

Framing Poetry: The Dynamics of Inside and Outside in Ancient Poetic Texts

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ABSTRACTS

Péter AGÓCS (University College London): ‘Frame, Setting, Rhetoric and Genre: The Symposium as a Context for Sung Praise in the Fragmentary *skolia* of Pindar and Bacchylides’

This paper starts from a sociological or sociolinguistic definition of ‘frame’ as the notional context created in any act of utterance. Greek choral songs are especially rich in such self-referential gestures, which by Pindar’s time are clearly made not simply as reflections of some ‘original’ historical performance context, but with future acts of reperformance or reading in mind. The Greek symposium is of course one of the great settings of song-performance in the culture: most of our monodic songs (Sappho, Alcaeus, Anacreon, elegy) are supposed to have been performed in that context. But there are some texts of choral song as well that seem to establish the moment of their utterance in the symposium. Early in Pindar’s *Olympian* 1, for example, the lyric speaker speaks of ‘the wise [poets]’ coming together to praise Zeus at Hieron’s abundant table. But the passage in question exemplifies what is at stake in such framing gestures in choral lyric. The singer not only creates a vibrant cross-over between epinician chorality and sympotic monody, but also, in an allusion to Homer, establishes a clear connection between himself and Demodocus, the Phaeacian bard of the *Odyssey*. And while some still argue for a literal correlation between poetic frame and historical performance contexts in Greek lyric songs, it is clear I think that we need to read such self-referential framing discourse in terms of a broader cultural system of contexts and genres. In the second part of the paper, I will argue that the several important fragments of Pindaric and Bacchylidean song – most notably the *skolia/encomia* fragments Pind. *fr.* 122, 124ab and Bacch. 20B and 20C – which frame themselves as utterance in the sympotic setting, bear out comparison with the relevant epinician odes, and show how the symposium, as a notional context for songs and singing, was a particularly appropriate social frame in which to situate utterance designed to praise a ruler within the context of his court – in short, that what we see in Pindar’s allusions to the symposium can often be read best within the culture of a court society.

Judit BESZKID (ELTE Budapest): ‘The Art of Competition: The Agon as a Performative Frame in The Contest of Homer and Hesiod’

The compilation known as *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod* presents the famous poetic competition between Homer and Hesiod and the decision of King Panedes to choose Hesiod over Homer as the victor. The story seems to have been inspired by Hesiod’s reference to a victory in a poetic competition in his *Works and Days* and was well known during antiquity. Viewing this poetical *agon* as a performative frame, my presentation examines how this frame interacts with the poets’ performances and how these circumstances – including the indications of Homer’s success throughout the competition, the reaction and admiration of the audience, and finally the verdict of Panedes – influence our aesthetic experience.

Joseph W. DAY (Wabash College): ‘Framed and Framing: The Verbal Dynamics of Epigrams, Monuments, and Contexts’

In Archaic and Classical Greece, many inscriptions in cemeteries and sanctuaries were in verse (epigrams), often on monuments with stone or bronze sculpture. The concept of ‘framing’, as treated in Platt and Squire 2017, helps us reconstruct the dynamics of ancient responses to such inscribed monuments, partly because the roles of frame and framed operated reciprocally: texts (as an ‘outside’) cued familiar ways of viewing the art, even as objects, their physical contexts, and human activities there guided the way texts (thus also an ‘inside’) were read. Here, I argue that verse inscriptions, drawing on traditionally referential poetic language, were better able than prose to heighten emotional response by exploiting the potential of mutual epigraphic framing. I consider three types of epigram and monument.

(1) Emotional language in epitaphs accompanying images of the deceased, e.g., Mnasiheos’ stele (*SEG* 49.505). Epigrams guided viewers toward responses of pity, sadness, and loss by naming them, even as images elicited those emotions.

(2) Emotional response in dedicatory epigrams, e.g., from the Athenian Acropolis. Epigrams frame dedications (with *agalma*, *charis*, praising epithets, etc.) as offerings that join god and dedicator in a bond of beauty and pleasure; and in turn, splendid dedications frame texts by generating such effects.

(3) Evocative language in victor dedications, e.g., at Olympia. Epigrams echoing the herald’s *aggelia* frame the viewing of victor statues as heightened experiences like coronations and epinicians; and in turn, viewing a statue cues the experience of an epigram as a repeated *aggelia* amidst such performances.

