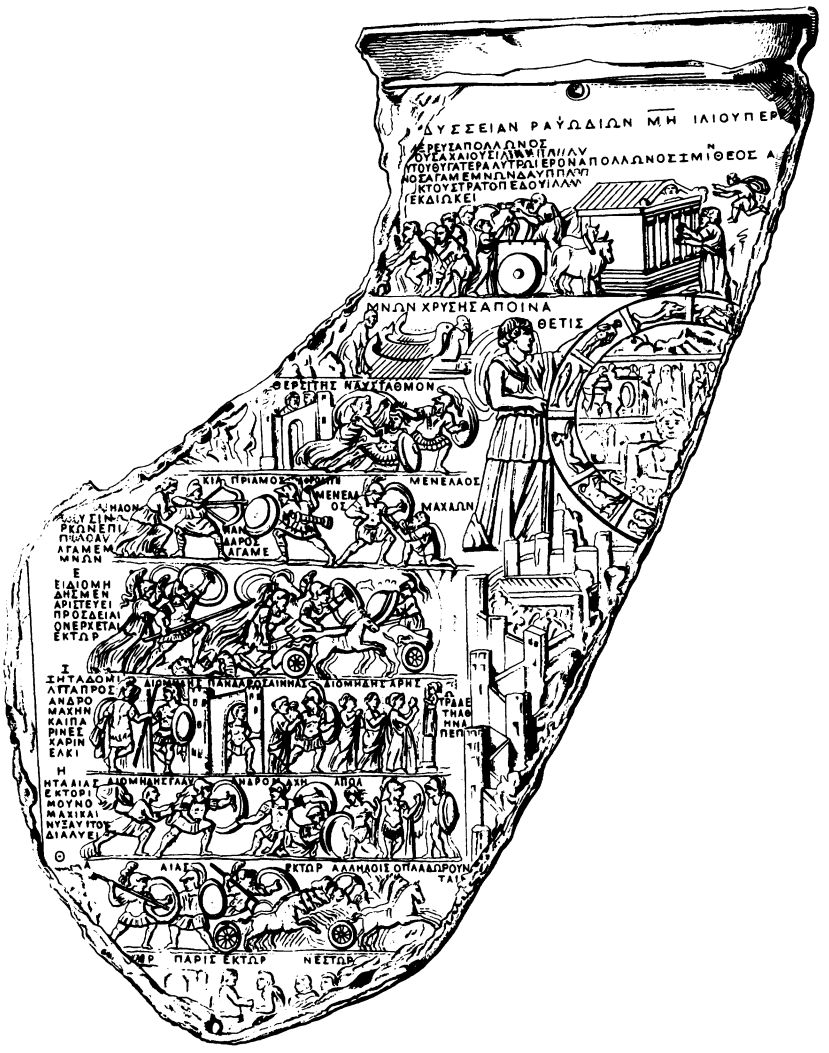

FIG. 1: 'Tabula Iliaca': Sarti fragment. (After Jahn–Michaelis, *Griech. Bilderchroniken*.)

implication is that Homer has deliberately provided Agamemnon with a shield that imitates the armament of the supreme god. At this point one may reflect on the possible relationship between this allegorization of Homer and contemporary royal ideology. Crates worked for the Attalid kings of Pergamum, who developed a particularly rich and extravagant imagery portraying the state and its ruler as divine agents of order, seen most notably in the Gigantomachy of the Great Altar of Zeus. Crates' name has often been suggested in the context of the authorship of the (lost) iconographical programme of this work, which manifestly combines themes from earlier myth and poetry with contemporary political propaganda.[79] Unfortunately, lack of evidence prevents further progress along this tempting path.

A striking instance of the accommodation of the cosmic images of the Shield of Achilles to the ambitions of a historical ruler is found in the simile which Silius Italicus applies to Hannibal, eager to provoke the Romans to battle after his victory at Lake Trasimene (*Pun.* vii 120 ff.):

[79] A recent evaluation of the pottery evidence suggests a *terminus post quem* of about 165 BC for the start of work on the foundations of the Great Altar: P. J. Callaghan, 'On the date of the Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon', *BICS* xxviii (1981) 115–21. If this late date is correct, chronology would certainly allow the participation of Crates in the drawing-up of the programme.

ut Thetidis proles Phrygiis Vulcania campis
arma tulit, clipeo amplexus terramque polumque
maternumque fretum totumque in imagine mundum.[80]

This cosmological content has a wider function in the context: Hannibal, in the confidence of an imminent capture of Rome, allows his imagined power to fill the world (106 ff.):

en, ubi nunc Gracchi atque ubi nunc sunt fulmina gentis
Scipiadae? pulsi Ausonia non ante paventem
dimisere fugam, quam terror ad ultima mundi
Oceanumque tulit.

