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Metaphor and Spatial Conceptualization. Observations on Orientational Metaphors in Lycophron's *Alexandra*

Summary

Drawing on the theoretical and methodological framework of the cognitive linguistic theory of conceptual metaphors and working from the textual basis of Lycophron's *Alexandra*, this paper argues for the existence of a conceptual orientational metaphor ACTIVE IS UP (with a corresponding opposite conceptualization PASSIVE/DESTROYED/DEAD IS DOWN). Numerous individual linguistic instantiations of this conceptualization occur in the *Alexandra*, most often in the form of prepositions or prefixes (ἀνά/ἀνα-, ἐπί/ἐπι-; κατά/κατα-), but also in case of words with basic meanings containing the direction up or down, such as αἴρω, whose metaphorical usages in the *Alexandra* (Lyc. 1228, 1295) are discussed in detail.

Keywords: Lycophron; *Alexandra*; cognitive metaphor theory; orientational metaphors; conceptual metaphors.

In Bezugnahme auf die theoretischen und methodischen Ansätze der kognitionswissenschaftlichen Theorie konzeptueller Metaphern und auf der Grundlage des Texts von Lykophrons *Alexandra* zeigt dieser Beitrag die Existenz der konzeptuellen Orientierungsmetaphern AKTIV IST OBEN (zusammen mit der korrespondierenden entgegengesetzten Vorstellung PASSIV/ZERSTÖRT/TOT IST UNTEN) auf. Zahlreiche einzelne textuelle Belege diese Vorstellung erscheinen in der *Alexandra*, oftmals in der Form von Präpositionen und Präfixen (ἀνά/ἀνα-, ἐπί/ἐπι-; κατά/κατα-), aber auch im Falle von Vokabeln, deren Grundbedeutung die Richtungsbestimmung oben oder unten enthält, wie αἴρω, dessen metaphorische Verwendung in der *Alexandra* (Lyc. 1228, 1295) ausführlich diskutiert wird.

Keywords: Lykophron; *Alexandra*; kognitive Metapherntheorie; Orientierungsmetaphern; konzeptuelle Metaphern.

1 Introduction

The *Alexandra* commonly ascribed to the Hellenistic tragic poet Lycophron of Chalcis (3rd century BCE) is probably the most peculiar literary work to survive from antiquity. Its form corresponds to a tragic messenger speech in iambic trimeters in which a Trojan watchman reports to king Priam of Troy the cryptic prophecies of his daughter Cassandra, who is here called Alexandra in allusion to her brother Alexandros, better known to us as Paris. Thus, the title is already indicative of the poet's penchant to hardly ever call anything by its proper name, but rather employ obscure and erudite periphrases and mythological allusions. Furthermore, the diction of the poem is riddled with a plethora of rare words which appear only in Lycophron or are attested in his poem for the first time.[1] It was the curse of Cassandra to always foresee the truth, but never be believed,[2] which gains a further dimension in Lycophron's *Alexandra*: Form and content of the poem are closely intertwined, for Cassandra's prophecies could not be believed, because they were not even understood:

> Every line of the poem is an enigma. Persons, gods, places are almost never called by their names but referred to by the most remote and abstruse allusions; if the allusion strikes the reader as recognizable he is surely wrong, for some more remote and more paradoxical reference is intended. (...) To modern readers the work, happily unique in its kind, appears to be the chef d'œvre of an erudite madman.[3]

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1 Cf. e.g. Hopkinson 1988, 230: "It has been calculated that 518 of the 3000 different words in the poem are found nowhere else, and that a further 117 occur in the *Alexandra* for the first time." This clearly indicates how conscious the poet of the *Alexandra* was of his diction and the expressions he chose to employ.

2 Cf. Lyc. 1454–1456.

3 Quotation from Hadas 1950, 192–193. Also cf. Hopkinson 1988, 230: "It was Cassandra's fate never to be believed. Lycophron provides a new reason for this traditional feature of the myth: she was not only not believed, but not even understood. (...) The poem thus constitutes a novel combination of form and subject matter." Similarly also West 2003, 85.

The excessive use of metaphors and metonymies, intensified by Lycophron's propensity for obscure vocabulary, largely accounts for the oracular character of the poem's diction and the overall effect of being one huge and elaborate riddle.[4] However, metaphor does not occur exclusively in instances where the poet consciously chose to employ figurative language as a rhetorical device and a means of encryption. Rather, since metaphor has been recognized to be a ubiquitous and common mode of thought and expression according to recent studies from the field of cognitive linguistics,[5] metaphors needs must also appear in low-key contexts where they might even have been used unconsciously and are often understood instinctively without additional cognitive effort. Compared to the obvious poetic metaphors consciously employed by the poet for stylistic and aesthetic reasons, the mechanical usage of unobtrusive and inconspicuous metaphorical language stems from the cognitive function of metaphors as a means of the human mind of imagining and conceptualizing certain ideas. It is particularly this type of unconscious and automatic metaphors which allows a glimpse into the conceptual system of language users. According to the cognitive linguistic theory of metaphors, individual linguistic metaphors found in actual texts are commonly (but not always) instantiations of underlying conceptions referred to as conceptual metaphors.[6] A conceptual metaphor consists of a source domain being mapped onto a target domain through several correspondences which are called mappings and which form the basis of individual metaphors. Despite the reasonable claim of cognitive scholars that most conceptual metaphors are grounded in basic human bodily experience,[7] the implicit hypothesis that the interpretation of human bodily experience and thus the human conceptual system have remained constant across cultures and have not undergone significant changes in more than two millenia is yet untested and in my opinion unlikely to be true.[8] Every

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4 Aristotle already noted that an overuse of metaphor results in an αἴνιγμα 'riddle' (Aristot. *Po.* 22, 1458a18-25; *Rh.* 3.2.12, 1405a34-b5). On the seamless transition from metaphor/extended metaphor (allegory) to riddle vide now also Calboli 2012, esp. at 25–32.

