From Haimorrhoousa to Veronica? The Weaving Imagery in the *Homeric Centos*

Anna Lefteratou

Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα γυνή,
τὴν σὴν αἰσθομένη θεότητα, μυροφόρου ἀναλαβοῦσα τάξιν,
ὀδυρομένη μύρα σοι, πρὸ τοῦ ἐνταφιασμοῦ κομίζει.
Οἴμοι! λέγουσα, ὅτι νύξ μοι, ὑπάρχει, οἶστρος ἀκολασίας,
ζοφώδης τε καὶ ἀσέληνος, ἔρως τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

O Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins perceived Thy divine nature, taking upon herself the duty of a myrrh-bearer, weeping, brings you myrrh before your burial, saying: "Woe is me! For with me is darkness, the sting of licentiousness, murky and moonless the lust of sin."
Cassiane, *Hymn*, 9th cent.[1]

In the sixth book of the *Iliad,* Hector famously tells Andromache she should stop worrying about the outcome of the war and mind her female business, "her distaff and her loom, and order her handmaids" (490–493). The obedient Andromache goes to her chambers where she weaves a beautiful purple double cloak for Hector and orders her handmaids to prepare a hot bath for him. But her work is interrupted by the cries of the onlookers on the walls of the city who witness Hector's death at the hands of Achilles. Andromache arrives on the wall only to see Hector's corpse being dragged behind Achilles' chariot. Her cloak will become a shroud for her dead beloved and the hot bath turns into ritual cleansing at the end of the poem.[2] As early as Homer, women, mortal and god-

[1] W. Christ and M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminorum Christianorum* (Leipzig 1871) 104.

[2] Hom. *Il.* 2.440–444. M. C. Pantelia, "Spinning and Weaving: Ideas of Domestic Order in Homer," *AJP* 114 (1993) 493–501, at 497, observes that

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desses, weave, non-stop, not only clothes but also tales; and together with the fabric they braid the flesh, entangling thus human reproduction with textile production.[3] It is therefore not surprising that the Woman with the Issue of Blood, the Haimorrhoousa, in the *Homeric Centos* (*HC*) is also depicted as someone skilled at the loom. That said, in *Recentio* I of the *HC*, and only in this one, the Haimorrhoousa is explicitly presented as weaving a purple cloth with lines borrowed verbatim from the famous Andromache episode. In the shorter versions this detail does not appear, although the woman's skill in weaving is praised. Despite this typical characterization of an epic female figure, the poem's insistence on the weaving metaphors in this episode may well sound conspicuous. Given the later medieval

the cloth Andromache weaves and Hector's shroud are both purple. See also N. Yamagata, "Clothing and Identity in Homer: The Case of Penelope's Web," *Mnemosyne* 58 (2005) 539–546, esp. 543.

[3] C. Segal, "Andromache's *Anagnorisis*: Formulaic Artistry in *Il.* 22.437–476," *HSCP* 75 (1971) 33–57, and J. Grethlein, "The Poetics of the Bath in the *Iliad*," *HSCP* 103 (2007) 25–49, on the episode and its dramatic irony; on women, esp. Penelope and weaving/narrating, see I. Papadopoulou-Belmehdi, *Le chant de Pénélope: Poétique du tissage féminin dans l'Odyssée* (Paris 1994); M. A. Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1991); B. Clayton, *A Penelopean Poetics: Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 2004). For the body as embroidery in classical literature see J. Scheid and J. Svenbro (eds.), *The Craft of Zeus: Myths of Weaving and Fabric* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1996). The monumental work on the beginnings of weaving in antiquity is E. J. W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles: The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages* (Princeton 1991). For the theme of weaving having a first place among female epic poets see J. M. Downes, *The Female Homer. An Exploration of Women's Epic Poetry* (Newark 2010); K. S. Kruger, *Weaving the Word: The Metaphorics of Weaving and Female Textual Production* (London 2001); A. Bergren, *Weaving Truth: Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2008); H. Harich-Schwarzbauer (ed.), *Weben und Gewebe in der Antike* (Oxford 2015). For the reception of the cento of another poetess in terms of the weaving metaphor see S. Schottenius-Cullhed, *Proba the Prophet* (Leiden 2016), esp. 100–102, 108, on Proba's reception in the Renaissance as the product of the opposition of needle and pen, and "Reading Textual Patchwork," in *Weben und Gewebe* 234–244.

associations of the Haimorrhoousa with Veronica and her cloth, can *I HC* represent an early stage in the development of the legend? And, if this is so, what would be the role in it of the traditional epic spinning metaphors?

In what follows, I first examine one of the early associations of the Haimorrhoousa of the Gospels with the epic theme of weaving. I discuss briefly the transformation of the Haimorrhoousa's legend into that of Veronica and then I concentrate on the passage from the Gospels which is the main source of *I HC*. Secondly I discuss the relevant episode in *I HC* and the weaving metaphors that abound in the passage. My reading follows closely the poetic text as it unfolds and reveals its complex intertextual debt to both epic and Christian sources as well as their late antique interpretation. This paper aims to show how the *Homeric Centos* may help us understand the early stage of the merging of Greek myths and Christian legends and how the particular tale about the Haimorrhoousa and her loom may encourage discussion of gendered poetics in late antiquity and support the attribution of *I HC* to a woman. If I am correct, this poetess could not have been other than Eudocia, a philosopher's daughter who became the wife of Theodosius II, and probably the redactor of the first edition of the *HC*, the longest one.[4]

[4] Together with some MSS. of various versions of the *HC*, an epigram attributed to a female author is transmitted, and it is attributed to Eudocia Athenaïs: R. Schembra, *Homerocentones* (Turnhout 2007) cxxxiii–cxlii. The various collections of centos are alternatively attributed to: Patricius, a contemporary of Eudocia of whom we know nothing besides an epigram with his name that seems to be slightly earlier than the *HC*, see A.-L. Rey, *Centons homériques* (Paris 1998) 39–40; Eudocia Athenaïs, Rey 41–56; a philosopher Optimus, mentioned in some MSS. but otherwise unknown, Rey 56; and a certain Cosmas of Jerusalem, a contemporary of John Damascene in the 8th century, Rey 58–59. Yet, as Schembra argues (cxliii), only Patricius and Eudocia are transmitted as authors and inventors of the centos. For Eudocia and the authorship of the centos see also A.-L. Rey, "Homerocentra et littérature apocryphe chrétienne: quels rapports?" *Apocrypha* 7 (1996) 123–134; R. Schembra, *La prima redazione dei centoni omerici* (Alessandria 2006)

The Haimorrhoousa legend and its visual imprint

One of the most popular medieval Christian legends tells how Veronica, the pious woman who was identified with the Woman with the Haimorrhage of the Gospels,[5] came to hold the Mandylion, the veil with the face of Jesus: on the way to Calvary, the now healed Haimorrhoousa wiped away Jesus' sweat with her cloth, resulting in Jesus' image being imprinted onto it. This image was of particular importance in that it was *acheiropoieton*,[6] not created by human hands (*non manufactum*), and thus received special veneration. This precious relic, the *vera icon*, the true image of the Lord, eventually became one of the 'Holy Faces' in circulation during medieval times, in both East and West. Yet Veronica's legend is not the only aetiology of the 'Sudarium' or 'Sindone' or 'Mandylion' but one of the competing narratives that emerged in late antiquity and were revisited throughout the Middle Ages. For the time frame that concerns us here, mid 4th to mid 5th centuries,[7] the most popular legend in the East was that of King Abgar, whom Jesus healed from a distance by sending him an oral response and/or a letter and/or a portrait. This is the so-called 'Image of Edessa' that was taken to Constantinople in 944 and then, after the Crusades, to the West, where its popularity increased together with, and eventually was obscured by, the Veronica

cxxxiii–cxlii. For the centos in the context of late antique poetry see G. Agosti, "Greek Poetry in Late Antique Alexandria: Between Culture and Religion," in L. A. Guichard and J. G. Alonso (eds.), *The Alexandrian Tradition* (Bern 2014) 287–312.

[5] Mt 9:20–22, Mk 5:25–34, Lk 8:43–48.

[6] The word first appears in Mk 14:58: "I will destroy this temple, constructed by humans, and within three days I will build another, one not made by humans (ἀχειροποίητον)."

[7] E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *DOP* 8 (1954) 83–150, at 94, argues that it is "possible that the turn of the fourth century also witnessed symptoms and expressions of a belief in magic powers." For the fourth century see also P. Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *EHR* 88 (1973) 1–34.

legend.[8] The iconogenetic potential of this tale that grows from word into image is manifest: the oral reply of Jesus was eventually turned into a written letter, then transformed into a painting by human hands, and eventually into the *acheiropoieton mandylion,* an image of the unfathomed.[9]

However, there is an earlier tradition that links a woman, the Haimorrhoousa of the Gospels, with an image of Jesus, albeit not on a cloth but with a statue complex, and which is also reported by Eusebius:[10]

> τὴν γὰρ αἱμορροοῦσαν ἐκ Πανεάδος ἔλεγον ὁρμᾶσθαι, τόν τε οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως δείκνυσθαι, καὶ τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος εἰς αὐτὴν εὐεργεσίας θαυμαστὰ τρόπαια παραμένειν. ἑστάναι γὰρ ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ λίθου πρὸς μὲν ταῖς πύλαις τοῦ αὐτῆς οἴκου γυναικὸς ἐκτύπωμα χάλκεον, ἐπὶ γόνυ κεκλιμένον, καὶ τεταμέναις ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσθεν ταῖς χερσίν, ἱκετευούσῃ ἐοικός· τούτου

[8] For the term see E. Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face: The Haemorrhoisa Motif* (Leuven 2015) 246–248. The Edessa tale appears as early as the early fourth century: Eus. *HE* 1.13.1–20. However, Egeria in the fourth century does not mention the image although she records the legend of Addai. The first mention of the Image (not an *acheiropoieton* but a painting) appears in an early fifth century text called *Doctrina Addai* written in Syriac and translated into many languages, for which see A. Desreumaux, in F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain (eds.), *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens* I (Paris 1997) 1480. The *acheiropoieton mandylion* appears in Evagrius Schol. (d. ca. 600) *HE* 4.27. The sources of the story can be found in E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legenden* (Leipzig 1899) 200–213; see M. Guscin, *The Image of Edessa* (Leiden 2009) 141–144, for the first mention of King Abgar; for the *Nachleben* of the legend see Av. Cameron, "The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983) 80–94.