Barna DOBOS (ELTE, Budapest): ‘Framing *aitia*: Poetic Complexity and Mixing of Genres in the Stories of Anna Perenna (Ov. *Fast.* 3.523–696)’

In the third book of the *Fasti*, Ovid gives us some explanations of the origin of the goddess Anna Perenna, among which we can find the miserable fleeing of Dido’s sister from

Carthage, a short story about a helpful older woman, and another on the fruitless love affair of Mars. In the presentation, the effects of framing will be analysed considering the actual month, namely March, as a broad frame in the first place. The calendar as a medium plays a crucial role in how Ovid weaves together these seemingly different stories giving the perfect framework for the poet to present the abundance of the antiquarian tradition and, at the same time, to smuggle some other attributes of other genres into his didactic poem written in elegiac couplets. In the case of Anna Perenna, a brief and twisted version of the *Aeneid* grabs our attention since Ovid reframes and rewrites the first part of the epos, putting a female protagonist in the middle of the masculine epical narrative. By doing so, the West Mediterranean landscape appears as the background and the spatial framework of the story. In the last Anna episode, Ovid plays another genre into play: Mars, as a ridiculous lover, is cheated by Anna, who plays the classical role of a bawd (*lena*), making the god of war a complete fool. Last but not least, Caesar's death frames these stories since the feast of Anna Perenna was celebrated in the middle of March. The presentation will give a comparative analysis of this complex web of stories and genres.

Attila FERENCZI (ELTE Budapest): 'Old Picture in New Frame: Petronius the Framer'

The paper intends to reconsider the interaction of frame and lyric inset in the case of a well-known passage from Petronius' *Satyricon*. The first verse inset of the transmitted text is a short didactic poem on creating literature, performed by Agamemnon, a hard working teacher of rhetoric. The usual approach to the piece in the scholarly literature concentrates on generic questions, raised by the short polymetric composition, or is occupied with the fluid definition of its ironies. But much more could be said on the interaction of the prose frame and the poem enclosed. The first part of the paper analyses the verses in their immediate surrounding, while the second part puts them in a broader context. The paper as a whole tries to demonstrate the role of a *par excellence* conservative educational program within the aesthetical system of the *Satyricon*.

William FITZGERALD (King's College London): 'Framed by a Condition: Opening a Poem with If'

In this paper I address the limit case of the frame of a poem, its opening, and specifically its opening word. I will be looking at poems which begin with the conditional, and will examine the ways in which conditionality can be said to frame a poem. I begin with Rupert Brooke's WW1 poem 'If I should die think only this of me' (*The Soldier*), which recycles the old narrative clichés 'If anything happens to me, open this letter' and 'if you are reading this, I'm dead'. From this I move on to the most famous of Latin poems begins with an 'if', Catullus 76, and discuss the way the poem challenges us to decide on the degree of its conditionality. 'If' can have a weak conditionality ('since' or 'when') or a stronger form (IF that is really the case). Catullus likes to start poems with a conditional (unlike Horace in his *Odes*, for instance), and poem 86 is another good example. Here, Catullus' opening *si* introduces a poem concerned with if, and how, an utterance arrives at its destination. Finally, I examine Martial's influential address to his friend and namesake (Martialis) in 5.20, whose opening '*si*' raises the question of how and whether the pair could begin to 'live'. I consider the light this poem casts on the previous one (5.19) in which Martial avers in the

opening line that 'If the truth can be trusted' the age of Domitian is to be preferred to all others.

Tom GEUE (St Andrews): 'Out of Frame: Apocolocyntosis and the Limits of Scholarship'

Many of us scholars consider it our job to frame texts with other texts. When we stumble upon a quotation, our deep philological impulse is to look it up. We then bring the original quote and its context back to our host text, and we make meaning of the process of recontextualization, a.k.a. reframing. Such a method has proven endlessly generative for classical scholarship. But what happens when the original quotations can't be dredged up? What does it do to our philological operation of source-searching, when the sources are either lost, or never existed as pin-pointable 'locations' in the first place?