Even the *fulmina gentis*[81] (an image which endows Roman heroes with divine omnipotence) are powerless against the universal might of Hannibal. A natural-philosophical view of the universe is here directed to serve the ends of a political or military universalist ideology; the *imago mundi* on the shield has become an emblem of the pretensions of a national leader with claims to world-wide empire.[82]

The early Greek tradition of the star-shield as emblem of heroic virtue joins up with the Hellenistic visual type of the celestial Shield of Achilles (as seen in the Pompeian wall-paintings) in a portrait of Alexander the Great found in a group of third-century AD gold medallions celebrating Alexander and Caracalla.[83] Mystery surrounds their discovery and their purpose; although they are associated with other material unearthed at Abukir in Egypt, the precise provenance of these impressive objects, which first became publicly known in 1902, is uncertain. This uncertainty led to a vitriolic debate about their authenticity at the beginning of the century, but this is not now in serious doubt. As to their purpose, the association of portraits and scenes of Alexander and his family with representations of Caracalla is to be seen in the light of Caracalla's well-attested admiration for and imitation of Alexander; the medallions are intended to glorify both the Macedonian and the Roman. The precise occasion for the striking of the medallions remains in dispute: it has been suggested that they were prize medals at the Olympics of 242/3 AD held by Gordian III in memory of Alexander the Great;[84] alternatively that they were struck on the occasion of the confirmation of ancient privileges to Macedonia by Alexander Severus in 231 AD.[85]

The obverse of three of these medallions (Dressel C, K, L; PLATE IIa) shows a portrait of Alexander holding a spear. On the breastplate appear the figures of Athena and a snake-legged giant throwing a rock,[86] an image of Gigantomachy, a myth which had been used as a symbol of royal victory over barbarians from at least the time of the Attalid kings of Pergamum, and possibly by the panegyrists of Alexander himself. The general design of the shield is now familiar. Around the rim are visible five of the twelve signs of the zodiac (clockwise, from Aries to the back half of Leo). Other celestial symbols occupy the central field: stars; busts of the sun (radiate) and of the moon (on a crescent) (with these may be compared, formally at least, the

[80] Silius echoes Ovid's description of the cosmic Shield of Achilles: cf. *Met.* xiii 110, *imagine mundi*, with *Pun.* vii 122, *totumque in imagine mundum*.

[81] On this image see O. Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London 1968) 145–50.

[82] The historiographical tradition also saw the Second Punic War as a contest in which the mastery of the whole world was at stake, e.g. Livy xxix 17.6; *cf.* Lucr. iii 830 ff.

[83] The major publication of the Abukir medallions is by H. Dressel, *Fünf Goldmedaillons aus dem Funde von Abukir*, Abh. Berl. Akad. (1906); cf. *id.*, *Zeits. f. Numismatik* 1908, 137 ff. Their authenticity was disputed by G. Dattari, *I venti medaglioni d'Abukir* (Milan 1908). Later discussions: Brendel (n. 69); M. Bieber, *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman art* (Chicago 1964) 79 ff. (with further bibliography); N. Yalouris *et al.*, *The search for Alexander* (Boston 1980) catal. nos 10, 11, 33.

[84] R. Mowat, *Bull. Soc. Nat. Antiquaires de France* 1902, 311 ff.

[85] Yalouris (n. 83) 103.

[86] The figured breastplate stands in the long tradition of statues with ornamental cuirasses, of which the Primaporta Augustus is the most famous example. The old view that these ornamented 'Panzerstatuen' are a Roman invention must now be abandoned; see K. Stemmer, *Untersuchungen zur Typologie, Chronologie und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen* (Berlin 1978) 149 ff.

four busts within the zodiac ring of the Shield of Achilles on one of the Pompeiian paintings);[87] and, in the centre, the figure of a woman holding a mantle above her head,[88] a female version of a common type of Caelus, and perhaps most reasonably interpreted as a personification of Night—a similar figure is found on Trajan's column.[89] There can be little doubt as to the significance of these celestial symbols on Alexander's shield: like the scene of gigantomachy they establish the king as a ruler of more than human power, a *cosmocrator*, to use a term transferred originally from astrology to imperial ideology, and applied to Roman emperors from the time of Caracalla on.[90] Two questions arise. Bieber suggests that this shield decoration is purely a product of late imperial Roman imagination,[91] to be compared with the elaborate ceremonial shields carried by emperors on coins from the time of Gordian III (238–44) on;[92] but is it possible that the Abukir Alexander is a faithful reproduction of a much earlier representation of Alexander? And secondly, is there any connection between the Abukir shield of Alexander and the representations of the Shield of Achilles with a zodiac and other astronomical devices?

Otto Brendel, in an article of 1936 (now reprinted in English),[93] answered yes to both questions. He pointed to the evidence for Alexander's emulation of the feats of Achilles, and in particular to the episode of the sacrifice of Alexander at the temple of Athena at Ilium, where he is said to have dedicated his own arms and taken in their place an antique set hanging in the temple; the shield from this was always with him on his campaigns, and, as Arrian tells us, was to save his life on one desperate occasion in India.[94] Finally, Brendel picks up an (unsupported) speculation of Droysen's[95] that this shield may have been regarded as that of Achilles. He does not consider by what channels the tradition, if it existed, might have been transmitted.

Now there is ample evidence that the Greeks believed in the survival of relics from Troy down into their own times: of epic shields the most famous still to be viewed was that of Euphorbus, taken by Menelaus, on display in the Argive Heraeum, and notorious for the use made of it by Pythagoras.[96] Alexander himself, according to Ps.-Callisthenes,[97] saw the famous shield of Ajax at Troy; his surprise at its unimpressive proportions led to the well-known exclamation about Homer's power to immortalize. But there is no surviving documentary tradition that the Shield of Achilles was still to be seen. If we were to ask the sort of question that delighted Tiberius, the conclusion would presumably be that it left Troy with Neoptolemus, to whom Odysseus yielded the shield. Brendel's hypothesis of a historical, physical appropriation by Alexander of a shield believed to be that of Achilles must be abandoned for lack of evidence; but this does not totally invalidate the inquiry into a link between the Achillean Shield and a shield, imaginary or otherwise, of Alexander.[98]

I begin with the more general consideration of whether the astral zodiac shield is a likely component of royal iconography contemporary with Alexander himself. The evidence of Pompeii suggests that this type of realization of the Shield of Achilles goes back to the Hellenistic period. The spread of the visual formula of the zodiac-ring in other contexts would appear to

[87] Compare also the type of the Shield of Achilles on some late fourth-century contorniates (in a scene of Vulcan seated before his handiwork), with a zodiac ring around confronting busts of Sol and Luna: A. Alföldi and E. Alföldi, *Die Kontorniat-Medaillons* (Berlin 1976) no. 391; pls 163. 2–10; 164.1–6.