[9] For the term 'iconogenetic' as "the moment of an image's creation, of its emanation from matter or its awakening," see Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face* 246–248. Sidgwick further associates the iconogenetic nature of the Haimorrhoousa image with the fantasy of touch and of incarnation, namely the touch that brings salvation.

[10] *In Luc.*, *PG* 24.541 (cf. *HE* 7.18.2). A discussion of the woman's faith is also in Eus. *Dem.Ev.* 3.4.23. Eusebius *PG* 24.541D and Asterius of Amaseia (d. ca. 425) *Hom.Jair.* (p.79 Datema) say that the statue was destroyed by Maximinus whereas Philostorgius says Julian (*HE* 7.3, *PG* 65.540B). Joh. Mal. *Chron*. 10.12 also mentions the statue.

> δὲ ἀντικρὺ ἄλλο τῆς αὐτῆς ὕλης ἀνδρὸς ὄρθιον σχῆμα, διπλοΐδα κοσμίως περιβεβλημένον, καὶ τὴν χεῖρα τῇ γυναικὶ προτεῖνον· οὗ παρὰ τοῖς ποσὶν ἐπὶ τῇ στήλῃ ξένον τι βοτάνης εἶδος φυέν, ὃ, μέχρι τοῦ κρασπέδου τῆς τοῦ χαλκοῦ διπλοΐδος ἀνιόν, ἀλεξιφάρμακόν τι παντοίων νοσημάτων τυγχάνει.
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> They were saying that the woman with the issue of blood originated from Paneas, and that it is possible to show her house in the city, and that there still remains evidence of the Saviour's kindness to her. For (they say) there is a bronze relief that stands on a high stone next to the doors of the house that represents a woman, on bent knee and her hands stretched before her, like a suppliant. And opposite this one there is another in the same material, a standing figure of a man, clothed decently with a double-folded cloak, and stretching his hand towards the woman. Next to his feet on the relief grows a strange kind of herb, which climbs up to the edge of the hem of the bronze double-folded cloak, a panacea that happens to be a remedy every sort of illness.

Eusebius says that the Haimorrhoousa originated from Paneas (Caesarea Philippi) and that after being healed she ordered this complex bronze image to be placed in front of her house. The description is important in that it mirrors precisely the visual representations of the Haimorrhoousa that we find in the catacombs and throughout late antiquity on sarcophagi and, later, on fertility amulets.[11] This evidence shows that the tale of the

[11] For the visual representations see von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder* 200–213; B. Baert, "Who touched my clothes?: The Healing of the Woman with the Haimorrhage in Early Medieval Visual Culture," *Antwerp Royal Museum Annual* (2009) 1–50; and Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face.* Nonetheless, in some cases the bleeding woman and Martha or Mary crouching at Jesus' feet (Jn 11:32) are conflated, e.g. A. M. Ernst, *Martha from the Margins: The Authority of Martha in Early Christian Tradition* (Leiden 2009) 59–61; but Ernst does not mention the Paneas complex that would have been important for the visualization of the scene. The Haimorrhoousa has also been identified with Martha, Lazarus' sister, as in Ambrose *PL* 17.698, *dum largum sanguinis fluxum siccat in Martha*; and other women, see L. Kusters, "Who is she? On the Identity of the Haemorrhaging Woman and her Wirkungsgeschichte," *Antwerp Royal Museum Annual* (2009) 99–133.

miraculous healing had an iconogenetic potential similar to that of the Abgar legend: just as Abgar believed from a distance, the woman in the Gospels believes without even presenting herself formally to Jesus;[12] and just as Abgar's beliefs were concretised in the visual form of an oral response/letter/painting, the silent belief of the woman took the form of a metal relief that blurs the realms of art and reality.[13] In Eusebius' text emphasis is given to Jesus' double cloak which he wears solemnly, διπλοΐδα κοσμίως περιβεβλημένος, the cloth, precisely, that transmits the healing. Furthermore, the strange plant that grows near the hem also becomes part of the image and mirrors the 'original' position of the woman in the legend as it too touches Jesus' sculpted hem. Moreover, because it becomes a panacea it also partakes of the real world by mediating between scripture, image, cloth, and healing-miracle. Thus as early as Eusebius the cloth and its artistic representation were endowed with a particular visual and miraculous power both as tales and as representations.

The earliest association of the Haimorrhoousa with a matron called Berenice is found in Macarius Magnes' *Apocriticus* (ca. 400?), according to whom the woman dedicated a sculpture in memory of being healed, although the story this time is situated in Edessa and not Paneas.[14] Another association of the Hai-

[12] Cf. Mk 5:34, "Daughter, your faith has made you well"; and the exegesis in John Chrys. *In Matt.*, *PG* 58.507, "for never before had they been coming in this manner, pulling him (Jesus) into their houses, and seeking the touch of his hand, and his oral commandments (προστάγματα διὰ ῥημάτων) … but the Haimorrhoousa taught everybody true philosophy."

[13] Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face* 255: "iconogenetically speaking, the stone or the rock as the archetypical medium of an image paradigm … was eventually supplanted by the cloth or textile that mediates the *vera icon.* It is not clear whether the plant was depicted on the sculpture or grew on the ground. The issue would have been a sensitive one as the whole complex was meant to oppose similar classical images.

[14] *Apocriticus* 1.6 (ed. U. Volp): "then Berenice, the matron of a famous city and an honored ruler of the great city of Edessa, was cleansed of the streams of impure blood and healed quickly of an awful woe … (Jesus made

morrhoousa with Berenice appears in the apocryphal *Acta Pilati* A, which circulated widely from the fourth century on[15] and whose influence is important elsewhere in *I HC*.[16] This time the woman comes to testify that Jesus' was her healer indeed, without any mention of the image.[17] None of these Berenices are depicted as possessing a veil or a cloth with the *vera icon*, and we have only mentions of statues, dedicated by the matron in Paneas or by the one in Edessa.[18] In fact, we need to wait seven centuries or so before a clear mention of the Veronica legend appears.[19] Had Eudocia (d. 460), or another author of the first

a miracle) that is up to now praised in song in Mesopotamia, rather throughout the whole world, this great cure; and the woman died after having sculpted the story piously in bronze (τὴν ἱστορίαν σεμνῶς ἀποχαλκεύσασα), as if the deed happened just now, not long ago."

[15] *Acta Pilati*, Greek A, 7.1 (239 Tischendorf): "And a woman called Berenice crying out from a distance said, 'I had an issue of blood and I touched the hem of his garment, and the issue of blood, which had lasted twelve years, ceased' " (transl. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford 1993]).

[16] For the *Homeric Centos* and Berenice's role in apocryphal literature, especially the *Acta Pilati* A, see Schembra, *La prima redazione* 543–549, 560–566, and K. O. Sandnes, *The Gospel according to Homer and Virgil: Cento and Canon* (Leiden 2011) 217–220. Cf. B. P. Sowers, "Thecla Desexualised: The St. Justina Legend and the Reception of the Christian Apocrypha in Late Antiquity," in L. M. McDonald and J. H. Charlesworth (eds.), *"Non-canonical" Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (London 2012) 222–238, for the reception of apocryphal literature in Eudocia's paraphrase of *Mart. Cyprian.*

[17] See also Baert, *Antwerp Royal Museum Annual* (2009) 39: "the plant keeps alive the earlier event in the inert matter of the bronze and transfers its remedial qualities to the statue."

[18] A marginal mention of Berenice, among the women who visit Jesus' tomb, is found in the 5th-century Coptic *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew* 8, but we do not know whether it was translated into Greek: J.-D. Kaestli, in *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens* 302.

[19] It is not until the 13th century that the Mandylion of Edessa found its way to the West in the guise of Veronica's cloth: supposedly after the sack of Constantinople in 1204 the Mandylion was transported either to Rome or to Paris, giving rise to many more *veronicas.* See G. Wolf, "From Mandylion

half of the fifth century, any of these elements of the legend at hand, this might have been the tale of the miraculous statue, and maybe an early identification of the Haimorrhoisa with a matron named Berenice. But most importantly, an early fifth century poet would have had at hand the canonical version of the miracle as it is narrated in the Gospels and its late antique exegesis, to which we now turn.

The Haimorrhoousa in the Gospels

As opposed to the complex medieval legend, the Synoptic Gospels describe the scene with fewer dramatic details. A woman who suffered from uncontrolled bleeding approached Jesus, touched the hem of his cloak, and was healed. In the longer Markan account (5:25–34):

> καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα, ἀκούσασα περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὄπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ· ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἅψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι. καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔγνω τῷ σώματι ὅτι ἴαται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος. καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ἔλεγεν· τίς μου ἥψατο τῶν ἱματίων; καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· βλέπεις τὸν ὄχλον συνθλίβοντά σε, καὶ λέγεις· τίς μου ἥψατο; καὶ περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο ποιήσασαν. ἡ δὲ γυνὴ φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα ὃ γέγονεν αὐτῇ, ἦλθεν καὶ προσέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην, καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιὴς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου.
>
> Now there was a woman who had been suffering from chronic bleeding for twelve years. Although she had endured a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all of her money, she had not been helped at all, but rather grew worse.

to Veronica," in H. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Bologna 1998) 153–179, and Guscin, *The Image of Edessa* 200.

> Since she had heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his robe, because she had been saying, "If I can just touch his robe, I will get well." Her bleeding stopped at once, and she felt in her body that she was healed from her illness. Immediately Jesus became aware that power had gone out of him. So he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples asked him, "You see the crowd jostling you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he kept looking around to see the woman who had done this. So the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came forward fearfully, fell down trembling in front of him, and told him the whole truth. He told her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed from your illness." (Internat. Standard transl.)