5 For metaphor as a natural and fundamental way of human thought, cognition, and expression vide e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, or Gibbs 1994, esp. 120–264 and Gibbs 1996.

6 For the cognitive theory of conceptual metaphors in general vide first Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Lakoff 1993, 202–251 as well as the summaries in Evans 2007, esp. 33–35 and Kövecses 2010, 3–14. A recent assessment of the theory can be found in Steen 2011 and Dancygier and Sweetser 2014.

7 Cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, esp. 56–68, and Johnson 1987.

8 E.g. the textual sources used in the first chapter of Lakoff and Turner 1989, 1–56 include, besides modern English poetry, Homer's *Iliad*, the Bible, the poems of Catullus, and Shakespeare's works. Even though the examples are, of course, chosen to support the argument, the unspoken assumption that the conceptual metaphors used in different times, societies, and languages are identical and not subject to change, is improbable and methodologically disputable. This question of crosscultural metaphorical universals is discussed e.g. in Kövecses 2005 and Dancygier and Sweetser 2014, 162–182 with the result that there are few, if any, absolute metaphorical conceptualizations. Note, however, that research in cognitive linguistics usually focuses on the synchronic study of different languages without taking the diachronic perspective on cultures and languages removed in time into account.

society and language community possesses a dynamic system of culturally dependent notions and conceptualizations which is subject to change over time.[9] Thus, when we attempt to apply the cognitive theory of metaphors to ancient languages and texts, we must refrain from automatically transferring our own conceptual system and first try to develop and identify the conceptualizations underlying the text and language on the basis of the linguistic evidence of their metaphors.

The following study is an attempt to illustrate the difficulties of explaining individual linguistic metaphors in ancient languages and of fully accounting for their underlying cultural conceptualizations. It takes as its starting point a close reading of a seemingly non-descript passage from Lycophron's *Alexandra* which will then give rise to a discussion of the wider issue of conceptual metaphors and spatial conceptualizations in Ancient Greek.

2 Orientational metaphors in Lycophron's *Alexandra*

At the beginning of his account of the fights between Greeks and barbarians,[10] drawing on the beginning of Herodotus' *Histories*,[11] the poet of the *Alexandra* also traces the origin of the hostilities between Europe and Asia back to the abduction of Io from Argos to Egypt by Phoenician sailors. The passage in question contains several instances of obscure geographical references and animal imagery, both of which are very common in Lycophronean oracular diction, and concludes with a poetic metaphor:

(1) Lyc. 1291–1295: ὄλοιντο ναῦται πρῶτα Καρνῖται κύνες,
οἳ τὴν βοῶπιν ταυροπάρθενον κόρην
Λέρνης ἀνηρείψαντο, φορτηγοὶ λύκοι,
πλᾶτιν πορεῦσαι κῆρα Μεμφίτῃ πρόμῳ,
ἔχθρας δὲ πυρσὸν ἦραν ἠπείροις διπλαῖς.

First shall perish the seafaring dogs from Karne (i.e. Phoenicia),
who took the cow-eyed bull-virgin girl
from Lerne (i.e. Argos), the mercantile wolves,

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9   In this regard, I draw on the definition of culture proposed by Geertz 1973, 89, who defines culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

Geertz is not referring to metaphors in particular in the original context, but his definition naturally encompasses them as just another cultural set of conceptualizations as a means of communication and the development of knowledge.

10 Cf. Lyc. 1283–1450.

11 Hdt. *Hist.* 1.1–4.

in order to obtain a fateful wife for the lord of Memphis (i.e. the king of Egypt);
they raised the beacon of hostility for the two continents.[12]

The final verse of the passage is obviously metaphorical with the phrase "they raised the beacon of hostility" denoting that the Phoenician sailors, by abducting Io from Argos, initiated the series of battles between the two continents, Europe and Asia, which culminated in the Persian Wars between Greece and Persia and Alexander the Great's victory over Persia.[13] The phrase is certainly a metaphor, for the "beacon of hostility" is obviously not meant literally as an actual object. However, since the meaning of the metaphor is unambiguous among the countless obscure passages in Lycophron, neither the ancient scholiasts nor modern commentators[14] offer any additional lexical explanations of the verse. On the contrary, an ancient periphrasis of the verse suggests that the scholiast either did not recognize the metaphoricity of the passage, or deemed it so self-evident and self-explanatory that he only changed the word order and even preserved the metaphor:

(2) Σ ad Lyc. 1295: τὸν δὲ πυρσὸν τῆς ἔχθρας ἐπῆραν Εὐρώπης καὶ Ἀσίας.[15]

The beacon of hostility of Europe and Asia they raised up.