[88] The figure is most probably a female bust, with long hair and bare breasts: see Dressel 1906 (n. 83) 9 n. 1.

[89] *Nox* figures on Trajan's column: K. Lehmann-Hartleben, *Der Trajanssäule* (Berlin 1926) nos 38, 150. On the motif of *velificatio* see F. Matz, *AAWMainz* x (1952) 725 ff.; K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton 1969) 204 ff.

[90] See F. Cumont, 'Mithra ou Sarapis *ΚΟΣΜΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ*', *CRAI* 1919, 314–28, esp. 318 ff.

[91] Bieber (n. 83) 80.

[92] See C. Vermeule, 'The imperial shield as a mirror of Roman art on medallions and coins', in R. A. G. Carson and C. M. Kraay, *Scripta Nummaria Romana: essays presented to H. Sutherland* (London 1978) 177–85.

[93] See n. 69.

[94] Arr. *An.* vi 9 ff.

[95] J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*[6] (1925) 124.

[96] Paus. ii 17.3; for a location at Branchidae, D.L. viii 4. See Nisbet–Hubbard (n. 18) 328. Ampelius *lib. mem.* 8 reports the shield of Agamemnon at Sicyon.

[97] i 42. 11.

[98] For other instances of attributes, either actually worn by Alexander or shown in representations of him, which assimilate him to specific heroes and gods, see R. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London 1973) 443 (Hercules and Dionysus).

reflect the spread of astrology in the classical world from the time of Alexander on;[99] a terracotta disc from Brindisi on which the zodiac-ring contributes to a religious iconography of divinization or apotheosis may be as early as the fourth century BC.[100] Thus the form is not necessarily late. As for its function within an iconography of kingship, parallels for the use of the zodiac to support the universal pretensions of the Roman emperor go back at least to the late first or early second century AD, if Cumont is correct in his interpretation of a terracotta fragment in the Louvre with remains of a zodiac frame and an inscription referring to Trajan.[101] The zodiac-ring is also frequently used in the Empire to symbolize the cosmic power of a god, as in a number of coin-types from Asia Minor and Egypt, in which a range of divinities (or their symbols) are placed within the circle of the zodiac.[102] A parallel close in time to Alexander himself is provided by Demetrius Poliorcetes, who, according to Duris,[103] had *chlamydes* dark in colour, the whole surface of which was embroidered with golden stars and the twelve signs of the zodiac: compare with this the night sky and the stars and zodiac of the Abukir shield. Plutarch, presumably referring to the same garment, talks of a χλάνις which was an εἴκασμα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν φερομένων; it was left unfinished when Demetrius lost power and none subsequently dared to wear it.[104] The ideology of a cosmic kingship is plain: we have already seen Demetrius identified with Helios. As has recently been pointed out[105] there is much connected with Demetrius that foreshadows the ritual and ideology of the later Roman Empire. There is, then, no real *a priori* objection to taking the Abukir Shield as an imitation of a much earlier, Hellenistic, representation of Alexander.

Under what circumstances might an image of Alexander bearing Achillean attributes have arisen, if we reject Brendel's direct historical link? One possibility is an origin in the visual arts, perhaps in a work of statuary, but here we are hampered by lack of evidence. It has been suggested that the desire to compare Alexander with Achilles was operative in a statue by Lysippus of Alexander with a Lance, but this is more than dubious,[106] as is also the suggestion that the Achillean Shield belonged to the statue of Lysippus itself.[107] Epigrams on his statue (or statues) of Alexander play on a division of the universe, with earth going to Alexander and Olympus to Zeus,[108] which would be insipid if the statue made celestial claims for its subject. According to Plutarch,[109] Lysippus criticized Apelles for drawing Alexander with a thunderbolt in his hand, while he, Lysippus, represented Alexander holding a spear, which was natural and proper for him as a weapon. Lysippus is not likely to have approved of astronomical shields. On the other hand the implications for Apelles and other less realistic purveyors of the royal image are suggestive.

[99] The best general treatment is the article of F. Cumont s.v. 'zodiacus' in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités* v (1912) 1046–62; *cf.* also A. Frazer, in *Essays in memory of K. Lehmann* (New York 1964) 112 n. 21.

[100] See P. Boyancé, 'Le disque de Brindisi et l'apothéose de Sémélé', *REA* xliv (1942) 191–216; M. J. Vermaseren, *Liber in deum: l'apoteosi di un iniziato dionisiaco* (Leiden 1976) 48 ff.

[101] F. Cumont, 'Trajan "Kosmokrator"?', *Mél. G. Radet* (=*REA* xlii [1940]) 408–11. Compare a medallion of Hadrian depicting on the reverse a figure (the deified Trajan?) seated within a zodiac ring: F. Gnecchi, *I medaglioni Romani* (Milan 1912) Hadrian (bronze) no. 105.