Mark is important for the *HC* since this version illustrates best the emotions of the participants and the social milieu in which the miracle takes place.[20] The story is told with slight variations in the other Gospels, yet all the Synoptics associate this tale with that of the resurrection of Jaïrus' daughter, who in Lk 8:42 happens to be twelve years of age. The link between the two cures is observed as early as Origen (d. 254) and the later commentators on Luke, who focus on the allegorical potential of the passage: the daughter of the High Priest and the polluted woman illustrate the pollution of the Jewish beliefs before Jesus' arrival.[21] Kuryluk shows that the two episodes are

[20] In Mk 5:25–34 374 words, Lk 8:43–48 280 words, Mt 9:20–22 138 words. According V. K. Robbins, "The Woman who Touhed Jesus' Garment: Socio-rhetorical Analysis of the Synoptic Accounts," *NTS* 33 (1987) 502–515, Mark, supposedly source of the Synoptics, emphasizes emotions and actions as the woman moves from the world of physicians to Jesus; Luke by contrast focuses on the public nature of the healing and her declaration of faith; while Matthew emphasizes her inner reasoning.

[21] Orig. *In Luc.* fr.125 Rauer: "but she was gushing forth blood endlessly and suffered from the 'blood-red sin'" (the passage is repeated in Cyr. Alex. *Comm. in Luc.*, *PG* 72.637). This echoes Is 1:18, "If your sins are as scarlet (ἁμαρτίαι ὑμῶν ὡς φοινικοῦν), as snow they shall be white." On the illness of the woman as φοινικὴν ἁμαρτίαν cf. Greg. Naz. *Or.* 40.33, *PG* 36.405B, "you were gushing forth the blood-red sin (τὴν φοινικὴν ἁμαρτίαν)."

closely related through the theme of menstruation, thought to be polluting.[22] The woman with the issue of blood was suffering from excessive menorrhagia and this was why she was afraid to touch Jesus, since she knew herself to be unclean. Kuryluk interprets Jesus' encounter with the Haimorrhoousa and Jaïrus' daughter as erotic fantasies developed around the motif of touch between a woman and a man: the mature menstruating woman, hidden in the crowd, who secretly absorbs Jesus' healing power, or the young girl whom he touches after coming into her chambers.[23] For Didymus Caecus the erotic aspect of this touch would also be marked. He links carnal desire, which he describes as γυναικὸς ἅπτεσθαι, with the purifying touch of the Haimorrhoousa, who is described as running to Jesus because of desire (πόθῳ), yet her touching is virtuous (θίγειν καλῶς).[24]

[22] For an elaborate anthropological study see now Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face*, esp. part I, where the Haimorrhooussa stands for the procreative blood, whereas Jesus for the sacrificial blood, both leading to creation, rebirth, and salvation. The kernel of this fantasy, she argues, is the petrification of the flowing blood into an image. She also associates motifs of fluctuation, such as strigilate patterns on sarcophagi, partaking of the same visual theme, the flow becoming stone.

[23] E. Kuryluk, *Veronica and her Cloth: History, Symbolism and Structure of a True Image* (Cambridge 1991). Female physiology is further explained in the late antique commentator Didymus Caecus (d. 398), who writes that the hemorrhage of the woman prevented her from having children, *Comm. in Zacch.* 1.251: "the woman, bleeding for twelve whole years, was healed (ἔξω γέγονεν) of the stream of the unclean blood, because of which she was unable to conceive (δι' ἣν ἐκωλύετο τίκτειν), by touching Jesus' hem."

[24] *Comm. in Zacch.* 1.148–149: "Touch has the sense of culpable handling in 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman' (γυναικὸς ἅπτεσθαι), suggesting a shameful and lustful approach. Proper handling (θίγειν καλῶς) is made clear by this word, making contact by touch, as in the remark by Jesus, 'Someone has touched me' when the woman with the flow of blood in her desire to be healed touched by grasping the hem of Jesus' garment" (transl. R. C. Hill, *Didymus the Blind. Commentary on Zecharia* [Washington 2006]). The distinction between haptic touch (ἁφὴ αἰσθητή) and spiritual touch (θεία ἁφή) is already found in Orig. *Dial.Heracl.* 19.

The erotic atmosphere between Jesus and the Haimorrhoousa and her later assimilation to Berenice and then to Veronica and her Mandylion are part of the same centuries-old weaving fantasy. In producing the cloth the Haimorrhoousa undertakes a similar, albeit not identical, task to that of the Virgin. The Haimorrhoousa too creates a fabric, a textile, and an *acheiropoieton*, just as Mary produces Jesus after weaving God into human flesh in her womb. Mary was associated with weaving as early as the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, dated to the second century. In it Mary was selected to weave the curtains of the temple, and her lot was the purple and the scarlet: purple for Jesus as the Son of God (King) and scarlet for him as the crucified Son of Man.[25] This pregnant clothing metaphor is excellently discussed in Constas' analysis of the weaving metaphors in Proclus of Constantinople (d. 446), the patriarch in Eudocia's time:[26]

> In this image, the Virgin's womb (γαστήρ) is depicted as a "workshop" (ἐργαστήριον) containing the "awesome loom of the divine economy" on which the flesh of God is woven together providing the bodiless divinity with form and texture.

There were many biblical images and passages that link cloth and body and that would support Constas' view.[27] All these garments that covered the flesh became eventually a metonymy for the incarnation of the divine flesh.[28] There was, therefore, a

[25] *Protev.Jac.* 1.10–11. In *C.Cels.* 1.28 Origen refutes the charges against Mary, that she was Joseph's wife and was earning a living by spinning and was an adulterer. See M. B. Cunningham, "The Use of the *Protevangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God," in L. Brubaker and M. B. Cunningham (eds.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium* (Surrey 2011) 163–178, at 165.

[26] N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 2003) 317, on *ergasterion* in Procl. *Hom.* 1.1.

[27] E.g. the garments of skin in Genesis 3:22 that Adam and Eve use to cover their naked bodies; the purple/scarlet robe of mockery Mk 15:17, Mt 27:29, Jn 19:2; the seamless (ἄρραφος) tunic of Jesus in Jn 19:23–24 for which the soldiers cast lots.

[28] To these add the Syriac tradition that was rich in clothing metaphors

fecund tradition throughout Christianity that associated women, (re-)production, and the web.[29] If Mary gave birth to the real Son of God, the other woman, Haimorrhoousa-Veronica, created the one and only truthful immaculate image of the Lord, the *vera icon*.[30] The very tale of the Haimorrhoussa then was one with iconogenic potential to be materialised in a work of art representing cloth and miraculous image. But we need not wait until the Crusades in order to see the Haimorrhoousa sitting and weaving at her loom.

Eudocia's weaving matron

The centos are poems stitched together from lines of other poems, here Homeric, both Iliadic and Odyssean. Thus their very compositional technique implies an overarching weaving metaphor.[31] Cento poetry presents a particular interpretative

from Ephraim onwards: cf. S. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Hampshire 1992) 11, "the entire Salvation can be expressed in terms of cloth imagery." On Mary and the Byzantine tradition of her spinning/weaving see also N. Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos and the Loom fo the Flesh," *JECS* 3 (1995) 169–194, and H. Maguire, "Body, Clothing, Metaphor: The Virgin in Early Byzantine Art," in *The Cult of the Mother of God* 319–352.

[29] Cloth as a metonymy for body is a universal phenomenon, see e.g. J. Hoskins, "Why do women sing the blues? Indigo Dyeing, Cloth Production, and Gender Symbolism in Kodi," in A. B. Weiner and J. Schneider (eds.), *Cloth and Human Experience* (New York 1989) 141–173, on Indonesisn weaving and dyeing practices as mirroring pregnancy and childbearing.

[30] See Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face* 250–255, on the fantasy of the flowing (female) blood becoming petrified through (male) touch and transformed into an image.

[31] Latin *cento* means "patchwork quilt," and it is used metaphorically in the 2nd cent. B.C. by Plautus, *centones sarcire* (make up stories), *Epid.* 455; Greek κέντρων means also a "piece of patchwork, rag" (LSJ s.v. II). On the development of the patchwork imagery see M. Usher, *Homeric Stitchings: The Homeric Centos of the Empress Eudocia* (Lanham 1998); Schottenius-Cullhed, *Proba the Prophet*; M. Bažil, "Elementorum varius textus: atomistisches und anagrammatisches in Optatians Textbegriff," in M. Squire and J. Wienand (eds.), *Morphogrammata: The Lettered Art of Optatian* (Paderborn 2017) 341–348.

challenge: not only do centos allude to a variety of texts, classical as well as Christian, canonical and exegetical, but also their meaning is challenged, endorsed, or subverted, by the actual verse and its original Homeric context.[32] The centos do not use new verses to engage with other texts but lines that belonged to other poems and that already had a heavy interpretative past.[33] They were therefore addressed to an audience of literati and performed in small circles of connoisseurs who knew their Bible and their Homer equally.[34] Cento poetry blos-

[32] The two principal ways of using the classical material are *Usurpation* (silent adaptation in the new Christian context) and *Kontrastimitation* (opposition between the original meaning and the new adapted Christian context). For these terms see G. Agosti, "Usurper, imiter, communiquer: le dialogue interculturel in la poésie grecque chrétienne de l'Antiquité tardive," in N. Belayche and J.-D. Dubois (eds.), *L'oiseau et le poisson. Cohabitations religieuses dans les mondes grec et romain* (Paris 2011) 275–299, for Greek, and K. Pollmann, "Tradition and Innovation," in *The Baptized Muse: Early Christian Poetry as Cultural Authority* (Oxford 2017) 19–36, for Latin poetry.