That in itself is corroboration of recent claims in cognitive science that metaphors are an integral part of human cognition and the human conceptual system, and that therefore they are often understood instinctively. This metaphor has only a low degree of metaphoricity,[16] meaning that it is not particularly active in the minds of the poet and the audience. Nevertheless, upon closer examination, even metaphors with low metaphoricity are often very difficult to explain and often reveal complex and intricate structures which require individual analysis for every single metaphor in its context. In the case of the πυρσὸς ἔχθρας "the beacon of hostility", there seems to be a combination

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12 Greek text quotations are taken from the recent Budé edition of Hurst 2008, all translations are my own tentative attempt to reproduce the original syntax of the cryptic lines of Lycophron in English as precisely as possible, in some places in dependence on phrases borrowed from the Loeb translation of A. W. Mair and G. R. Mair 1955.

13 Cf. Lyc. 1412–1434 and Lyc. 1435–1444 respectively.

14 Cf. the major commentaries on the *Alexandra*, von Holzinger 1895, Fusillo, Hurst, and Paduano 1991, Gigante Lanzara 2000, Hurst 2008 and Hornblower 2015.

15 Quoted from the recent edition of the extensive scholia by Leone 2002.

16 For a theoretical approach to distinguish varying degrees of metaphoricity (as opposed to applying the obsolete 'dead' – 'alive' distinction) vide Hanks 2006 or Müller 2008, esp. 178–209; Müller defines metaphoricity as a continuum starting with expressions whose original metaphorical character is entirely obscured by semantic opacity and poetic novel metaphors with high metaphoricity forming the other end of the spectrum.

of two distinct conceptual metaphors,[17] both of which are appropriate for the function of the metaphor in context.

Firstly, light, and in this instance light originating from a fire, serves as a rather conventional metaphor for rendering something visible and conspicuous. The noun πυρσός, derived from πῦρ 'fire', is particularly suitable to convey this notion, since it does not merely refer to any fire or torch, but usually denotes a bright fire signal or a watch fire in the night, which may also be used as a means to transmit messages over large distances.[18] This is also the basis for the metaphorical use of πυρσός in Pindar's Fourth *Isthmian Ode* where he employs the metaphor of "lighting the fire-brand of song"[19] with the beacon's light being a signal of the glory his praise poem will spread.

Secondly, the image of a "fire of hostility" is especially apt, since it also draws on the conceptualization of war and conflict as fire. The image already occurs in the Homeric poems, and other linguistic instantiations of this conceptual metaphor WAR IS FIRE[20] in Ancient Greek include such poetic expressions as Homer's formulaic phrases "burning battle",[21] "blazing war",[22] or "fighting in the likeness of blazing fire".[23] Lycophron himself possibly uses similar fire-imagery metaphorically in one other passage in reference to hatred and enmity when he relates the story of Nauplios, the father of Palamedes, who took revenge on the Greeks for the death of his son by making their wives commit adultery:

(3) Lyc. 1219: ψυδραῖσι τ᾽ ἔχθραν μηχαναῖς ἀναφλέγων.

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17 To repeat, the term conceptual metaphor is employed in cognitive metaphor theory to denote an abstract cross-domain mapping conceptualizing one thing in terms of another which underlies the production of individual linguistic metaphors.

18 Cf. e.g. *Il.* 18.211; Gorg. *Palam.* 30; Hdt. *Hist.* 7.183, 9.3; Eur. *Pho.* 1377; [Eur.] *Rh.* 97.

19 Pind. *I.* 4.43: ἅψαι πυρσὸν ὕμνων. Cf. Thummer 1969, 74 on Pind. *I.* 3/4.61: "In dem Ausdruck ἅψαι πυρσόν wird von den in den vorhergehenden Versen verwendeten Bildern des Klanges (φωνᾶεν) und des Lichtes (ἀκτίς) das zweite weitergeführt. Man wird dabei an das Feuerzeichen erinnert, das am Beginn des *Agamemnon* die Siegesbotschaft über Meer und Land trägt" (reference to Aes. *Ag.* 281–316). For light imagery in Pindar also cf. Steiner 1986, 46–48 who lists, but does not explain individual metaphors.

20 Note the convention in cognitive linguistics to print conceptual metaphors (as opposed to individual linguistic metaphors) in small capitals in the form of SOURCE IS TARGET. This is done to indicate that they do not appear as such in texts, but are deduced from individual textual metaphors.

21 *Il.* 4.342; 12.316: μάχης καυστείρης. Also cf. the explanation in Hainsworth 1993, 353 ad *Il.* 12.316: "Note the metaphorical epithet. Fires (conflagrations, not domestic hearths), being destructive and well-nigh irresistible, make effective similes for advancing heroes and armies (19x). See also 17.736-41 and n., where bT observe that the extended simile at that point is here compressed into a single metaphorical word."