[102] A. B. Cook, *Zeus* i (1914) 752 ff. The zodiac is a constant feature on Mithraic monuments.

[103] *Ap.* Athen. 535e ff. (=*FGrH* 76 F 14). *Cf.* Cerfaux–Tondriau (n. 19) 184.

[104] Plut. *Demetr.* 41.4.

[105] S. MacCormack, *Art and ceremony in late antiquity* (Berkeley etc. 1981) 281 n. 14.

[106] On the Lysippan portraits of Alexander: M. Bieber, *The sculpture of the Hellenistic age*[2] (New York 1961) 47 ff. The argument for Achillean allusion is that the Lysippan statue was modelled on Polycleitus' *Doryphorus*, which in turn is said to have been an image of Achilles, but this last statement is based on no more decisive argument than the fact that Pliny (*NH* xxxiv 18) said that nude statues holding spears in gymnasia were called *Achilleae* (see G. Rodenwaldt, *AA* 1931, 334). For further speculation with regard to the image of Augustus see H. Kähler, *Die Augustusstatue von Primaporta*, Monumenta Artis Romanae i (Cologne 1959) 13. It is at least worth noting that the breastplate of the Primaporta statue of Augustus presents symbols of a universal empire, though the iconography is quite different from that of the Abukir shield of Alexander.

[107] H. Thiersch, 'Lysipps Alexander mit der Lanze', *JdI* xxiii (1908) 162–9. For the evidence for cuirassed statues of Alexander see Stemmer (n. 86) 133 ff.

[108] *Anth. Plan.* 120 (=Asclep. 43 GP), 121. Note esp. 120. 3 f., αὐδασοῦντι δ' ἔοικεν ὁ χάλκεος ἐς Δία λεύσσων. / 'Γᾶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ τίθεμαι· Ζεῦ, σὺ δ' Ὄλυμπον ἔχε.'

[109] *De Alex. fort.* 335b.

Another possibility is a literary source, on which the visual arts later drew. Here one can only speculate on the contents of the lost Alexander epics. In general one might suppose that, given Alexander's own fascination with Homer, and with Achilles in particular, it would be a natural step for a writer of epic to elaborate and glorify the history of Alexander's campaign through the medium of the pre-existing themes of the *Iliad*, just as the events at Troy shape the events in the last four books of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Tarn has argued that some of the more impossible feats ascribed to Alexander, such as the fight with the river Acesines, are to be explained in this way, and suggests Choerilus of Iasus as a likely candidate for the authorship of such an epic, though on slender evidence.[110] Any such Homerizing epic would hardly omit a reworking of the scene in which the hero is presented with his armour; all the more so given the Hellenistic delight in the ecphrasis. The incident in the temple of Athena at Ilium might even have been drawn into the working up of such an imitation of Homer. Three pieces of evidence may lend some support to this hypothesis, one from the visual arts and two from literature.

Another of the medallions from Abukir (Dressel E; PLATE II*b*) has on its reverse Alexander seated on a lion skin draped on a bench; a figure of Nike approaches from the right and presents Alexander with a helmet and a round shield on which is figured the group of Achilles dragging Penthesilea by the hair; Alexander's pose suggests that he is about to leap up.[111] A group of Nike (Victoria) with a shield is very common in Roman art;[112] a frequent type is that where Victory stands in front of and writes on a shield, a type found on some of the Abukir reverses. In such a group the shield is dedicatory or commemorative, a memorial to achievements already past. In real life dedications such shields were common enough: the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus is a famous example, unusual only in that it records civilian rather than military achievement. But the presentation of a shield (and other items of armour) to the hero or ruler himself can only be understood as a prelude to the deeds to be achieved with those arms. The most famous occasion on which a goddess brought decorated armour to a hero, prior to his *aristeia*, is that on which Thetis brought the arms forged by Hephaestus to Achilles. If this episode had been adapted for an Alexander epic, who would have taken the role of Thetis? Olympias is hardly suitable, and a personified goddess of Victory might well have been introduced as a stopgap. The figures on the shield of the Abukir medallion have nothing to do with the scenes on the Homeric Shield of Achilles: we would have to suppose either that the artist of the medallion, or his source, had substituted something quite different, or that he had arbitrarily selected just one of the scenes described on a Shield of Alexander; the story of Achilles and Penthesilea might serve both to point up the Achillean connection and to symbolize the victory of Greek over barbarian. One might compare the scene of Manlius and the Gauls on the Virgilian Shield of Aeneas (*Aen.* viii 652 ff.), an episode in which Romans successfully survived barbarian attack, and which, in the overall structure of the Virgilian ecphrasis, clearly anticipates the climactic scene of the battle of Actium, Octavian's victory over the barbarian hordes of the East.

The second and third arguments are drawn from the later history in the epic tradition of the episode of the Shield of Achilles. In his *Dionysiaca* Nonnus describes the shield of Dionysus, made by Hephaestus and conveyed to Dionysus by Attis at the behest of Rhea; it is a reworking of the Shield of Achilles, and the model is formally acknowledged by the repetition at the beginning of the first words of the Homeric Shield, ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξε.[113] Like the Shield of Achilles, the Shield of Dionysus is divided into two sections: cosmological scenes (xxv 387–412), and mythological scenes on earth and Olympus (413–562); the six lines of astronomy on the Homeric shield are spun out to 24 lines in Nonnus. But, unlike the Homeric Shield, this Shield is designed in detail to reflect the interests and pretensions of its bearer. The mythological scenes are selected to honour Dionysus:

[110] W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* ii (1948) 55 ff.