[33] For intertextuality and cento poetics see M. Bažil, *Centones christiani: métamorphoses d'une forme intertextuelle dans la poésie latine chrétienne de l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 2009) 49–74, and S. Hinds, "The Self-conscious Cento," in M. Formisano and T. Fuhrer (eds.), *Décadence. "Decline and Fall" or "Other Antiquity"?* (Heidelberg 2014) 171–198.

[34] There is no doubt that the archaizing Christian poetry of late antiquity was intended for the elite, Christian primarily and secondarily classical, see G. Agosti, "La voce dei libri: dimensione performative dell'epica greca tardoantica," in E. Amato (ed.), *Approches de la Troisième Sophistique* (Brussels 2006) 35–42; "Cristianizzazione della poesia greca e dialogo interculturale," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 31 (2009) 311–335; and "Greek Poetry," in S. F. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2012) 361–404. Some of these poets read not only the Gospels but also relevant exegetical texts. We know for example that Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* depends heavily on the *Commentary* of Cyril of Alexandria, see G. Agosti, *Nonno di Panopoli: Parafrasi del Vangelo di S. Giovanni* (Florence 2003) 54–57; A. Faulkner, "Faith and Fidelity in Biblical Epic," in K. Spanoudakis (ed.), *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context* (Berlin 2014) 198–210. For the debt of Christian poetry to exegesis and for poetry as biblical exegesis, at least in Latin, see the contributions in W. Otten and K. Pollmann (eds.), *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity* (Leiden 2007.

somed from late antiquity until the Renaissance and was an interesting result of the interaction of classical culture with Christianity.[35] The story of the Haimorrhooussa in the *I HC* is woven as follows (1000–1052):[36]

ἔσκε δὲ πατρὸς ἑοῖο γυνὴ φοίνισσ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ,	*Od.* 15.417-418	Eumaeus' Phoenician nurse
καλή τε μεγάλη τε καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' εἰδυῖα		
κέρδεά θ', οἷ' οὔ πώ τιν' ἀκούομεν οὐδὲ παλαιῶν,	*Od.* 2.118	Penelope's skill
λίην γὰρ πινυτή τε καὶ εὖ φρεσὶ μήδεα οἶδεν.	*Od.* 11.445	Penelope's wit
ἤτις τοιˌ ινύκτας τε καὶ ἤματα συνεχὲς αἰεὶ	*Od.* 8.581+9.74	storm
θυμὸν ἀποπνείουσ' ὥς τε σκώληξ ἐπὶ γαίῃ	*Il.* 13.654-655	death
κεῖτο ταθεῖσ'· ἐκ δ' αἷμα μέλαν ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαῖαν.		of Harpalion
ἠρώτα δὴ ἔπειτα τίς εἴη καὶ πόθεν ἔλθοι,	*Od.* 15.423	Eumaeus' nurse
⌜ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ⌝ γίνωσκε θεοῦ γόνονˌ ιέγγυς ⌜ἐόντα⌝,	*Il.* 6.191+*Od.* 9.181	Bellerophon
καρπαλίμως δ' ἔπειτα μετ' ἴχνια βαῖνε θεοῖο,	*Od.* 2.406	Telemachus follows Athena
δάκρυα δ' ἔκβαλε θερμά, ἔπος δ' ὀλοφυδνὸν ἔειπε· *[1010]*	*Od.* 19.362	Euryclea to Odysseus
"⌜κέκλυ⌝θι ⌜νῦν καὶ ἐμεῖο⌝,ˌ μάλιστα γὰρ ἄλγος ἱκάνει·	*Il.* 10.284+3.97	Menelaus' speech
οὐ γάρ πω μύσαν ὄσσε ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν,	*Il.* 24.637, 639	Priam to Achilles
ἀλλ' αἰεὶ στενάχω τε καὶ κήδεα μυρία πέσσω.		
κρῆνον νῦν καὶ ἐμοὶ δειλῇ ἔπος, ὅττι κεν εἴπω·	*Od.* 20.115	A maid
ἔλκος μὲν γὰρ ἔχω τόδε καρτερόν,ˌ ιοὐδέ μοι αἷμα	*Il.* 16.517+518	Glaucus prays to Apollo
τέρσεται,ˌ ιἀλλὰ μάλ'ˌ ιῶκα κατειβόμενον κελαρύζει.	*Od.* 7.124 (+*Il.* 3.214+21.261)	
πολλοῖσιν δ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ δὴ ὀδυσσαμένη τόδ' ἱκάνω	*Od.* 19.407-408	etymology of Odysseus' name
ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξὶν ἀνὰ χθόνα βωτιάνειραν.		
ὥς μ' ὄφελ' ἤματι τῷ ὅτε με πρῶτον τέκε μήτηρ	*Il.* 6.345-346	Helen's speech
οἴχεσθαι προφέρουσα κακὴ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα *[1020]*		
εἰς ὄρος ἢ εἰς κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,	347	to
ἔνθα με κῦμ' ἀπόερσε πάρος τάδε ἔργα γενέσθαι.	348	Hector
ἔλκος δ' ἰητὴρ ἐπιμάσσεται ἠδ' ἐπιθήσει	*Il.* 4.190-191	Talthybius heals Menelaus
φάρμαχ', ἅ κεν παύσῃσι μελαινάων ὀδυνάων.		

[35] C. Hoch, *Apollo Centonarius. Studien und Texten zur Centodichtung der italienischen Renaissance* (Tübingen 1997), and Bažil, *Centones christiani* 201ff.

[36] Text as in Schembra, *Homerocentones* 68–71. M. D. Usher, *Homerocentones Eudociae Augustae* (Leipzig 1999), is slightly different; e.g. Schembra 1000 = Usher 1993, and the centos in Schembra 1019–1021 are in different order than in Usher 1013–1014. For a critique of Schembra's edition and methods see Schembra cx–cxxix.

πολλάκις ἐν μεγάροισι καθημένη ἡμετέροισιν ἄλλοτε μέν τε γόῳ φρένα τέρπομαι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε παύομαι· αἰψηρὸς δὲ κόρος κρυεροῖο γόοιο.	*Od.*4.101-103	Menelaus lamenting
ἀλλὰ σύ πέρ μοι, ἄναξ, τόδε καρτερὸν ἔλκος ἄκεσσαι, ἔρξον ὅπερ ἐθέλεις· ἱκέτης δέ τοι ⌜εὔχ⌝ομαι ⌜εἶναι⌝.	*Il.* 16.523 *Od.* 16.67+*Il.* 6.211	Glaucus prays to Apollo Glaucus meets Diomedes
ὡς σέ, ἄναξ, ἄγαμαί τε τέθηπά τε δείδιά τ' αἰνῶς γούνων ἅψασθαι· χαλεπὸν δέ με πένθος ἱκάνει».	*[1030]* *Od.* 6.168-169	Odysseus to Nausicaa
αὐτῷ δ' οὔ πω φαίνετ' ἐναντίη, αἴδετο γάρ ῥα,	*Od.* 6.329	Odysseus prays to Athena
χειρὶ δὲ νεκταρέου ἑανοῦ ἐτίναξε λαβοῦσα.	*Il.* 3.385	Aphrodite and Helen
αὐτίκα παῦσ' ὀδύνας, ἀπὸ δ' ἕλκεος ἀργαλέοιο αἷμα μέλαν τέρσηνε, μένος δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε θυμῷ.	*Il.* 16.528-529	Glaucus' wound
αὐτὰρ ὁ ἔγνω ᾗσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ φώνησέν τε· "ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει, γύναι· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς	*Il.* 1.333 *Il.* 6.441	Achilles greets the embassy Hector to Andromache
θάρσει, μηδέ τί τοι θάνατος καταθύμιος ἔστω.	*Il.* 10.383	Odysseus captures Dolon
οὕτω νῦν καὶ ἐγὼ νοέω, γύναι, ὡς σὺ ἐΐσκεις.	*Od.* 4.148	Menelaus to Helen
ἐν θυμῷ, γρηῦ, χαῖρε καὶ ἴσχεο μηδ' ὀλόλυζε,	*[1040]* *Od.* 22.411	Odysseus to Euryclea
ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε, ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε ὡς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἅλις ἔστω."	*Il.* 6.490-491 *Od.* 24.486	Hector sends Andromache home Zeus to Athena about Odysseus
ἡ δ' ἄρα ⌞ἔγνω ᾗσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ γήθησέν τε, ὅττι οἱ ὧκ' ἤκουσε μέγας θεὸς εὐξαμένῃ κεν.	*Il.* 6.302+16.530 *Il.* 16.531	Theano's veil + Glaucus Glaucus
ἡ δ' ὅτε δὴ οὗ πατρὸς ἀγακλυτὰ δώματ' ἵκανε, κέκλετό γ' ἀμφιπόλοισιν ἐϋπλοκάμοις κατὰ δῶμα,	*Od.* 7.3 *Il.* 22.442	Nausicaa returns to the palace Andromache calls her maids
ἡ δ' εἰς ὑψόροφον θάλαμον κίε δῖα γυναικῶν καὶ δή ⌞ ⌞γ' ἱστὸν ὕφαινε μυχῷ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο	*Il.* 3.423 *Il.* 1.161+22.440	Helen welcoming Paris Andromache weaving
δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσεν. ἡ δ' αὖτις δμῳῇσιν ἐϋπλοκάμοισι μετηύδα· "δεῦτε, δύω μοι ἔπεσθον, ἵδωμ' ὅτιν' ἔργα τέτυκται"	*Il.* 22.441, *[1051]* 449-450	Andromache calls her maids