I'll argue in this paper that this problem of origin-seeking is precisely the issue raised by Seneca's dark early Neronian satire, the *Apocolocyntosis*. By its nature, the mixed prose-verse form of Menippean satire always raises questions of framed vs frame: do the prose chunks contain the poems, or vice versa? But in addition to this formal property, the *Apocol.* wreaks havoc with our pathological search for original quotations by supplying a series of quotes which either have no specific home, or float away in their non-specificity, so general as to be completely autonomous from their initial contexts. The *Apocol.* co-ordinates such a cancellation of textual origins with its larger scale reframing of the imperial figure it seeks to bring down, i.e. Claudius, who is turned from a figure of divine/imperial lineage to an enslaved person defined precisely by his *absence* of origins. In its abasing swing from Olympian power to underworld enslavement, the *Apocol.* stops the scholar asking 'from where', and forces them to accept the end result; flips us from an obsession with origins to a fixation on the destination. It is a reframing riposte to past-focussed scholars like Claudius – or like us.

Philip HARDIE (Cambridge): 'The Letter-Carrier, Inside and Outside Verse (and Some Prose) Epistles'

As a form of communication, the letter is subject to framing of various kinds. The contents of what is not an immediate, face-to-face, exchange of words, are typically contained within conventional formulas of opening and closure. Time and space also frame the letter. Time, in that sender and receiver process the communication in the knowledge that time will (have) elapse(d) between writing and reading of the letter. This is marked by dating formulas and the 'epistolary imperfect'. Space, since the condition of a letter is that sender and receiver are separated in space. For secure transmission, the letter may be physically enclosed, as in an envelope, an enclosure that may be further secured by a seal. To reach its addressee, the letter thus physically contained must be conveyed through some combination of human and vehicle. In the ancient world, this role is typically entrusted to the letter-carrier. In the modern world, the means of conveyance are normally excluded from the experience of reading a letter, once the envelope is opened. In antiquity, the letter carrier bore an important responsibility, and would often be known to the sender, sometimes as a trusted friend, or servant or slave. In this case, the carrier, an embodied 'frame' of the letter, sometimes breaks the frame to enter the letter (or book of letters) as part of the

contents. This paper examines examples of this ‘breaking of the frame’ in the epistles of Horace and Paulinus of Nola.

**Bernadett KÁRPÁTI (ELTE Budapest) & Anna Emese KERTI (ELTE Budapest):
‘Meanings In-Between: Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 7.16 and 19.10’**

In many chapters of Aulus Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*, a certain philological interest can be observed, which is directed towards providing the ‘correct’ or ‘better’ reading of a specific archaic or canonical text or explaining an expression that sounds strange or old-fashioned. In our presentation, we shall analyse two chapters of the *Noctes Atticae*, in both of which a challenging word and its confusing meaning is used as a starting point. In 7.16, a so-called *quispiam* accuses Catullus’ poem 92 of being *frigidissimum*, and our narrator defends the text arguing that this man could only be that mistaken, because he was not familiar with the ‘*doctiusculus*’ meaning of the word *deprecor*. In 19.10, the illustrious company gathered in Fronto’s house ponders on the expression *praeterpropter* used by an unnamed guest, and in order to clarify its meaning, they read a passage of Ennius’ *Iphigenia* aloud. In both texts, it is worth paying attention to the phenomenon of framing on many levels. First of all, it is interesting how the Gellian prosaic frame recontextualises the quoted texts, and vice versa: how these citations influence the whole chapter and its poetics. The Gellian ‘essay’, however, is being framed itself: these argumentations are enclosed by the frame of the narrative (an anecdotal story, a dramatic setting), which is also interweaved by well-known generic codes (such as satire, tragedy, or invective), and seem to apply the methods of commentary (such as providing parallel texts). Accordingly, after the persistent chase of the ultimate meaning, we find ourselves exactly where we started: among the meanings in-between.

Dániel KOZÁK (ELTE Budapest): ‘Framing in Commentary – Commentary as Frame’

Commentaries – either visually, on the margins of the page, or in a metaphoric way – surround the text they are composed to explain. In that sense, they also act as frames of interpretation, “guarding” the text, as it were, against misinterpretation – but they also give the commentator the opportunity to suggest what the “correct” interpretation is. The phenomenon of framing, however, can be examined not just on the level of the text and the commentary as a whole, but also in case of individual notes accompanying segments of the text. The selection and designation of segments (words, expressions, lines, passages, whole books etc.) to be commented upon turns these into “foreground objects” of interest in themselves, in contrast to the “background” made up by segments left without comment. In my paper, I am going to discuss framing effects in commentary, focusing on textual segments and individual notes rather than the text and the commentary as a whole, and taking examples mainly from the commentary tradition on Vergil’s *Aeneid*. Particular attention will be paid to the *Interpretationes Vergilianae* by Tiberius Claudius Donatus as an “atypical” commentary, and to the episode of Aeneas meeting Venus in *Aeneid* 1 (314–417).