[111] Discussed by Dressel 1906 (n. 83) 51 ff. The pose is perhaps suggestive of the typical Lysippan 'restlessness'; *cf.* Bieber (n. 106) 41 f. on the seated figure of Hermes ready to rise.

[112] Nike and shield: Dressel 1906 (n. 83) 44 ff.; Hölscher (n. 75) 98 ff.

[113] Compare also 394 f. with *Il.* xviii 485.

χαριζόμενος δὲ Λυαίῳ
τεῦξε λυροδμήτοιο βοόκτιτα τείχεα Θήβης.

The Homeric theme of the city is accommodated to the interests of the recipient of the Shield; compare the Virgilian specification of Rome as the city on the Shield of Aeneas, again to suit the person of its recipient.[114] In the mentions of the Shield of Dionysus prior to the ecphrasis itself, however, it is its cosmological and astronomical content that is stressed. Attis announces it to Dionysus thus (337 f.):

δέχνυσο τεύχεα ταῦτα, τά περ κάμε Λήμνιος ἄκμων,
συν χθονὶ πόντον ἔχοντα καὶ αἰθέρα καὶ χόρον ἄστρων.

The practical importance of the cosmological representations is brought out in Attis' second speech (352 ff.): they will prevent attacks on the shield's bearer, that is, they are apotropaic. The gods themselves will not stand against this star shield (ἀστερόεσσαν . . . ἀσπίδα: on this see above); the river Hydaspes will not harm one who carries Ocean. Stegemann sees the whole shield as an amulet lending universal power to Dionysus, at the same time as it symbolizes his coming victory over the Indians. *In hoc signo vinces.*[115]

The popularity of the triumphal progress of Dionysus through the east as a subject for epic cannot be detached from the assimilation of Alexander to the figure of Dionysus, a process which was fully realized by the beginning of the third century BC at the latest;[116] the details of Dionysus' campaign appear largely to have been calqued on the historical or legendary exploits of Alexander.[117] Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* is to a large extent a patchwork of themes and details from the whole of the previous tradition of Greek poetry, with a strong representation of Hellenistic models. Koepp suggested long ago that we might look for motifs from Alexander epic in Nonnus.[118] Consider the possibility that the Nonnan Shield of Dionysus looks back to Homer in the mirror of an epic Shield of Alexander. With the astronomical emphasis on the Nonnan shield compare the astronomical emphasis on the Abukir Shield of Alexander.[119] The mythological scenes on the Shield of Dionysus contain subjects of specific interest to Dionysus: the history of Thebes, Maionia, the nurse of Dionysus. Our hypothetical Shield of Alexander will have included in the ecphrasis a selection of scenes germane to Alexander and Macedon. Here again the Virgilian Shield of Aeneas may serve as a parallel.

This leads to the question of whether the Virgilian Shield owes something to a precedent in Alexander epic. It would not be the only instance in which Virgil reached out to Alexander panegyric for material to glorify Rome: Norden pointed to such elements in the Speech of Anchises in Book vi,[120] a passage which is in many ways a pendant to the ecphrasis of the Shield in Book viii. One detail in particular of the Shield of Aeneas is interesting in this respect, the final

[114] For another example of a historical allegory of the cities on the Homeric Shield see schol. D *ad Il.* xviii 491 (citing Agallis of Cercyra, a contemporary of Aristophanes of Byzantium), τὰς δύο πόλεις εἶναι Ἀθήνας καὶ Ἐλευσῖνα. The allegory is developed from an Athenian nationalist point of view; see H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* iv (Berlin 1975) 528 ff. Note also Aelius Aristides' image of a shield with five concentric rings (based on the five-layered Shield of Achilles?) to describe the place of Athens at the centre of the world (*Panath.* 15): the five rings correspond to Acropolis, polis, Attica, Hellas, the Earth; see J. H. Oliver, *The civilizing power: a study of the Panathenaic discourse of Aelius Aristides*, Trans. Am. Philos. Soc. lviii (1968) 95 ff.

[115] V. Stegemann, *Astrologie und Universalgeschichte: Studien und Interpretationen zu den Dionysiaca des Nonnos von Panopolis* (Leipzig etc. 1930) 85 ff.

[116] A. D. Nock, 'Notes on ruler-cult, I-IV', *JHS* xlviii (1928) 21–43 = *Essays on religion and the ancient world* i (Oxford 1972) 134–59.

[117] F. Vian, *Nonnos: Dionysiaques* i (Paris 1970) xli ff. (with bibliography). It has been argued that the increase in the popularity of Dionysiac subjects in the later Roman empire on sarcophagi, etc., is connected with the revival of a Dionysiac imperialist ideology: R. Turcan, *Sarcophages romaines à représentations dionysiaques* (Paris 1966) 374 f.

[118] F. Koepp, *De gigantomachiae in poeseos artisque monumentis usu* (Bonn 1883) ch. 3.

[119] Note also that Nonnus devotes nearly half of the astronomical section of his shield to the constellation Draco (402–12), which is not mentioned in Homer, but which is a prominent feature on the Pompeian paintings of the Shield of Achilles.

[120] E. Norden, *RhM* liv (1899) 467 ff., = *Kl. Schr.* 422 ff.

words of all: *et pontem indignatus Araxes, Aen.* viii 728. The episode referred to is quite unhistorical, but Servius Auctus is not at a loss for historical commentary:

> ARAXES cui Alexander Magnus pontem fecit, quem fluminis incrementa ruperunt. postea Augustus firmiore ponte eum ligavit, unde ad Augusti gloriam dixit 'pontem indignatus Araxes'.