There lived in her paternal house a woman with an issue of blood / tall and beautiful (was she) and skilled in handicrafts too / and knowledgeable, such as none among those of past tales / for she was wise and her thoughts were of wisdom only. / This woman yet, continuously, day in and day out, / was breathing her last, crawling on the earth like a worm / she lay flat. For blood ran down from her and soaked the ground. / Often she asked who he was and where he came from; / but when she felt that the Son of God was now coming closer / she ran as quickly as she could behind the divine footsteps / and shedding burning tears, she said the following tale of woe: / "Hear me now you too, for I am in tremendous pain / I cannot

close my eyes beneath my eyelids / I am always lamenting and languishing under countless torments. / Now fulfil for pitiful me the words which I say to you. / I have this invincible disease, for my blood flow will not staunch / but non-stop pours and gushes forth quickly like a stream. / I have come here hated by many / by men and by women alike who dwell on this life-giving land. / The first day my mother brought me forth, I should better have died / vanished in the whirl of a hurricane, swept away to the mountaintop or in the seas, deep into the roaring waves / that I be drowned long ago before this woes happened. / The doctor will knead the wound indeed, he will put on it poultice / as medicine, in hope to end those awful pains (of mine). / Yet often when I am sitting in my halls / I attempt sometimes to soothe my soul with moans / and other times I take a break; for grief is satisfied soon through ice-cold tears. / But for my sake, now you Lord, heal this dreadful sickness, / I make myself your suppliant, and you do as it pleases you, / for I worship, I adore you, o Lord, and I am truly frightened / to touch your knees, overwhelmed as I am by this dreadful woe." / She did not come into his sight, for she was truly embarrassed / but only touched and lightly held his divine fine gown. / Indeed he stopped her pains and her bad wound / staunched from the black-blood flow, her heart rejoiced all the more. /And so spoke He who knew well in his mind: / "Indeed, I know everything, woman, now take courage! / Do not let death be at all in your mind. / Now I consent too, woman, whatever your wish is. / With joy fill now your heart, old woman, stop and do not wail, / Go back to your house and take care of your own chores / your loom, your spindle, your handmaids, just as in past days. / I wish that wealth and peace may always be with you." / And she felt him deep in her heart and directly rejoiced. / For great God at once heard her praying. / Then to her father's famous halls she retuned / and into her chambers called for her fair-haired maids / and she herself entered her high-roofed bedroom / and in the inner cubicle of the house she wove her web / purple, double-folded, and stitched with fine complex needlepoint. / And again her fair-haired maids she called forth / "You two, come follow me, to see the miraculous embroidery."

The story *I HC* tells us about the Haimorrhoousa is and is not different from that of the Gospel. The main difference is that all the cento editions give the miracle a special position after the healing of the demoniac, as in the Synoptic Gospels, but separate from the healing of Jaïrus' daughter. Thus the woman comes under a spotlight; and in *I HC* she is placed between the healing of the demoniac (931–999) and Jesus' encounter with yet another woman, the Samaritan at the Well (1053–1160). Moreover it is positioned, more or less, in the middle of *I HC* and occupies some 50 lines of the 2354-line total. There are also some similarities, especially to the Markan account: in Mk 5:25–26 the woman allegedly spends all her

fortune seeking a cure, which suggests that she had money to do so.[37] *I HC* 1025 (ἐν μεγάροισι), 1043 (πλοῦτος), 1048 (ὑψόροφον θάλαμον) also presents the woman as wealthy, dwelling in a high-roofed palace. Moreover the image of the woman making inquiries (1007) is thought to rework the woman's experience with physicians in the Gospel. In the Gospel she comes to Jesus hidden in the crowd and touches the edge of his cloth. The image is reinforced in *I HC* 1005 with the woman as a worm crawling on the ground (ὥς τε σκώληξ ἐπὶ γαίῃ). However, unlike the Gospel where she first touches and then has an exchange with Jesus, in *I HC* she first asks Jesus to heal her, in what seems to be an internal monologue or a prayer since line 1032 (οὔ πω φαίνετ' ἐναντίη) makes clear that she did not appear in front of him—a line borrowed from Odysseus' encounter with Athena.[38] As in the Gospel the woman touches the edge of his garment without getting permission to do so (1033, a line borrowed from yet another famous encounter between a woman and a goddess, Helen and Aphrodite, disguised as an old nurse). Moreover the cento depicts Jesus as omniscient (1036): although he feels that the cure was produced without his permission, he does not ask the famous "who touched my clothes" (Mk 5:30).

These poetic touches are important for the translation of the biblical account into hexameters, as the woman's monologue is a wonderful case of *amplificatio*: the twenty lines in which she gives her own version of her sufferings are a nice case of *ethopoeia* and allow for a focalization of her woe through her own eyes.[39] Jesus' insight is also important: by avoiding the question

[37] Robbins, *NTS* 33 (1987) 510, argues that this detail illustrates the interest of the narrator in the social realities.

[38] Schembra, *La prima redazione* 312–313, notes the close connection between *I HC* 1007 and Mt 9:21, ἔλεγεν γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῇ, but also the dependence otherwise on Mk 5:28.

[39] The rhetorical methods of translating biblical narratives into poetry and the late antique aesthetics are discussed thoroughly in M. J. Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool 1985) 148–

τίς μου ἥψατο the narrative focuses on the personal exchange between the two and not on the staging of the miracle, thus ignoring the crowd.[40] Finally, the *Usurpatio* of Glaucus' prayer to Apollo to heal his wound—which Apollo does—and its transfer to the woman is not surprising, in that throughout late antiquity Jesus and Apollo were closely related as healers *par excellence*.[41] Broadly speaking, therefore, the cento is textured with lines belonging to various encounters of mortals with immortals in the context of epic epiphany, and focuses on the exchange of the faithful woman with Jesus set apart from the crowd.

What is most striking about the passage, however, is the clothing and weaving metaphor which permeates it and which opens and closes the episode as if in ring-composition. Weaving and female voice are closely entangled. Throughout the centuries Greek and Jewish women weave and the place of the woman is at home with the loom.[42] Because of the domestica-

218, and *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca 1989). See also L. Miguélez Cavero, *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200–600 AD* (Berlin/New York 2008) 311–314.

[40] This confirms again the findings of Robbins, *NTS* 33 (1987) 502–515, in her comparative analysis of the miracle in the Synoptic Gospels. Exegetes of this passage offered different interpretations of the question; e.g. John Chrys. *In Matt.*, *PG* 57.371, "Why then did Christ (ask the question)? He did not let her remain unobserved but brought her into the spotlight and made her visible (εἰς μέσον ἄγει καὶ δήλην) for the sake of many. Yet some of the mindless say that he did the asking out of love of glory—for why did he not let her remain unnoticed? What are you saying, o foul and most foul (ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ παμμίαρε, Ar. *Pax* 173)? … First (by doing so) he dissolves the woman's fear … secondly she is set right, because she thought she passed unnoticed. Thirdly she shows to everyone her faith."

[41] M. Wallraff, *Christus verus Sol: Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike* (Münster 2001) 31–37; F. Graf, *Apollo* (London 2009) 119.

[42] E.g. in Hes. *Theog.* 63–64 Pandora is trained by Athena in weaving. For Greek women see Pantelia, *AJP* 114 (1993) 493–501, and Scheid and Svenbro, *The Craft of Zeus*; for Jewish women see M. B. Peskowitz, *Spinning Fantasies: Rabbis, Gender, and History* (Berkeley 1997). On cento female poetics and weaving see Schottenius-Cullhed, *Proba the Prophet*; on weaving and late

tion of women and weaving—and singing at the loom—women's voices became intrinsically related to weaving. It comes therefore as no surprise that the introductory lines of the passage tell us that the woman was very good at handicrafts (1003 ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' εἰδυῖα κέρδεά θ').

This characterization is maintained in almost all the versions of the *HC*, but in our passage they occupy the larger part of the first section, lines 1000–1007. Still, compared with the other compilations, *I HC* pays particular attention to the woman's craftsmanship and *sophrosyne*, filling four lines as opposed to the two found in the other editions.[43] Of these four, the first two are taken from the description of Eumaeus' wet nurse, who kidnapped him, resulting in his becoming Laertes' slave. Schembra's point in discussing these lines, and especially adopting the lowercase φ for the Haimorrhoousa instead of uppercase Φ, the ethnic, is right:[44] the φοίνισσα here is meant precisely, as illustrating her illness, the red blood of her hemorrhage. Besides, the Christian commentators often describe the woman's hemorrhage as the φοινικὴ ἁμαρτία, the "phoenician/purple/blood-red sin."[45] That said, the erotic undertones of *Od.* 15.417 would not have gone unnoticed: for example, the scholia on the passage remind the reader that "even if woman is skillful and virtuous, she is (easily) corrupted through flirtation and sexual promises."[46] Yet the following lines in the cento, from *Odyssey* 8.168 and 11.445, are clear allusions to Penelope's chastity that go together with her excellent weaving

antique poetics see now Bažil, in *Morphogrammata* 341–348

[43] The lines ἔσκε δὲ πατρὸς ἑοῖο γυνὴ φοίνισσ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ, / καλή τε μεγάλη τε καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' εἰδυῖα appear in *HC* A 373–374, *HC* B 418–419, and *HC* C 432–433; but not in *II HC* 941 where she is introduced as yet another lamenting woman.

[44] R. Schembra, *La prima redazione* 311, does not believe that the tale here is conflated with the healing of the woman from Canaan, Mk 7:24, which is the case in the *Parisinus* version in Rey, *Centons homériques* 308–309.

[45] Cf. Orig. *In Luc.* fr.125.

[46] Schol. *Od.* 15.422.

skills which she used in order to preserve it. Thus, whereas the wanton Phoenician nurse is a negative foil, the comparison of the Haimorrhoousa to Penelope is used as *Kontrastimitation* that opposes her otherwise chastity to her current state of impurity. The end of the first passage, the description of the woman and her disease, returns to the foil of the Phoenician nurse (1007, ἠρώτα δὴ ἔπειτα τίς εἴη καὶ πόθεν ἔλθοι, *Od.* 15.423). The question in Homer opens the plan for the woman's escape with her lover and subverts once more the expectations of the audience regarding the positive Penelopean characterization of the Haimorrhoousa. Consequently, the double association, with Penelope and with the wanton Phoenician woman, relates menorrhagia to a sin of the sexual sort, while arguing for the woman's inner purity.