22 *Il.* 4.281: δήϊον ἐς πόλεμον; 5.117: δηΐῳ ἐν πολέμῳ. I propose to interpret the common epic adjective δήϊος (which is also applied to πῦρ, cf. *Il.* 6.331; 8.181; 11.666; 16.127) in these instances as derived from δαίω 'burn' rather than from δαΐς 'battle', cf. esp. other metaphorical expressions using the verb directly: *Il.* 12.35: ἀμφὶ μάχη τ᾽ ἐνοπή τε δεδήει; 13.736: πέρι στέφανος πολέμοιο δέδηε; 17.253: τόσση γὰρ ἔρις πολέμοιο δέδηεν; 20.18: μάχη πόλεμός τε δέδηε.

23 *Il.* 11.596: οἳ μὲν μάρναντο δέμας πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.

with lying schemes lighting up enmity.[24]

Note however that so far this analysis has not produced anything to indicate the notion of beginning in the metaphor of the "beacon of hostility", and the fire/light metaphor is not elaborated.[25] The verb of the phrase is not taken from the same source domain, since the Phoenician pirates are not said to have lit the fire of hostility, as we would probably have expected from the image;[26] instead, the Phoenicians are said to have raised the metaphorical beacon of hostility, ἔχθρας δὲ πυρσὸν ἦραν. The verb ἦραν[27] must be an aorist of ἀείρω/αἴρω, literally '(to) raise', '(to) lift up', and is clearly metaphorical in this context: the etymology of the verb ἀείρω/αἴρω is uncertain, but an association with ἀήρ 'air' has been suggested[28] and it seems that the notion UP/UPWARDS is inherent in its basic meaning '(to) raise (up in the air)'.[29] Since the contextual meaning differs from the basic meaning, it is a clear case of metaphor on a lexical level.[30] It is surprising that the poet uses the 3rd pers. pl. aor. ind. of ἀείρω/αἴρω, ἦραν, rather than ἦψαν, the corresponding and prosodically equal form of ἅπτω '(to) ignite', as the poet could have easily substituted (cf. the phrase ἄψαι πυρσὸν ὕμνων in Pind. *I.* 4.43). However, the use of a verb from a

24 The line might be a clear instantiation of the conceptualization WAR IS FIRE. However, the verb ἀναφλέγων is only a conjection by Scheer (accepted by Mooney 1921, Mascialino 1956, Gigante Lanzara 2000, Chauvin and Cusset 2008, Hornblower 2015) on the basis of the scholia which preserve the fire-imagery by periphrasis (Σ ad Lyc. 1219: ψευδέσι μηχαναῖς καὶ τρόποις τὴν ἔχθραν ἐκκαίων καὶ ἀναζωπυρῶν); the reading of the manuscripts is ἀναπλέκων (retained by Holzinger 1895, A. W. Mair and G. R. Mair 1955, Fusillo, Hurst, and Paduano 1991, Hurst 2008), which is in tune with the fishing-imagery of the passage (and thus a possible explanation for a clerical error).

25 Cf. Semino 2008, 25 for the use of the term 'elaboration of a metaphor' as "a particular type of cluster, where several metaphorical expressions belonging to the same semantic field or evoking the same source domain are used in close proximity to one another in relation to the same topic, or to elements of the same target domain."

26 The form ἦψαν is not attested, but has been conjectured by Liberman 2009 as an "easy correction"; the conjecture is rightly rejected by Hornblower 2015, 456 ad loc.

27 The form was corrected from the ungrammatical ἦραν by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1924, 155. The emendation has been accepted in the most recent editions of the *Alexandra* (Hurst 2008, Horn-

blower 2015); other editors and translators retain ἦραν, but there is general agreement in all translations that it is the 3rd pers. pl. aor. ind. of ἀείρω/αἴρω: "they raised a war-torch for two continents" (Mooney 1921), "they raised the beaon of hatred for the two continents" (A. W. Mair and G. R. Mair 1955), "levantaron la tea del odio entre los dos continentes" (Mascialino 1956), "sollevarono l'inimicizia tra i due continenti" (Fusillo, Hurst, and Paduano 1991), "levèrent la torche de la haine pour les deux continents" (Lambin 2005), "ils levèrent le flambeau de la haine entre les deux continents" (Chauvin and Cusset 2008), "c'est ainsi qu'ils ont levé le flambeau guerrier entre deux continents" (Hurst 2008), "they lifted up a torch of enmity for the two continents" (Hornblower 2015).

28 Cf. Frisk 1960, 23 s. v. ἀείρω. However, this explanation is rejected by Beekes 2010, 24.

29 The attribution to an old Proto-Indo European verbal root *h₂er- meaning 'hängen (intr.)' in Rix 2001, 290 and Beekes 2010, 23 also indicates that the notion UP/UPWARDS is an intrinsic component of the basic meaning of ἀείρω.