József KRUPP (ELTE Budapest) & Kathrin WINTER (Heidelberg): ‘Inner Framings in Latin Lyric Poetry’

This paper investigates a small, formal, and anachronistic detail in Latin lyric poetry: inverted commas. Inverted commas obviously serve more than one purpose: they mark somebody’s speech, they transfer words and phrases from the realms of a literary meaning to those of another, usually metaphorical meaning, but what is much more, they can be used to establish inner frames and boundaries: after all, they create an inside by separating it from what is outside. Although inverted commas do not exist in antiquity, there are examples for exactly such framings in Latin lyric poetry which create/separate inside and outside and invite modern editors to use inverted commas to mark the frame. Questions arising immediately are: How are these frames created, how are places marked that call for punctuation? How are inside and outside established in Latin lyric poetry, and how do the readers know which is which?

These questions are particularly interesting with regard to Käte Hamburger’s theory of literature. Hamburger conceives of the lyrical I as *Aussagesubjekt* (“declaratory subject”) that creates and conveys a field of experience: whatever occurs within this field may be fictitious (as it belongs to the realms of *mimesis*, of ποιεῖν) whereas the *Aussagesubjekt* itself, being always part of a declaratory function (of λέγειν), is never fictitious. This paper will investigate how the relationship between lyrical I and the field of experience is constituted and marked by frames, how inside and outside are created, and where these frames could or should be indicated by inverted commas.

Margot NEGER (University of Cyprus): ‘Framing Verse Inscriptions in Ancient Epistolography’

The epistolary *prosimetrum*, i.e. prose letters with embedded poems of various content and length, is a phenomenon which we encounter almost exclusively in Latin epistolography. A conspicuous number of the poems inserted into epistolary texts belongs to the genre of verse inscriptions. Being incorporated into letters, poems which are actually designed for a specific place or spot (a tombstone, a building or an *objet d’art*) become mobile and are able to circulate among the letter writer’s addressees and thus beyond the original place of destination. This mobility, however, is limited again as soon as the letter (together with the inscription) becomes part of a published collection and is assigned a specific position within the book. Within this process, the frame and context of an inscription changes several times, and constantly new forms of interaction are created.

Verse-epitaphs, inscriptions for buildings (mainly churches) and smaller objects appear in the letters of Pliny the Younger, Jerome, Paulinus Nolanus and, especially frequently, Sidonius Apollinaris. Ennodius too inserts inscriptions into two of his letters. In most of the cases, the prose text of the letter provides information about the inscription’s genesis – in many cases the letter writer himself is the author of the inscription – and sometimes also about its material context and location. Apart from framing an inscription by providing it with an additional narrative, letters also compete with inscriptions by adopting some of their key functions such as commemorating, representing, envisioning and commenting.

Attila SIMON (ELTE Budapest): ‘Framing Reading, Reading Framing: The Rhetoric of Mediality in the Writing Tablet Scene in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* 856–890’

In one of the climaxes of Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, Theseus curses his son and asks Poseidon for death upon him (887–90). Theseus’ demand and curse are based on the false conviction that Hippolytus had raped his stepmother, the king’s wife, Phaedra. Phaedra’s letter to Theseus, in which she makes the accusation against Hippolytus, plays a decisive role in this false judgment. Theseus’ condemnation and curse are preceded by his recognition of the letter as a material object and of his reading of its words (856–86). The fatal and wrongful judgment is not based solely on the information carried by the letter. Of at least equal importance is the medial framing, which not only conveys the content of the information, but also authenticates it for Theseus. This paper examines two such medial frames. The first is the description of the writing tablet as a carrier of the letter inscribed on it. This description presents the letter bound to Phaedra’s hand as an object (together with the corpse itself) which authenticates the information contained in the letter, and thus attributes an active and authorizing force to certain parts of the wax tablet. The other medial frame portrays or rather – as in the case of the tablet – carries the reading of the letter itself and the account of what has been read. This is about a kind of rhetoric of sound and voice: about the rich sonic imagery that Theseus himself describes and voices in the ‘speech’ of the letter at the very moment of vocal transmission. This voice, with its hallucinatory effect, also contributes to the (self-)misleading of the emitter of the voice. This paper seeks to show that this medial framing of dramatic utterances becomes the central organizing force of the scene’s meaning.

