

Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies - Individual Grant Report (2023/24)

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Thanks to a Hellenic Society grant of £200, I was able to travel to Chicago in January 2024 to present a paper at the annual Society for Classical Studies (SCS) conference.

I presented my paper, entitled 'Cape Malea as narrative node: the poetics of divergence in the *Odyssey*', as part of the 'Place, Landscape, and the Natural Environment' panel, chaired by Prof. Alex Purves (UCLA). The paper considered how the *Odyssey* makes use of specific points in the landscape of the storyworld as 'narrative nodes' that, in offering multiple potential routes for characters to travel, also offer branching pathways for plot development. I argued that by encouraging the audience to guess at which of the potential narrative routes will be followed, these 'landscape nodes' generate suspense and lay the groundwork for 'Homeric misdirection' and audience surprise. My aim was to offer the novel notion of landscape nodes as a contribution to our understanding of how Homeric epic engages its audience in the unfolding of its narrative by toying with audience expectations regarding the 'traditional' course of the plot.

The paper was well received and the in-person audience asked questions that have helped me to develop the paper further and to consider how it might fit into a larger project. I am particularly thankful to Alex Purves for her insightful questions and for taking the time to discuss the paper with me further over coffee after the panel. I have now submitted the article to the *TAPA* journal, where it is under review.

Attending the conference in person was beneficial not only in terms of helping me to develop my ideas around the paper I gave, but also for the opportunities it offered me to network. I enjoyed immensely getting to know other academics at various stages of their professional careers, and have forged relationships that I hope will continue to be a source of collaboration and support for the remainder of my academic career.

My sincere thanks once again to the Hellenic Society for their financial help, without which this trip and all its benefits would not have materialised.