30 For a procedure and criteria to determine metaphor through the difference between basic and contextual meaning vide Pragglejaz Group 2007, esp. at 3, also summarized in Semino 2008, 11–12, further developed in Steen et al. 2010, esp. 1–42.

different source domain is in tune with Lycophron's usual practice to forego the obvious in favor of something more nebulous or unexpected. This habit informs the whole poem and offers many difficulties to any interpreter, since the poet regularly makes use of rare vocabulary, remote versions of myths, obscure cult epithets, etc. Considering Lycophron's awareness regarding his diction, this choice of verb can hardly be accidental. It is conceivable that the image of 'raising the flame' as a whole is an idiom referring to a certain cultural setting where the lifting of a torch was used as a symbol to indicate a beginning, such as a wedding,[31] a symposium,[32] or an athletic event;[33] however, there is no evidence to support the assumption that 'raising the flame' was a fixed expression. Even if we could attribute the Lycophronean metaphor to a specific instance where the symbolic raising of a torch denoted the beginning of something, this act would be based on the same conceptualization which I will propose for the metaphor in Lycophron. On the contrary, drawing on other instances of πυρσός in Greek literature, it is likely that the noun does not only denote a mere torch used for some signalling purpose, but a larger stationary fire to convey messages over larger distances;[34] thus, it is unlikely that an actual πυρσός could be raised in a physical sense, and if indeed the combination of the verb αἴρω with the object πυρσός cannot be used literally, the metaphor becomes even more pronounced.

In any case, the use of the verb αἴρω adds a directional component to the metaphor, and I would argue that this spatial component of the basic meaning of the verb is the reason why the poet chose to employ it metaphorically in this context. In cognitive metaphor theory, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have opted to call the metaphorical use of spatialization "orientational metaphor"; since it provides an abstract concept with

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31 Cf. e.g. Eur. *Cycl.* 514–515; *Med*. 1026–1027; *Pho.* 344–345; *IA*. 732–733; A. R. *Arg*. 4.808–809. However, in none of these instances is πυρσός used to refer to a wedding torch, and when the wedding torches are not merely lit (Eur. *Pho*. 344–345), but explicitly said to be raised, the verb employed is ἀνέχω rather than αἴρω (Eur. *IA*. 732; *Med*. 1027; A. R. *Arg*. 4.808). Thus, even if the image of raising the torch is familiar, the phrasing of the Lycophronean passage is probably unconventional. However, the wedding ritual is particularly suggestive as the source of the Lycophronean metaphor of 'raising the flame' because it would present the war between Europe and Asia as an inauspicious wedding.

32 Cf. Alc. frg. 346.1 Lobel-Page. In this case, the poet asks his fellow revellers not to wait for the lamps to start the drinking party; however, it is to be assumed that torches and lamps were always lit for symposia, which were usually held in the evening,

but there appears to be no further evidence that the beginning of the event was actually marked by the kindling of lights.

33 There is not much evidence of this practice, but it seems that the start signal of races at athletic competitions was not given visually, but by means of a βαλβίς, a rope streched between two posts which indicated the start and finish of a race, also the metaphorical use in Lyc. 13–15: ἄκραν βαλβῖδα μηρίνθου σχάσας (...), ὡς πτηνὸς δρομεύς 'cutting the utter bounding thread (…) like a winged runner' with the commentary of Holzinger 1895, 166–167 ad Lyc. 13.

34 Cf. esp. *Il*. 18.211; Hdt. *Hist*. 7.183, 9.3. There is one other occurrence of πυρσός in the *Alexandra*, at Lyc. 340, where it also refers to a signal fire which is used to convey a message over a distance; however, some interpreters have understood the fire sign to be a mere torch, cf. Holzinger 1895, 221 ad loc.

structure by means of a spatial orientation.[35] Scholars of the cognitive linguistic the-
ory of metaphors have compiled a list of common conceptual orientational metaphors
in modern English, such as GOOD IS UP, CONSCIOUS IS UP, CONTROL IS UP, HAPPY IS UP,
HEALTHY IS UP, MORE IS UP, RATIONAL IS UP, VIRTUE IS UP, HIGH STATUS IS UP (all with co-
ordinate conceptualizations with opposite directionality).[36] However, to the best of my
knowledge, no systematic research has been conducted on orientational metaphors, i.e.
on metaphors based on spatial relations, but Lakoff and Johnson's observation of the
existence of orientational metaphors provides a starting point and a theoretical frame
for the interpretation I am about to offer.

Since we have ascertained that the πυρσὸς ἔχθρας is merely a poetic way of refer-
ring to war and open hostility, the image leaves us with the questions why the 'torch of
hostility' is being lifted up at the beginning of the series of battles between Europe and
Asia, and what the connotations of the concept UP in this context might be.

None of the examples of conceptual orientational metaphors listed above can ac-
count for the Lycophronean passage, but in order to posit a conceptual metaphor for
an ancient language it is indispensable to adduce similar instantiations of the same spa-
tial conceptualization in the *Alexandra*. Indeed it turns out that Lycophron uses αἴρω
once more metaphorically. The first possible parallel occurs a little earlier in the poem
where the Romans, in their capacity as descendants of Troy, are predicted to "raise the
foremost crown of glory with their spears" when establishing their empire and seizing
control over land and sea:

(4) Lyc. 1226–1230: γένους δὲ πάππων τῶν ἐμῶν αὖθις κλέος
μέγιστον αὐξήσουσιν ἄμναμοί ποτε
αἰχμαῖς τὸ πρωτόλειον ἄραντες στέφος,
γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης σκῆπτρα καὶ μοναρχίαν
λαβόντες. (...)

But the fame of the race of my ancestors
shall hereafter be increased by their descendants
who shall with their spears raise the foremost crown of glory,
obtaining the sceptre and dominion of earth and sea.