This initial eroticised description of the woman is revised in the following verses that show her on the way to salvation, for which the Odyssean imagery of quest is used. Line 1017 (πολλοῖσιν δ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ δὴ ὀδυσσαμένη τόδ' ἱκάνω, *Od.* 19.407), that the woman who was hated by many has come to Jesus' feet in supplication, marks the turning point in the story. These famous words are pronounced in the *Odyssey* by Autolycus and are the very etymology of Odysseus' name. Scholars have investigated whether the etymology of ὀδυσσάμενος is rather passive (the one who is hated) or active (the one who brings trouble) or both.[47] To the scholiasts, ὀδυσσάμενος was rather "the hated," or "the one provoking the (divine) wrath," or "the one who chases hatred."[48] In this sense Clay is closer to the original meaning when she translates it as "cursed." In a similar sense the Haimorrhoousa is not only hated but also cursed, and hated by everybody precisely because of her sin/curse.

[47] J. Strauss Clay, *The Wrath of Athena* (Princeton 1983) 60–65, with an elaborate discussion of prior scholarship; L. E. Doherty, *Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 2009) 92–93.

[48] Schol. *Od.* 19.407, ὀδυσσάμενος, μισηθείς· ἢ ὀργὴν ἀγαγών· ἢ βλάψας. On the etymological interpretation of Homer see R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian* (Berkeley 1986) 38–39.

The association with Odysseus and his travels as an allegorical travel from ignorance to faith was a well-known metaphor in late antiquity[49] that would have prompted the audience to interpret these lines as a foreshadowing of the woman's salvation. But before reaching safe haven the woman needs to be portrayed as a lost soul and her chastity needs to be again underminded.

The next cluster (1019–1022) alludes to the epic theme of weaving, derived this time from Helen's monologue in *Iliad* 6. Although there is no mention of weaving here, the introductory source lines *Iliad* 6.323–324 depict Helen sitting at her loom together with Paris, surrounded by her handmaids and weaving divine handicraft.[50] Hector comes from the battlefield, witnesses this idyllic family scene, and rebukes his brother. It is in this context that Helen laments her fate and tells her brother-in-law that she wishes she were dead instead of being the cause of so much bloodshed. These are precisely the lines that Eudocia puts in the mouth of the Haimorrhoousa in her internal prayer, showing a particular feeling for the voice of the female character that becomes confessional: by taking up the Helen foil the woman reveals the sexual nature of her curse but also her own regrets.[51] If the erotic allusions related to Eumaeus' Phoenician nurse did not hit home, the allusion to Helen, found only in *I HC*, would hardly have escaped notice.

[49] H. Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (New York 1963) 86. For other Odyssean characters and their *nostoi* in the *HC* see A. Lefteratou, "Late Antique Epiphanies: The Man Born Blind in Eudocia's *Centos* and Nonnus' *Paraphrase*," in J. Clauss et al. (eds.), *The Gods in Greek Hexameter Poetry and Beyond* (Leipzig 2017) 274–293, at 278.

[50] See B. Graziosi and J. Haubold, *Iliad Book 6* (Cambridge 2010) 169, on the metaliterary importance of the περικλυτὰ ἔργα. The lines were part of Helen's ancient characterization (e.g. Porph. *Quaest.Hom.Il.* 3.236) which assembled various lines in which Helen presents herself negatively.

[51] Cf. a similar female voice in the much later hymn by Cassiane: ἁμαρτιῶν μου τὰ πλήθη καὶ κριμάτων σου ἀβύσσους τίς ἐξιχνιάσει, ψυχοσῶστα Σωτήρ μου; ("the multitude of my sins and the abyss of thy judgements, who could discern, you Saviour of my soul?").

This time it is not just any woman but the most controversial woman in Greek epic and the embodiment of desire and licentiousness. Yet, like Helen, the woman here repents of her previous conduct. The theme of the Woman who Sinned is common in the New Testament, and the Magdalene is of course the chief example. That said, this is also a typical female theme that will become representative for a later Christian poetess as well.[52] Still, while the Helen foil intensifies Eudocia's sensual interpretation of the miracle, the Christian bard finds a way to exculpate the Beauty.

For a Christian audience the mention of water and drowning has a different, salvific connotation, in contrast to an audience of the *Iliad*. We know for example that a Christian beauty, Thecla, famously attempts suicide *cum* baptism by diving into a pond with carnivorous seals.[53] Besides, according to Tertullian, those baptized leave behind the present world, their sins, and the devil drowned in the water.[54] The image of drowning and emerging from the water appears also in Athanasius' discussion of the Haimorrhoousa: Jesus, he claims, saved the woman as if from a shipwreck, and his discussion of the metaphorical κλύδων bears a similarity to the imagery of the storm at sea in Eudocia's poem.[55] As a result, it is the sinful Helen-like foil to

[52] See also the adulterous woman in Mk 14:3–9, Lk 7:36–50, Mt 16:6–13 that inspired the *Hymn* of Cassiane that prefaces this essay.

[53] *Acta Pauli et Theclae* 34: "in the name of Jesus Christ I am baptized on my last day"; but the seals did not eat her and instead floated up dead. The legend of Thecla was particularly popular in late antiquity, see e.g. S. F. Johnson, "Late Antique Narrative Fiction: Apocryphal Acta and the Greek Novel in the Late Fifth-Century *Life and Miracles of Thecla*," in *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity* (London/New York 2006) 189–208. On the image of being covered by water cf. *I HC* 452, κρύπτων ἐν δίνῃσι βαθείῃσιν μεγάλῃσιν (= *Il.* 21.239) describing Jesus' descent into the river Jordan. See Agosti, *Nonno di Panopoli* 59–65, on water and baptismal imagery.

[54] Tert. *De bapt.* 9.1: "the nations are set free from the world by means of water, and the devil, their old tyrant, they leave quite behind, overwhelmed in the water (*diabolum … in aqua oppressum derelinquunt*)."

[55] Athan. *PG* 28.1012: "How did (Jesus) save the woman with the issue of

the Haimorrhoousa that will almost drown in the water, before the cleansed woman emerges after reaching Jesus, the safe haven.[56] To some extent, the Haimorrhoousa becomes a wandering figure, both Odysseus- and Helen-like,[57] justifying her association with Odysseus' curse, ὀδυσσαμένη (1017).[58]

Upon the woman's purification, the Helen foil gives way to that of Andromache, who also, unwillingly, will have to travel after the fall of Troy, widowed and childless, to weave for a Greek mistress (*Il.* 6.456). Jesus' response (1037–1042) is dominated by the figure of Andromache, a character befitting the new status of the healed/cleansed woman as a chaste wife. The first line is from Hector's famous answer to Andromache's plea to stay away from the battlefield (ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει, *Il.* 6.441) while the following lines are part of his exhortation to his wife to mind her female business and leave war to men

blood from the bloodstreams (ἐκ τῆς τῶν αἱμάτων φορᾶς) and save her from the wave (τοῦ κλύδωνος)?" The Christian interpretation of Odyssean storms and their allegorical meaning was a popular theme, see Rahner, *Greek Myths* 350–353.

[56] For a similar reading of Euripides' *Helen* and on the purifying role of the sea see C. Segal, "The Two Worlds of Euripides' *Helen*," *TAPA* 102 (1971) 553–614, esp. 598–599.

[57] Helen's wanderings and Odysseus' were related to each other throughout the Second Sophistic, the embarkation of Helen becoming one of the most popular scenes of the Helen tale: A. Lefteratou, *Mythological Fictions: The Bold and Faithful Heroines of the Greek Novel* (Berlin/New York 2017). For Iphigenia and Helen as quest heroines see E. Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris* (Oxford 2013) 115.

[58] It may also not be coincidental that the Haimorrhoousa miracle is followed in *I HC* by the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman at the Well, yet another passage full of baptismal types. See M. Caprara, *Nonno di Panopoli: Parafrasi del Vangelo di S. Giovanni. Canto IV* (Pisa 2005) 10–15. While this is not the place to elaborate on the pericope of the Samaritan Woman, it should be mentioned that the placing of both episodes with female characters in the middle of the cento is important for its interpretation. By linking the Haimorrhoousa, a character of the Synoptic tradition, with the Samaritan Woman at the Well, the narrative not only emphasizes female focalization but also links John with the Synoptic Gospels.

(1041–1042, ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα … ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, *Il.* 6.490–491). The domestic crafts are precisely spinning and weaving,[59] and these lines enjoyed a gnomic character throughout antiquity that would make them well known and good material for cento composition.[60] It is therefore not surprising that all the versions of the *HC*, both the longer and the shorter, include this typical epic female characterization, but it should also be noted that only *I HC* elaborates on this theme while the others give only the first line and end the story with the woman returning home amazed at the miracle.[61] Instead, *I HC* at 1046–1052 not only reuses more lines from Hector's exhortation but also further develops the theme of Andromache's weaving, thus linking tightly the two Andromache episodes from *Iliad* 6 and 22:

1046 ~ *Od.* 7.3 / 1047 ~ *Il.* 22.442 / 1048 ~ *Il.* 3.423 / 1049 ~ *Il.* 1.161 + 22.440 / 1050 ~ *Il.* 22.441 / 1051 ~ *Il.* 22.449 / 1052 ~ *Il.* 22.450

Although lines 1046 and 1048 recall *en passant* Nausicaa and

[59] The lines are repeated in the *Odyssey* in Telemachus' address to Penelope (1.356–357 and 21.350–351), judged spurious in antiquity (cf. Aristonicus *De sign. Od.* on 1.356). Byzantine readers, however, did not have much of a problem with the repetition of these lines since they fit the aesthetic of the cento, which was familiar to them. Eustathius cites many parallels to Hector's exhortation and also the Odyssean ones. In his view, Homer imitates Homer: Eust. *Il.* 2.372, "in many places he imitates himself (ἑαυτὸν ὁ ποιητὴς παρῳδεῖ)." Elsewhere, when lines are repeated verbatim, Eustathius takes them to be a 'Homeric' cento, created by Homer himself: e.g. *Od.* 4.325, "see how he stitched the lines of this passage (*Od.* 3.96–101 and 4.326–331) in a cento-like manner (κέντρωνος τρόπου)." See further O. Prieto Domínguez, *De alieno nostrum: el centón profano en el mundo griego* (Salamanca 2010) 22–30.