Péter SOMFAI (ELTE Budapest): ‘Framing a Fragment of Accius’ *Medea sive Argonautae* in Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum* 2.89’

My presentation focuses on the way the fragment of Accius’ *Medea sive Argonautae* interacts with the Ciceronian text in which it is embedded. In Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*, the argument of the Stoic Balbus uses the Accian passage – which is also full of cosmic repercussions – to set a shepherd’s gradual comprehension of the Argo as a model for the way a Stoic philosopher should grasp the divine agency in the creation of the world. However, it is due to the Ciceronian frame that the modern reader is able to recognise that the phenomenon described by Accius is a ship, and what is more, not only a ship in general but the most famous ship of the Graeco-Roman literary tradition. In this context, the Argo is presented as a boundary-crossing construct in many respects, just as paratexts or textual frames. My presentation is going to investigate various forms of boundary-crossing in this Ciceronian passage where the ‘distant view’ of the Accian shepherd is a model of the ‘distant view’ of the philosopher.

Michael SQUIRE (King’s College London): ‘*Picto limite dicta notans*: Framing Poetry and Picture in Optatian’

This paper explores the work of framing devices across ancient visual and literary media. It does so through a particular poetic-pictorial case study: the works of Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius (‘Optatian’), penned during the reign of Constantine in the second and

third decades of the fourth century AD. Optatian's graphic creations – composed at once as metrical poetic texts and ornate visual apparitions on the page – were not long ago dismissed as 'hare-brained frivolities in verse'. More recently, and over the last decade in particular, they have been championed as decidedly innovative creations, bound up with the particular cultural parameters of the early fourth century. But Optatian's *carmina*, I suggest, also offer a rich case study for understanding how the cultural work of frames transcends the disciplinary boundaries of classical archaeology and philology. Not only do Optatian's picture-poems probe the boundaries between reading and viewing – that is, the relationship between readable texts and viewable artefacts – they also explore how the frames of images at once coalesce and collide with those of poems, and vice versa. The paper demonstrates the point by examining some of Optatian's so-called *carmina cancellata* ('gridded songs'). Here, I argue, material apparitions within the letter-grid in turn frame additional poems and paratextual/paravisual commentaries: while embedded within the lettered fabric of a poem, these graphic forms also reshape responses to the work as a whole, interrogating the boundaries between its inside and outside – that is, the very margins of parergonality.

Ábel TAMÁS (ELTE Budapest): 'Acrostics and Telestichs as Textual Frames in Latin Literature'

In a sense, the most obvious frames of Latin poetic texts are acrostics and telestichs endowing the horizontal texts with vertical messages inscribed onto the margins. Acrostics and telestichs are located in a liminal zone: while belonging to the poetic texts decorated by them, they also operate, at a different level, as separate entities. My paper will present both well-known and newly discovered acrostics and telestichs that can be understood as textual frames being inside and outside of the poem at the same time. Vergil's 'gamma-like' acrostic spelling ALMA – which uses alternating lines at *Aen.* 1.1–7 –, for example, will be interpreted as a variant of *arma*, the epic's first word: this acrostic, alluding to Lucretius' poem, might endow the beginning of Vergil's epic with an alternative, 'vertical' dimension which is dominated by *Philia* implied by *alma Venus* in contrast to the 'horizontal' dimension that seems to be ruled by *Neikos* suggested by *arma*. The alternative dimension implied by the vertical reading simultaneously belongs and does not belong to the text of the poem concerned, and this holds true for my further examples as well, including Lucretius' textual *intermundia* and Lucan's telestichal intertextuality. Along these examples, I would like to outline a theory of acrostics and telestichs as textual frames in Latin Literature that is based on the wish of the poets to extend the limits of textuality.