As with the original passage, the degree of metaphoricity of the metaphors in Lyc. 1228
is also comparatively low. The periphrasis in the scholia seems to be more concerned

35 Note that most theoretical approaches to metaphors
would either dismiss this phrase as conventional, or
pass it over on account of its low metaphoricity, or
face difficulties accounting for this choice and usage

of αἴρω. On orientational metaphors cf. esp. Lakoff
and Johnson 1980, 14–21 or Kövecses 2010, 40.

36 Cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 15–17, as well as the
extensive list of common conceptual metaphors and
metonymies compiled in Kövecses 2010, 369–375.

with the intelligibility of αἰχμή 'spear' which the scholiast replaced with the synonym δόρυ, but otherwise he preserved the metaphorical verb:

(5) Σ ad Lyc. 1228: δόρασι τὸ πρωτεῖον ἄραντες στέφος, ἐπάραντες.

    With spears raising the foremost crown, raising up.

In fact, the apparently explanatory addition of the compound verb ἐπ-αίρω '(to) lift up' rather than the simplex αἴρω '(to) lift' makes the metaphorical usage even more pronounced. As with text (1), modern commentators offer infomation only as regards the content of the passage, but see no need to explain the metaphorical uses of αἴρω. In her *Lexikon zu Lykophron*, Maria Grazia Ciani gives the literal Latin translations "*erigo*, *extollo*" for both instances, but, contrary to her usual practice, fails to note the metaphorical character of the usages.[37] However, the imagery of the reference passage raises similar questions: it seems obvious that the Romans do not literally raise the winner's crown with their spears; rather, by means of their strength, which is metonymically denoted by the reference to their weapons, they win a victory. The military context becomes apparent in πρωτόλειον which is used as an adjective and literally refers to the first spoils of war (cf. λεία 'plunder'), but is further expressed by the metaphor of 'the victor's crown' taken from the domain of athletic competition.[38] Again, the question arises as to why the poet has the Romans "raise the victor's crown" rather than elaborate the original metaphor with a verb from the same source domain of athletic or martial competition and use the more obvious verb of 'winning' or 'gaining'.[39]

    The motivation for employing the verb αἴρω in all three instances is obviously its spatial and directional component. The phrases exhibit a consistent metaphorical conceptualization of the direction UP, in these instantiations embodied in the verb αἴρω, '(to) raise' or '(to) lift'. It seems that in this case, the orientation UP is associated with activation and coming into effect, and thus the cognitive linguistic formulation of the conceptual orientational metaphor would be ACTIVE IS UP. This orientational metaphor is admittedly rather vague, but this is due to the metaphor's status as a primary metaphor directly based on human bodily experience.[40] The physical experiential basis of this conceptualization is obvious, since humans get up and stand upright in order to move and become

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37 Cf. Ciani 1975, 11 s.v. αἴρω.

38 Note that the military and the athletic domains are often used to conceptualize one another, which they can easily do because they belong to the same metaphor family through the shared frame of competition, cf. Dancygier and Sweetser 2014, 67–69.

39 Hornblower 2015, 437 ad loc. treats ἄραντες στέφος together as a metaphor from the domain of athletics and adduces the parallel of Bacchyl. 2.5:

[ἄ]ρατο νίκην. It is likely that victors actually raised up the crowns or wreaths they won in competition in order to affirm and make their success visible, with the symbolism of the gesture also drawing on the orientation UP, VICTORY/SUPERIORITY IS UP (note the etymology of 'superiority').

40 For the idea of primary metaphors cf. Dancygier and Sweetser 2014, 25–30.

active, and there is also a cultural basis, since tools and instruments require picking up before they can be wielded efficiently.[41]

This particular orientational metaphor ACTIVE IS UP also occurs in modern languages, in particular with verbs meaning '(to) raise', '(to) lift', or '(to) rise',[42] and is consistent with numerous examples of conceptual orientational metaphors in modern languages in which UP denotes the good half of a polar pair.

In accordance with the underlying bipolar VERTICALITY schema,[43] we can expect to find a corresponding opposite orientational metaphor PASSIVE IS DOWN, passive in these cases meaning not only inactive, but broken, destroyed, or dead. The experiential basis complements the conceptualization ACTIVE IS UP, since objects that are not in use, inoperative, or discarded are set down and dead bodies devoid of life fall down due to the effect of gravity. Lycophron's poem shows copious instances of the direction DOWN, as expressed e.g. in the prefix κατα-, being associated with, or strengthening the notion of, suffering, destruction, and death. If some of the translations of the following passages seem awkward or unidiomatic, it is because English allows the realisation of this particular conceptual orientational metaphor in some cases but not in others:

(6) Lyc. 48: σάρκας καταίθων λοφνίσιν (...)

burning down flesh with fire-brands.

(7) Lyc. 55: παιδὸς καταβροχθέντος αἰθάλῳ δέμας

the body of the boy gorged down by flame.

(8) Lyc. 90–91: (...) ἡ 'χερουσία τρίβος / καταιβάτις (...)

the path of Acheron, leading downward.

(9) Lyc. 169: κίρκου καταρρακτῆρος (...)

of the hawk which shoots down from above.