[60] E.g. Plut. *Brut.* 23.6: Brutus cites these lines to contrast his farewell to Porcia.

[61] The female spinner appears in all except *II HC*: in A *HC* 385, B *HC* 431, C *HC* 444. The other editions (*II HC* 960, A *HC* 386, B *HC* 432, C *HC* 446) end the miracle with the line "she was amazed at the miracle and returned home again."

Helen respectively, the weight of the passage lies on *Iliad* 22. This cluster of lines shows the woman not only returning home but actually following Jesus' advice, just as Andromache does in *Iliad* 22. This sequence shows that the intertextual affinities with the Andromache episode are not a by-product of the cento technique, stitching, but important for the interpretation as well, as they form a ring composition that confirms the introduction of the passage with its depiction of the woman as skilled in art.

In Homer, the good wife Andromache follows Hector's exhortation and returns to her chambers. She is not on the walls of the city when Hector fights his final battle with Achilles, and she is the last to realize he is dead. This is the famous scene that Eudocia alludes to at 1047–1052, with some interpolations. The foil Hector-Andromache, therefore, intensifies the erotic connotations by representing the woman as a good wife, especially after being healed, who is waiting for her husband at home. Like Andromache, the Haimorrhoousa weaves a double-folded cloak with floral motifs. The Homeric background gives an extra erotic twist to the story in order to develop the tale in more sensual terms. Furthermore the weaving/procreation metaphor and the Hector-Andromache pair intensifies the portrayal of Jesus as the eschatological bridegroom. Thus Jesus is depicted as the symbolic bridegroom for the now healed woman-bride.[62]

That said, the foil Hector-Andromache has negative associations as well. While Eudocia relates closely the passage of *Iliad*

[62] The most famous is the parable of "The ten Bridesmaids" in Mt 25:1–12, and Paul's mention of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, e.g. 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 5:24–32. See M. Tait, *Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom in Mark 2:18–22* (Rome 2010), esp. 266–267, for Jesus' ambiguous relationship to the Woman at the Well. For Nonnus' use of the same theme for the Cana Wedding see E. Livrea, *Nonno di Panopoli: Parafrasi del Vangelo di San Giovanni. Canto II* (Bologna 2000), e.g. 89 on Jesus as bridegroom and Mary/Church as bride, and 161–162; for the erotic connotations in the passage on the Samaritan Woman see Caprara, *Nonno di Panopoli* 45–50, who also relates the passage to the one in *I HC*.

6 to that of *Iliad* 22, the closing lines, 1051–1052, might seem more difficult to interpret. In Homer these are precisely the lines that heighten the dramatic irony and Andromache's suffering. She calls on her handmaids to go and see "what has happened" (1052, ἴδωμ' ὅτιν' ἔργα τέτυκται, *Il.* 22.450), whereas the reader knows that Hector is already dead. Ancient readers seem to have been puzzled by the fact that the woman was sitting at her loom, while the battle was fiercer than ever, but this was explained because of her previous encounter with Hector. Eudocia, by placing the two episodes one next to the other not only provides a sensitive female reading of the sequel but also appears to be supportive of a Unitarian reading by suggesting that Andromache has retired because she followed Hector's words. Furthermore, there is little doubt that the interpretative load of these lines would have encouraged comparison between Jesus and the Trojan hero found elsewhere in her poem. For example, ancient readers observed the authorial intrusion νηπίη as a marker of the dramatic irony of the passage.[63] In the Christian translation, then, Jesus could be implicitly compared to Hector, whose death is also certain and approaching.[64] Moreover, just as the cloth that Andromache weaves will never be used to dress Hector alive but probably will be a shroud, the reader may get some hint of what kind of cloth the woman is weaving for Jesus. However, unlike in Homer, Jesus does not die in the passage immediately follow-

[63] *Il.* 22.445–446, "innocent, she didn't yet know that far from the baths grey-eyed Athena had beat him down at the hands of Achilles." Cf. schol. 22.440a: Andromache during such uproar stays at home without fear and unaware of the situation, although she is not ignorant of Achilles' attack; it seems, Aristarchus argues, that the poet, having previously employed the Andromache character in the dialogue with Hector (6.396–502), "now casts off the character." Schol. 22.442–5: "the *pathos* is heightened. Andromache is so far from understanding any of what has happened that she is even preparing a bath for her husband, having in mind Hector alone. This is why the poet exclaims with sympathy 'poor silly one, she did not understand', as pitying her ignorance."

[64] For other passages see Sandnes, *The Gospel* 12–15, 193, 201.

ing, which would impede any interpretation of these lines as the Haimorrhoousa telling her maids to go and see "what has happened." If then the Haimorrhoousa and her maids do not go out to see Jesus' corpse, as it is too early in the plot of the Christian poem, what are they invited to see?

These lines are important for the passage as they focalize the tale of the woman's salvation through her own eyes and those of her handmaids, something unparalleled in the Gospel narrative and in the other versions that do not offer her point of view. While the allusion to the death of the Son of Man implied in the parallel between Jesus and Hector should not be downplayed, there is, I believe, a better reading of these lines. It may be safer to understand ἔργα τέτυκται as a metaliterary signpost in the broader context of the weaving metaphor elaborated throughout this passage.[65] The divine woman, δῖα γυναικῶν, we learn has isolated herself in her private chambers and weaves the wonderful double-folded cloak. The Haimorrhoousa is described as δῖα, an epithet that is mainly ascribed to Helen or Penelope[66] and that stresses in the Christian poem the impact of the divine healing on her. From such a woman, therefore, only exceptional handicrafts ought to be expected. Moreover, the passive τέτυκται is used elsewhere in *I HC* to introduce vivid *ekphraseis*, such as the Creation, and thus encourages connecting the depicted with the language depicting it.[67] The text thus arouses the reader's desire to see at a meta-

[65] Cf. *Od.* 7.234–235, ἔγνω γὰρ φᾶρός τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματ' ἰδοῦσα / καλά, τά ῥ' αὐτὴ τεῦξε σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισι γυναιξί.

[66] Helen in *Il.* 3.171, 3.228, 3.423, 4.305, *Od.* 15.106, etc. Penelope in *Od.* 16.414, 18.302, 20.60, etc.

[67] Cf. *I HC* 8, ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', alluding to the ekphrastic description of Achilles' Shield in *Il.* 18.483, on which see P. Hardie, "*Imago mundi*: Cosmological and Ideological Aspects of the Shield of Achilles," *JHS* 105 (1985) 11–31. For Homer see e.g. M. Squire, "Ekphrasis at the Forge and the Forging of Ekphrasis: The 'Shield of Achilles' in Graeco-Roman Word and Image," *Word* & *Image* 29 2 (2013) 157–191, and M. Squire and J. Elsner, "Homer and the Ekphrasists: Text and Picture in the Elder Philostratus' 'Scamander' (*Imagines* I.1)," in J. Bintliff and N. K. Rutter (eds.),

literary level by having the internal audience, the handmaids, witness their mistress' wonderful handicraft. In this sense the ἔργα is meant as the embroidery, the actual cloth. If this is the case then the Haimorrhoousa of *I HC* is the earliest one to be associated with weaving and with a cloth, long before the Veronica legend.

Ultimately, the ekphrastic language of the passage needs to be examined alongside actual works of art. We mentioned above the iconogenetic power of miracles such as Abgar's and later Veronica's, where word, a letter, becomes image, the Holy Face. This early version of the Haimorrhoousa, I believe, illustrates one of the in-between stages of this transformation. On the one hand the lack of a clear mention of the crowds fits some visual representations of the miracle: in the visual arts, especially wall paintings and mosaics, as in the cento, the encounter takes place as a tête-à-tête;[68] it also matches Eusebius' description of the relief, mentioning only two figures, the woman and Jesus. The comparison of the woman to a crawling worm is not in the Gospel, but this too might be inspired by the visual representations of the Haimorrhoousa that depict her crouching to the ground in order to touch Jesus' cloth, as early as Eusebius. Moreover these depictions tend to illustrate the woman not just kneeling but prostrate on the ground and wrapped with thick dark-coloured (grey, brown) clothing—occasionally also her hands are covered.[69] This shrouded image

The Archaeology of Greece and Rome (Edinburgh 2016) 57–99.

[68] E.g. the catacombs of SS Peter and Marcellina in Rome, or the Haimorrhoousa in a detail of the Lipsanotheca of Brescia, an ivory relief of ca. 360–370: see Baert, *Antwerp Royal Museum Annual* (2009) 4 (fig. 1) and 6 (fig. 4) respectively. On sarcophagi the woman tends to be depicted among the crowd.