The allusion to Alexander is also fictitious, but the bridging of a river *was* a prominent episode in Alexander's subjugation of the east, or at least in the panegyric on that subjugation; the river was the Euphrates (itself mentioned two lines earlier in the Virgilian passage), and the town at the bridgehead was called Zeugma.[121] Is the Virgilian allusion meant to recall us to thoughts of Alexander (and indicate Augustus' outbidding of the achievements of Alexander in bridging a river even further east), and possibly, so prominently placed, to remind us that Alexander also received a shield like that of Achilles?

The Virgilian Shield of Aeneas is taken up almost entirely with the scenes of war (*pugnataque in ordine bella, Aen.* viii 629) that Heraclitus Homericus had suggested would have been appropriate for the Shield of Achilles; but, as I shall argue elsewhere, the Shield of Aeneas is also a universal shield, whose underlying theme is the creation of a Roman cosmos.[122] I conclude by examining another representation of a figured shield which celebrates the power of Alexander, this time through images of war, but in a context which makes plain its universalizing purport. Among the series of *Tabulae Iliacae*, though without Homeric content, is the Chigi relief (FIG. 2);[123] it depicts the female figures of Europe and Asia, both wearing the *corona muralis*, on either side of, and supporting, a round shield, on which are seen the forces of Macedonian and Persian infantry and cavalry engaged at the battle of Arbela.[124] Jahn–Michaelis place the Chigi relief in the category of honorary shields.[125] The normal practice was to place either a portrait (*imago clipeata*) on such a shield, or an inscription, as on the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus. The scenes of battle on the Chigi relief are in the line of descent from the Amazonomachy which figured on the exterior of the shield of the Pheidian Athena Parthenos;[126] and this may be more than simply compositional borrowing given the probable intention of the Parthenos shield to symbolize the victory of Greek over Persian.[127] The inscriptions on the Chigi relief indicate the way in which it is to be interpreted. The general legend reads: *ἡ ἐπὶ πᾶσι μάχη τρίτη πρὸς Δαρῆον γενομένη ἐν Ἀρβήλοις*. There is also an epigram:

> *ἔπταξαν βασιλῆες ἐμὸν δόρυ ἔθνεά τ' αὐτῶν,*
> *ὅσσα πέριξ γαίης ὠκεανὸς νέμεται·*
> *εἰμὶ δ' ἀφ' Ἡρακλέος Διὸς ἔκγονος, υἱὸς Φιλίππου,*
> *Αἰακιδῶν γενεῆς, μητρὸς Ὀλυμπίαδος.*[128]

The epigram presents a universalist interpretation of Alexander's conquests; they extend over the entire *oikoumene*, and they are the achievement of one with a suitable genealogy, descended

[121] Pliny *NH* xxxiv 150; Dio xl 17.3; Steph. Byz. s.v. *Ζεῦγμα*. According to Pausanias, x 29.4, it was Dionysus who first bridged the Euphrates, another example of the interaction of the Dionysus and Alexander legends. On the influence of motifs from Alexander's Indian triumph on the staging of Roman triumphs: I. M. DuQuesnay, 'Virgil's fifth *Eclogue*', *PVS* xvi (1976–7) 33. I. Worthington, *LCM* ix (1984) 48 also sees an allusion to Alexander in the mention of Araxes at *Aen.* viii 728, but does not consider the possibility of a model in Alexander epic.

[122] In a forthcoming book *Virgil's Aeneid: cosmos and imperium*.

[123] Sadurska 17M; the inscriptions at *IG* xiv 1296. Sadurska dates the piece to the time of Augustus, but this is partly dependent on her speculative interpretation of its significance (see below).

[124] Compare the figure of Thetis supporting the shield on the Sarti fragment, and see n. 75.

[125] Jahn–Michaelis (n. 58) 56. On the *clipeus virtutis*: Weinstock (n. 6) 229, 233 n. 5. On honorary shields: Hölscher (n. 75) 98 f.

[126] Jahn–Michaelis (n. 58) 55 n. 361.

[127] The shield of the Pheidian Athena Promachos bore reliefs of the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs according to Pausanias i 28.2, another myth which could be used to symbolize victory over barbarians.

[128] These lines are related to *Catalepton* 3 (Jahn–Michaelis [n. 58] 86 n. 443).