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41 On the experiential physical basis of orientational metaphors vide esp. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 15–21. More extensively on the bodily basis of metaphor and meaning vide Johnson 1987, esp. 18–138.

42 Cf. a random selection of examples from modern European languages, such as English: "The conflict arose because of a misunderstanding."; "The suppressed people rose in protest."; German "Es erhob sich ein Getöse."; "Es werden neue Steuern erhoben."; Italian "Il vento si è alzato."; "L' avvocato solleva un' obiezione."; Spanish "Se levantaron pocas voces críticas."; "La nación se alzo en armas contra el opresor."; French "Un peuple se lève contre un dictateur."; "Cette réponse a soulevé des protestations."; "Le vent s' est levé." Of course, this selection of European languages is not nearly sufficient to claim that this particular metaphor is universal (on these matters cf. Kövecses 2005), but it suggests that the conceptualization underlying the Lycophronean passages is not an isolated instance, but has parallels in other Indo-European languages.

43 On the VERTICALITY schema (also UP-DOWN schema) cf. Johnson 1987, esp. xiv.

(10) Lyc. 249: (...) καταίθει γαῖαν ὀρχηστὴς Ἄρης

Ares the dancer burns down the land.

(11) Lyc 256: γόῳ γυναικῶν καὶ καταρραγαῖς πέπλων

with groaning of women and down-tearing of robes.

(12) Lyc. 298–300: πολλοὺς δ᾽ ἀριστεῖς (...)
αἱ σαὶ καταξανοῦσιν ὄβριμοι χέρες

many heroes / (...) / shall thy mighty hands tear down.

(13) Lyc. 396–397: ψυχρὸν δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖς ἐκβεβρασμένον νέκυν
(...) ἀκτὶς Σειρία καθαυανεῖ

the ray of Sirius shall wither down the cold corpse washed up on the shore.

(14) Lyc. 382-383: (...) ὧν καταιβάτης
σκηπτὸς κατ᾽ ὄρφνην γεύσεται δῃουμένων

whom the descending thunderbolt will taste in the darkness as they perish.

(15) Lyc. 459: (...) καταίθων θύσθλα Κωμύρῳ λέων

the lion (i.e. Heracles) burning down sacrifices for Komyros (i.e. Zeus).

(16) Lyc. 560–561: (...) χαλκὸς καὶ κεραύνιοι βολαὶ
ταύρους καταξανοῦσιν (...)

bronze and thunderbolts shall tear down the bulls.

(17) Lyc. 971: (...) πύργων δυστυχεῖς κατασκαφὰς

unhappy downfalls of towers.

(18) Lyc. 1376: καταιθαλώσει γαῖαν ὀθνείαν (...)

he shall burn down the alien soil.

It is obvious that not all of these examples are necessarily metaphorical, but there are several where the notion of the direction DOWNWARDS does not make any immediate sense in their respective contexts, and thus cannot be meant literally. Examples are provided by passages (11), (13), and (18), where the rending of robes in grief, the drying of a corpse, or the burning of a country respectively do not literally entail any downward

direction. In these cases, the use of verbs prefixed by κατα- is due to the notion of destruction conveyed by this prefix on the basis of the conceptual orientational metaphor PASSIVE IS DOWN.

This emphasis on destruction, along with the notion of control and subjugation, may also be expressed by the directionality DOWN FROM ABOVE, often in the form of the preposition ἐπί or the prefix ἐπ- respectively:

(19) Lyc. 228: τοσῶνδε κῦμ᾽ ἐπέκλυσεν κακῶν

a wave of such evils washing over (sc. Troy).

(20) Lyc. 333: κρύψει κύπασσις χερμάδων ἐπομβρίᾳ

a cloak of stones will hide her (i.e. Hecuba) in a downpour (= she will be stoned to death).

(21) Lyc. 557–558: (…) τῷ δὲ δευτέραν ἔπι
πληγὴν ἀθαμβὴς κριὸς ἐγκορύψεται

a second blow the fearless ram (i.e. Idas) will strike down on him (i.e. Polydeukes) with his horns.

(22) Lyc. 1114–1115: δράκαινα διψὰς κἀπιβᾶσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐχένος
πλήσει γέμοντα θυμὸν ἀγρίας χολῆς

the dragoness, the serpent (i.e. Clytaemnestra), stepping down on my neck will fill her groaning soul full of wild bile.

The passages show again that ἐπί does not merely express the direction DOWN FROM ABOVE, but also emphasizes the notion of destruction in contexts where the directionality cannot be intended literally. In (19), a metaphorical wave of evils washes over Troy, submerging and putting down the city, in (20) the stones from the stoning of Hecuba fall down on her, rather than being thrown at her, and in (21) the blow falling on Polydeukes is at odds with the image of his opponent as a ram striking him with his horn. In (22), Cassandra's prediction of Clytaemnestra stepping down on her neck might at first be taken literally or appear as an instantiation of the orientational metaphor CONTROL IS UP;[44] however, Cassandra's slaughter (Lyc. 1108–1115) is described in several metaphors as the splitting of a tree trunk (Lyc. 1110–1111), with Clytaemnestra the viper (Lyc. 1114) filling her soul with bile (Lyc. 1115), and the phrase κἀπιβᾶσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐχένος seems to refer to Cassandra's death rather to her subjugation. Therefore, it would be well in

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44 Hornblower 2015, 395 ad loc. takes the phrasing literally and as a detail possibly going back to a version narrated in the Epic Cycle.

tune with the tone of the passage and the style of Lycophron to interpret the participle construction as another metaphorical instantiation of the same conception with the directionality of DOWN FROM ABOVE emphasizing the notion of destruction.