[69] Baert, *Antwerp Royal Museum Annual* (2009) 35, discussing a Ravenna mosaic of the 6th century (fig. 18): "her covered hands are a reference to the prevailing purity laws. Relics, for example, could only be touched with a piece of cloth. At a visual level, text and gesture are connected with the convention of *proskynesis* before the Holiest."

fits well with the poem's simile of the woman as a worm, an image evocative of Platonizing and Christian resurrection.[70]

In addition to these visual features that are shared between the early representations of the miracle and Eusebius, I wish to emphasize some further similarities especially in what concerns a probable influence of Eusebius' text: the narrative, instead of the Gospel's κράσπεδον or ἱμάτια[71] which could have been translated into Homeric language as φᾶρος or χιτών, as elsewhere in *I HC* (453, 2043, 2231), says that the woman weaves a δίπλαξ (1050), which is a *hapax* in *I HC*. This detail seems reminiscent of Eusebius' description of the bronze figure of Jesus in which he wore a διπλοΐς. Further, the floral motifs woven into the cloak, θρόνα ποικίλ' (1050), may allude to the strange plant, βοτάνη, that according Eusebius was depicted at the figure's feet. This association is stronger if we recall the double meaning of θρόνα, LSJ "embroidered floral motifs" (*Il.* 22.441, a *hapax*) and "herbs used as drugs and charms," which would apply to Eusebius' ἀλεξιφάρμακον.[72] These allusions suggest that *I HC* may have taken into consideration not only the thematic of the visual representations but also Eusebius' account. We might speculate whether Eudocia replaced the

[70] For the tripartite life-cycle from moth to chrysalis to butterfly see Arist. *HA* 551a13, Plin. *HN* 11.112. These cycles were interpreted allegorically; e.g. in Pl. *Phdr.* 248C the psyche sheds her wings when filled with evil; 249A the psyche recovers her wings; 246D, the psyche ascends to the heavens, cf. Apul. *Met.* 6.23. Schembra, *La prima redazione* 312, suggests here an allusion to Ps 21:3–7 (ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰμὶ σκώληξ), a passage evoked for Jesus' resurrection e.g. in Asterius of Antioch *Comm.Psal.* 14.8. For the afterlife of the Platonic insect allegory see R. B. Egan, "Eros, Eloquence and Entomo-psychology in Plato's *Phaedrus*," in R. B. Egan and M. A. Joyal (eds.), *Daimonopylai. Essays in Classics and the Classical Tradition presented to E. G. Perry* (Winnipeg 2004) 65–87.

[71] Mt 9:20: ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου.

[72] Cf. F. Overduin, *Nicander of Colophon's Theriaca* (Leiden 2015) 370, who notes that the medical use of the word appears only in Nicander and Aglaïas, e.g. *Ther.* 493: τῶν μὲν ἐγὼ θρόνα πάντα καὶ ἀλθεστήρια νούσων, φύλλα τε ῥιζοτόμον.

bronze frieze with another offering, the very cloth that the Haimorrhoousa shows to her maids and which too, like the panacea plant portrayed next to the figure, blurs the border between art, ekphrastic representation, and miracle/reality. In this endeavour the epic theme of weaving would make the leap from statue to cloth easier, transforming the bronze frieze of Eusebius' narrative into a cloth and into the first narrative that relates the Haimorrhoousa to a cloth.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the version of the healing of the Haimorrhoousa in Eudocia's *I HC*. Because of the nature of cento poetics I have attempted to read the passage as it unfolds and not by thematic units. Here, however, I will address the evidence thematically. Unlike the Gospel account, the Haimorrhooussa episode of *I HC* is focalized through the female character who delivers a lengthy monologue and whose actions (the weaving scene) close the passage. Focalization thus emphasizes the woman's role in the narrative. The analysis showed the debt of *I HC* to the visual representations of late antiquity but mainly the debt to weaving imagery of the Homeric epics that is also prominent in fifth-century Christian imagery.

I have argued that the visual metaphor does not restrict itself to the visual models but is based on an overarching weaving metaphor that is typical in late antique poetics and cento poetics in particular. The episode is unique in the transmission of the legend of the Haimorrhoousa in presenting the woman sitting at her loom and weaving a cloth for Jesus, using Andromache and other epic female characters as a foil. Weaving a cloth and weaving the incarnated God into human flesh were interchangeable metonymies. To be sure, Christian weaving imagery would have been as important as the cento's epic models, for Mary is also depicted as weaving Jesus into human flesh. The erotic connotations of the foils of the Phoenician nurse, of Helen, and especially of Hector-Andromache intensify the nuptial imagery dominating the relationship of Jesus-Bridegroom/Haimorrhoousa. The erotic aspect is not openly examined in discussions of the Haimorrhoousa by the Church

Fathers; this is a revision by the author, as is the carefuly constructed weaving theme—not just as a one-off quotation as in the other versions but as an elaborate ring-composition, from ἀγλαὰ ἔργα in 1001 to a work of art ἔργα τέτυκται in 1052, with an ekphrastic and presumably miraculous potential. This emphatic use of the weaving theme points us to those studies that show how weaving becomes a metaphor for female song in particular. The weaving metaphor, together with the prominence of the woman in this passage, may be yet one more argument for female authorship of *I HC.* It is extremely telling, in my view, that the passage about the purple cloak appears only in this *Recentio Prima* of the *HC*, the one reputedly composed by a poetess, Eudocia.

The analysis of the individual lines has shown that the centos were addressed to an elite audience that was equally familiar with the Gospels and Homer. The interpretation of the passage displays traces of Christian exegesis, especially the erotic connotations of the encounter between Jesus and the woman, and the woman as a model of silent faith. The poem, by omitting for example the question "who touched my clothes," shows an interest in smoothing out that otherwise debated passage. On the other hand, as to Homeric interpretation, the Homeric verses chosen, far from arbitrary, were well known and had a loaded scholiastic history: thus the lines that belong to the Phoenician nurse, Helen, and Andromache's handiworks describe the woman in an erotic light, especially given the nature of her illness but also as the obedient wife of Jesus-Hector-divine Bridegroom, supporting thus the biblical exegesis. It is because of the audience's acquaintance with the dramatic irony dominating the Andromache scene that the poetess juxtaposes *Iliad* 6 and its sequel, Book 22, highlighting thus the hints of Jesus' coming death. The sequel-like stitching of the two passages, moreover, together with the Helen-like extended monologue of the woman that is not found in the Gospel, may also be read as a sensitive female approach to the Homeric text: namely, as a study on the character of Andromache but also on the character of the sinful woman embodied by Helen, who like Odysseus is on her way to salvation.

The pronounced role, therefore, of the poetess and of her implied alter ego, the woman weaving a cloth and the woman weaving the poem, may also be examined in the light of gender narratological approaches which associate weaving with female voice, singing, handicraft, and narrative. The very nature of cento poetics relies precisely on the stitching capacities of the poet(ess), namely the semantic swapping of the needle used for a textile with the pen used for a text. The proliferating Christian weaving and clothing metaphors that are characteristic of late antique aesthetics may then have had a female appeal: weaving metaphors became popular through the sermons of Proclus of Constantinople in Pulcheria's religious salons and would have been easily supported by the weaving-female imagery typical of epic.

Thus the Haimorrhooussa tale, like the Veronica legend in the Middle Ages, can be read as a story for female consumption.[73] Eudocia and her sister-in-law and later empress Pulcheria were both powerful, educated women, who, each in her own way, were intent on defining themselves as elites, queens, and Christians. We know for example that Pulcheria promoted the cult of Mary, whose reputation increased in late antiquity after the Council of Ephesus in 431; equally Eudocia's pilgrimage and charitable work in the Holy Land mirrored that of the model Chistian queen Helena.[74] What would then be the ideal epic foil for a married noble matron and a devoted Christian as well? It would not be unusual for the female

[73] As observed by both Kuryluk, *Veronica* 119–120, and Sidgwick, *From Flow to Face* 4–6, 23–26, etc.

[74] K. G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1982) 140–147, depicts very well the desire of both Pulcheria and Eudocia to embody the ideal pious orthodox queen with sainthood as their objective; see also 195–198 on their competition for the title of 'New Helena', the model Christian Empress. For the Marian cult see now S. J. Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion* (New Haven 2016), and his previous works, who argues for a rise in the worship of Mary as opposed that of Thecla from the fourth century on.

author of *I HC* to seek a model for a Christian bard among the female characters of the New Testament: the Haimorrhooussa would be an obvious choice, just as Cassiane chose the Magdalene five centuries later. On the other hand, classical tradition that depicted attractive, skilled, and faithful women-queens such as Andromache or Penelope would also fit a kingly ideal, and this is fleshed out in the cento not only in the description of the rich domicile of the woman (1025) but also, and most importantly, in the explicit allusions to Homeric queens.

It is also tempting to seek a further reason for Eudocia's choice of the particular Homeric models: while Helen, like the Magdalene for Cassiane, would embody the sins of the flesh and of lust, Penelope and Andromache and the self-blaming Helen were faithful wives and could be cherished mouthpieces for a former empress now exiled in the Holy Land. The poem does not allow for further biographical speculations, but in Eudocia's legend we learn of the death of two of her three children, which might have assimilated her to Andromache, of her exile from the capital, which would have made her a wandering heroine like Odysseus/Helen and even Andromache, and finally, if the charge of adultery might be hinted at in the comparison to the Phoenician woman, of the repentant Helen, and the faithful Penelope.

Finally, I have urged the debt of *I HC* to the visual arts in depicting the woman crawling on the earth and alone, something found not in the Gospels but in late antique representations of the miracle. The description of the embroidery bears close resemblance to Eusebius' account of the Haimorrhoousa frieze: the use of δίπλαξ for Eusebius' διπλοΐς seems not accidental and θρόνα may recall not just floral embroidery but also the healing herb that was depicted at the feet of the figure. Since Macarius Magnes tells us that the story was extremely popular, "praised in song (ἀοίδιμον … ᾄδεσθαι ποιήσας) in Mesopotamia and the throughout world," there is little doubt that Eudocia would have known it. But the details may show an even closer relation between the two.

The entanglement of both female models, the Haimorrho-

oussa and Andromache/Helen, into the weaving matron and the impact of the visual culture on this poem illustrate the easy amalgamation of Christian devotion and elite *paideia* in late antiquity. If I am right, the miracle described in *I HC* may be the first account for the Haimorrhooussa sitting at Veronica's loom. If this is so, then as early as the first half of the fifth century, Eudocia may have felt compelled to replace the bronze frieze relief at Paneas with a textile *Ersatz*. The fabric of the Haimorrhoousa in *I HC* may not be a *vera icon*, yet whatever was the embroidery on the double-folded cloak, *I HC* presents one of the first testimonies of the Haimorrhoousa at the loom and one of the first assimilations of her to Berenice/Veronica and her later famous cloth. Ultimately, the poem presents a unique opportunity to contemplate the Haimorrhoousa and the female epic bard either weaving the threads of Jesus' purple cloak or braiding the κέντρωνες of Homer into a Christian cento.

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Heidelberg
anna.lefteratou@uni-heidelberg.de