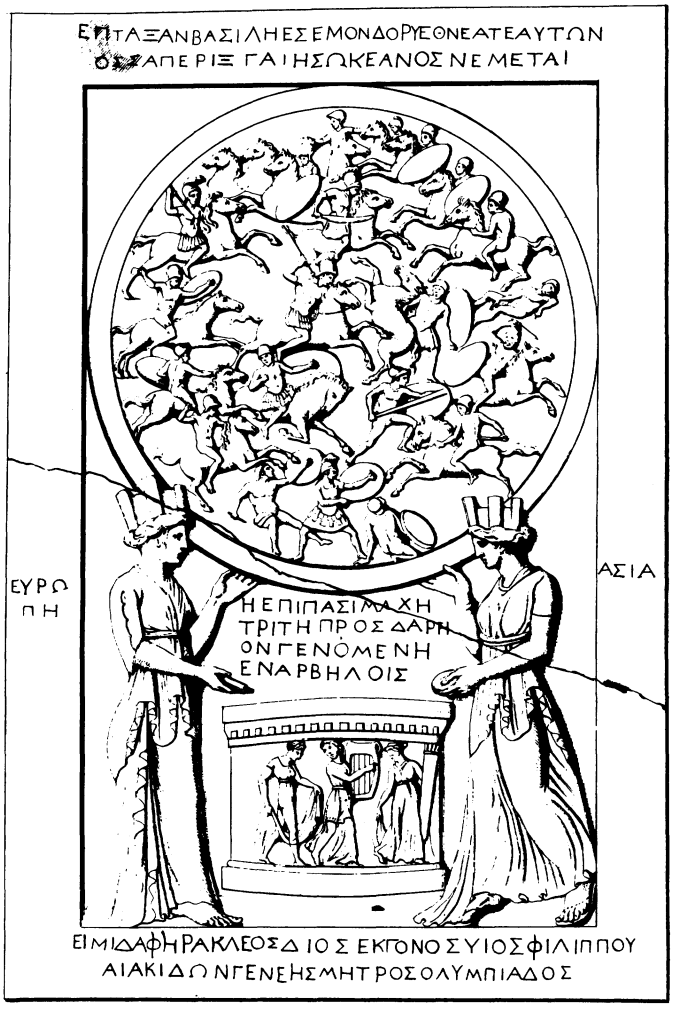

FIG. 2: 'Tabula Iliaca': Chigi relief. Rome, Palazzo Chigi. (After Jahn–Michaelis, *Griech. Bilderchroniken*.)

on the one side from Heracles[129] and Zeus, and on the other side from Achilles. Michaelis thought that the epigram was alien to the pictorial themes of the relief, and suggested that it was originally composed for the Lysippan statue of Alexander with a lance (note δόρυ in line 1).[130] But the central horseman, who may well represent Alexander, does wield a spear, and the overall message of the relief in fact corresponds closely with that of the epigram: Asia and Europe support the shield on which is shown the decisive victory over Darius, by means of which Alexander realized his ambition of rule over both continents, i.e. the *oikoumene*.[131] In a recent article on the Athena Parthenos shield (which, as indicated, may be one of the models for the Chigi relief) Harrison suggests that the circular form of the Pheidian shield, acting as a frame for the Gigantomachy depicted on the inside surface, is intended to symbolize the circle of the world, while a guilloche ornament around the Amazonomachy on the outside may have stood for the moat of Athens; implied is an equation of *urbs* and *orbis*, also discernible in the pediments of the Parthenon, the west one with the hill of the city, the east with the hill of the world.[132] As

[129] Compare the appeal to Heraclid descent by Demetrius Poliorcetes and others in support of a claim to world-wide domination. See F. W. Walbank, 'Alcaeus of Messene, Philip V, and Rome', *CQ* xxxvi (1942) 134–45.

[130] Jahn–Michaelis (n. 58) 86.

[131] For the two-continents motif in an epigram on Alexander's tomb see *Anth. Pal.* vii 240 (Adaeus).

[132] E. B. Harrison, 'Motifs of the city-siege on the shield of Athena Parthenos', *AJA* lxxxv (1981) 281–317, esp. 304 ff. It has been suggested that the Parthenos shield itself alludes to the Homeric Shield of Achilles: see Fittschen (n. 49) 1 n. 1.

well as providing a formal model, the Parthenos shield might thus be a precedent for the universalizing intention of the Chigi relief. There is also a parallel with the function of the battle of Actium on the Shield of Aeneas in Virgil *Aen.* viii 675 ff., a battle in which Augustus successfully vindicates his claim to be a world-ruler. Sadurska actually claims that the Chigi relief is designed as a piece of Augustan propaganda, intended to glorify the exploits of the *princeps* in the East, and in particular to celebrate the victory of Actium. I see no compelling reason to take it in this way, when the inscriptions so unambiguously refer it to the exploits of Alexander.

Sadurska suggests that the Chigi relief might be based on an opening book-illustration for an epic on Alexander.[133] The similarity between the function of this shield and that of the imitations of the Shield of Achilles examined earlier in this section may be a phenomenon of convergence, but we might finally ask whether the battle-scene on the Chigi relief is not drawn from the more varied repertory of a large-scale ecphrasis of a shield which Alexander, the descendant of Achilles, received as a weapon befitting his career of conquest.