3 Conclusions and perspectives

To conclude, I hope to have shown the challenges and difficulties of explaining even a seemingly simple metaphor in an ancient language: since every metaphor arises from the culture of its language users, knowledge of many aspects of the respective culture is a requirement for the interpretation of its metaphors. Drawing on the methodology and terminology developed in the cognitive linguistic theory of metaphors, I suggested that the use of αἴρω in the two passages discussed above can be explained by and attributed to a conceptual orientational metaphor ACTIVE IS UP (with a corresponding opposite PASSIVE IS DOWN). This orientational metaphor is admittedly rather vague, but the concept turns out to be pervasive and very productive and numerous instantiations occur in the *Alexandra*. The two examples discussed in detail, passages (1) and (4), show the conceptual orientational metaphor ACTIVE IS UP being used creatively as a basis for individual linguistic metaphors in conjunction with other metaphorical and metonymical conceptualizations.

As such, the in-depth analysis of metaphors with low metaphoricity can highlight the mastery of figurative language of a poet, if even non-descript metaphors prove themselves to be particular apt images. Besides, an examination of these metaphors with regard to their underlying conceptualizations reveals a wealth of additional information, not only about the individual poet, but also about his language community and culture.

In a next step it would be necessary to ascertain that the metaphor does not only occur in Lycophron's *Alexandra*, but was also used by other writers and members of the Ancient Greek language community. A first lexical search on the basis of LSJ yields several instances of the phrase πόλεμον αἴρεσθαι '(to) raise war',[45] two passages containing φυγὴν αἴρεσθαι '(to) raise flight',[46] as well as one instance each of κίνδυνον αἴρεσθαι '(to) raise danger'[47] and νίκας αἴρεσθαι '(to) raise victories'.[48] Similarly, further lexical search shows that the compound form ἐπ-αίρω, lit. (to) 'lift', (to) 'raise', is also used metaphorically with the same underlying conceptualization in the sense of (to) 'make active' → (to) 'stir up', (to) 'excite'.[49]

[45] Aes. *Suppl*. 342; Hdt. *Hist*. 7.132; Thuc. 4.60; Demosth. *or*. 5.5; Aristoph. *Av*. 1188 (pass.).

[46] Aes. *Pers*. 481; [Eur.] *Rhes*. 54.

[47] Antipho. *or*. 5.63.

[48] Pind. *I*. 6.60; to this add Bacchyl. 2.5, cf. note 39 above.

[49] Cf. e.g. Hdt. *Hist*. 1.204; Soph. *OT* 1328; Eur. *IA* 125; Demosth. *or*. 16.23; Aristoph. *Ra*. 1041; etc. The same development must be assumed for the verbs

The evidence suggests that the metaphorical usage of (ἐπ-)αἴρω/αἴρομαι in Ancient Greek was common and conventional, and even though none of the examples are explicitly marked as metaphorical, it is obvious that they cannot be understood literally.[50] However, the contextual meaning of αἴρεσθαι in these passages can easily be understood from the basic meaning, and the metaphorical usage can be attributed to the same general conceptualization of directionality and space which we have encountered in Lycophron's *Alexandra* and described as ACTIVE IS UP.[51]

ὀρίνω/ὄρνυμαι '(to) rise', '(to) stir', '(to) rush', cf. note 50 below.

50 This also affords some insights into the working of a language and the difficulties of lexicography: in case of ἀείρω/αἴρω which is used both literally and figuratively, it is possible to make out the metaphorical usage. However, there is a related verb ἄρνυμαι (only attested in pres. and impf.), which is commonly associated with αἴρω and appears to be formed from the same verbal root ἄρ- (< Proto-Indo European *h₂er- 'hang') with nasal infix -νυ-. Thus, despite literally meaning '(to) raise for oneself', this verb seems to have been used exclusively metaphorically and consequently has taken on the lexicalized meaning '(to) receive', '(to) win', '(to) gain'. Clearly,

the metaphoricity of ἄρνυμαι, which is also based on the orientational conceptual metaphor UP IS ACTIVE, is so low as to be likely semantically opaque even to a native Ancient Greek language user.

51 In the Homeric *Iliad*, our oldest extant source of Ancient Greek literature, (ἐπ-)αἴρω/αἴρομαι is not used metaphorical, however, the orientational metaphor ACTIVE IS UP already occurs in formulae employing the verbs ὀρίνω/ὄρνυμαι, which is attributed to a root *h₃er- '(a)rise' by Beekes 2010, 1107 s. v. ὄρνυμαι: thus war (*Il.* 2.797; 12.361), strife (*Il.* 3.87; 12.348, 361; 13.122, 15.400; 24.107), clamor (*Il.* 11.530), noise (*Il.* 2.810; 4.449; 8.59, 63; 16.633; 21.313), lamentation (*Il.* 24.760) are said to arise or be raised.

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