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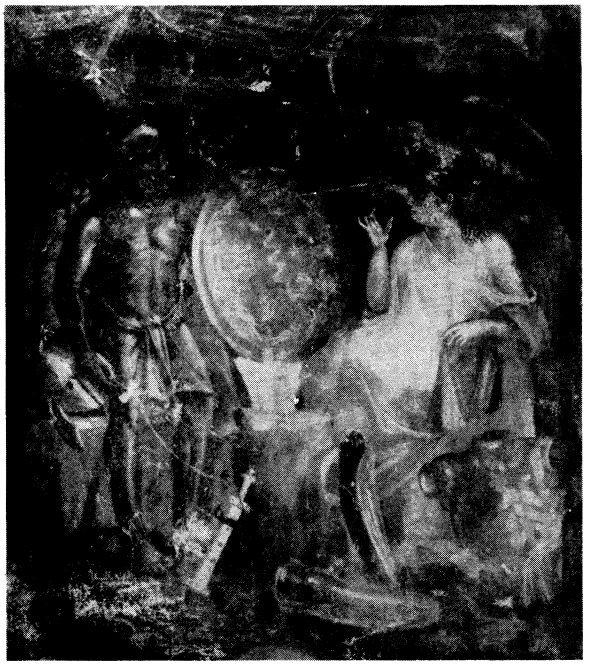
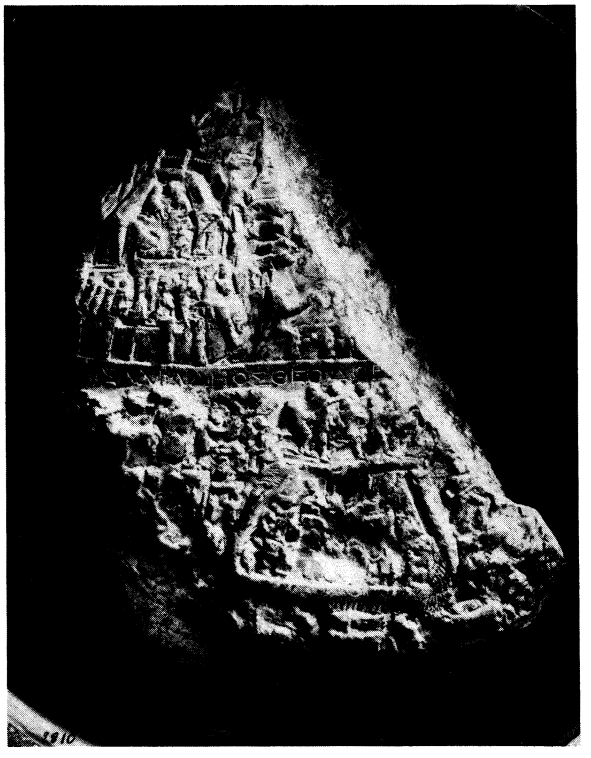
[133] Sadurska (n. 71) 77.



(*a*) *Thetis in the forge of Vulcan.* 'Domus Uboni', Pompeii. (After Herrmann–Bruckmann, *Denkmäler.*)

(*b*) *Thetis in the forge of Vulcan.* Casa di Sirico, Pompeii. (After Herrmann–Bruckmann, *Denkmäler.*)

(*c*) *Thetis in the forge of Vulcan.* Naples, Museo Nazionale. (After Herrmann–Bruckmann, *Denkmäler.*)

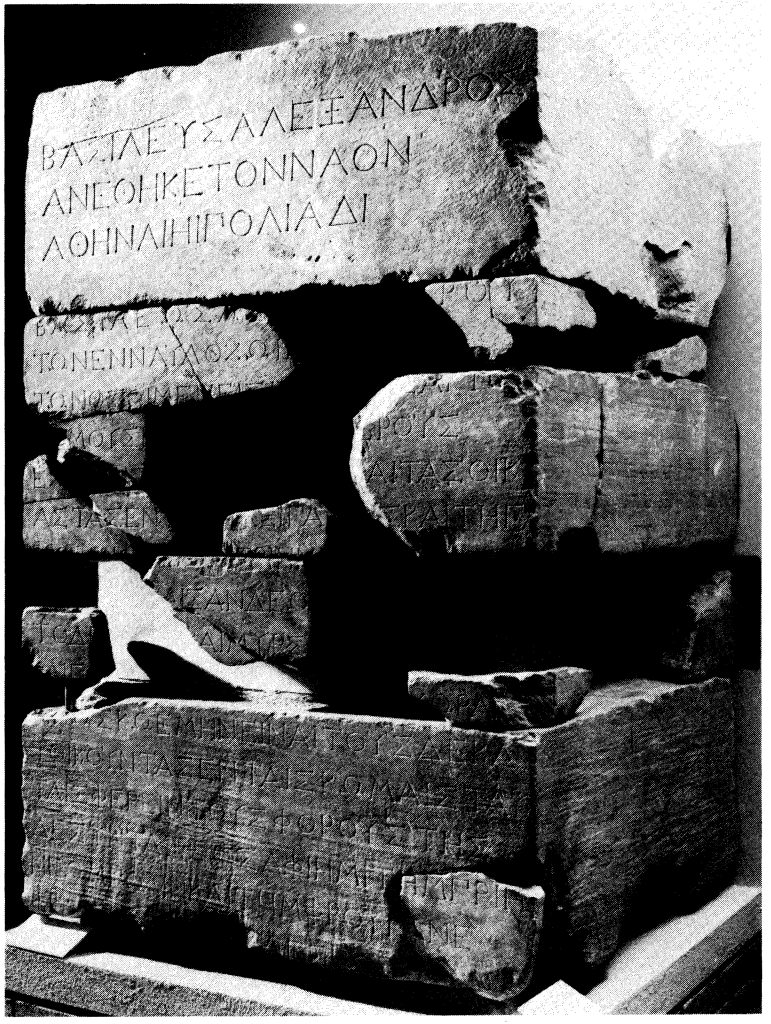


(*d*) 'Tabula Iliaca': *The Shield of Achilles.* Rome, Museo Capitolino.

(*a*) Gold medallion: bust of Alexander the Great. Berlin (After Dressel, *Fünf Goldmedaillons.*)

(*b*) Gold medallion: *Victory brings arms to Alexander the Great.* Berlin (After Dressel, *Fünf Goldmedaillons.*)

(*d*) Dedication inscription of Alexander (Courtesy British Museum).



(*c*) Upper part of *anta* from the temple of Athena Polias at Priene as reconstructed in the British Museum. On the front are the dedicatory inscription (above) and the edict of Alexander (Courtesy British Museum).

THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES (*a*) and (*b*); ANCIENT ARCHIVES: THE ALEXANDER EDICT (*c*) and (*d*)