

ON THE HORIZON OF HOSPITALITY

Thea Madeleine Potter

ABSTRACT: A thrown stone raises the question of the position of authority and does so only by remarking us as responsible for our limits and their transgression, but it also raises the problem of boundaries. Are they natural, or are they inscribed in us? In Ancient Athens, boundary-stones were inscribed with a word (*horos*) that raises the problem of definition by implicating a coincidence of meanings. These stones were never supposed to mark a boundary as an adamantine barrier proscribing transgression from one side to the other. And yet they did not for all that cease to be and mark a boundary. Although the identity between the stone and the word for boundary does not provide any answers as to how boundaries should be maintained or dissolved, it does raise the problem of the relation that the boundary engenders and the bond that it poses between two sides as a question of hospitality.

KEYWORDS: Hospitality; Derrida; Plato; Boundary; Market

THROWING STONES

When Edward Said visited Lebanon he picked up and threw a stone across the border to Israel, for this act he was barred from attending certain institutions. During the French revolution it was stones, the humble cobble, that were thrown against the troops and piled high to form the barricades. Again, in England, during the suffragette movement women wrapped stones in paper, tied a string to them and threw them at public offices, drawing the string to retrieve them. During the Al-Aqsa intifada in Palestine it was an iconic image of a young boy throwing stones, later killed by the Israeli army, that attracted the attention of the international media. In a simple protest in Athens against education cuts in 2008, it was a youth throwing stones who was killed by police and caused a general revolt. In Egypt during the recent uprising it was stones that littered the streets even as the military was sending in tanks.

Must we be satisfied in agreeing with Blanqui that the stone is the principal article in urban battles because it is most ready to hand?¹ Or has the stone gathered this reputation for insurgency on account of history's momentum, resurfacing every time because of its presence in the former revolt? As Lacan said, perhaps the stone has become an *objet petit a* for the revolutionaries.² For although we employ stones, crushing them down, piling them up, in the construction of buildings, roads and walls, here the stone, its content and form is in every way subordinated to the increasingly hostile environment we are building around us, blocking out strangers, ensuring swifter means of progress and limiting in every possible way the direct confrontation and interaction with our fellow men. And yet there is one place where the stone returns to its base material, and with it binds us in a direct relation with one another. That is, in insurrection.

But what if the symbolism of the stone is not limited to these more recent acts of historical insurrection? What if the stone itself already marks out our responsibility to struggle for what we know to be right? What if the stone actually stands as a testament to what we cannot see in the immediate world around us but recognize nonetheless as presenting a most substantial challenge to the status quo exactly because something has been missed, overlooked, or simply lost?

In the Ancient Athenian *polis* boundary stones proliferated. These stones can be identified from other stones by their inscription. They read **HOPOS**. The word *horos* (ὄρος) means 'landmark', 'boundary-stone', 'boundary', 'limit', 'term', 'definition', 'measure', 'rule', 'time', 'gravestone'. But that does not mean that *horos* ceases to be a simple stone, a stone that is simultaneously inscribed and described by the matter of language. Found in many contexts, from archaeology to philosophy, this word confounds any singular attempt to translate it or define it. It is at once the word for boundary and the name of the stone: a name that marks the distinction between word and matter. Although the *horos* marked a boundary, it was not for all that adamant. On the contrary, *horos* stood as a bond between one side and the other. It was meant to be read and therefore recognised as marking a boundary even though it never foreclosed the possibility of transgression. For in its stony presence, it always already raised the question of definition as a question of substance. Here we are working on the implicit hypothesis that words and things not only endure in a relation, but that the *horos* actually stands in for this relation as a boundary and limit, a point of division, simultaneously relating matter and language, the 'stone' with the word for 'boundary',

¹ Auguste Blanqui, *Manual for an Armed Insurrection*, trans. Andy Blunden, 2003 Available on-line: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/blanqui/1866/instructions1.html> (accessed Feb 2015).

² Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p336.

and providing the very material basis for their distinctions. The word itself refuses its abstraction from the material dilemma of the boundary, or, to be more precise, it raises the problem of the difference between word and material by always remaining between them and bringing them into distinction. *Horos* is a fence sitter, but this means that it presents us with a duplicitous problem, at once lexical and spatial.

ONE HOROS SUFFICES

In his *History of the Peloponnesian Wars* Thucydides states that ‘in the meeting of two armies one *horos* suffices’.³ Now it goes without saying that when two armies come face to face there is a presupposed boundary of contention between them, a boundary which has been brought into question by the fact of war. So long as the war rages, a boundary remains. But the problem here is exactly where this boundary is located, about which both sides are in disagreement. The location itself is at once the site of conflict and *in conflict*. In every sense it is over this very boundary that war is waged. But here we can understand the point of contention also as a unifier, where, in the words of Heidegger, ‘strife is not a rift, as a mere cleft is ripped open; rather, it is the intimacy with which opponents belong to each other’.⁴ But there is a significant difference between war (*polemos*) and civil war (*stasis*), because with war even though the boundary is in contention, it does not cease to be present as that which divides the hosts and unites them in hostility.⁵ In civil-war, however, there is not necessarily a distinct boundary that has been transgressed, there is no physical boundary (*horos*) within a singular community that divides it in two.

Stasis derives its meaning from the word ‘to stand’, and we should understand this word as did the Greeks, as a point when a community ceases its usual motion, comes to a stand-still, comes up against a wall.⁶ *Stasis* itself fulfils the function of division where ever it arises, however this division is not linked to a particular place. It could be said to be the ethical experience of division. Vardoulakis states that ‘the temporality of stasis in relation to the theologico-political is intimately linked to the impossibility of fixing stasis to a particular locus’.⁷ *Stasis* is a creation of the community, within the community, that simultaneously calls into question the very character and unity of the community as such, so that, given its multivalence, ‘stasis has the capacity to disturb

³ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Charles Foster Smith, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 2005, 4.92.4.

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, London, Routledge, 2000, p188.

⁵ Plato, *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1935, 470b.

⁶ For a full study of the concept of *stasis* in Ancient Athens, see Nicole Loraux, *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens*, trans C. Pache and F. Fort, New York, Zone Books, 2006.

⁷ Dimitris Vardoulakis, ‘Stasis Beyond Political Theology?’ in *Cultural Critique*, Number 73, Fall 2009, p142.

the mutual support of presence and absence'.⁸ Unlike the *horos*, the division in *stasis* has no immediate relation to a position, or the sacred, it is a political event even when it breaks in as an exception of authority and power. This non-positional aspect of *stasis* was disrupted by Solon when he passed a law that stated that in the case of civil-war, every man had to take up a side, thus outlawing the neutral position. In so doing he reminds us that what appears to be an exception to politics is simultaneously the ground for a new political relation, but a ground that provides neither a foundation nor a sovereign. The *state* of civil war issues in the possibility for an ethical and political relation, thus a 'responsible politics is above all a politics that eschews the violent act of separation instituting the sovereign. Stasis solicits a politics of friendship'.⁹

By instigating a law that would apply to this exceptional state, Solon placed himself not in the position of sovereign, but in the position of the mute and inanimate boundary. As he himself is quoted as saying, he placed himself not only in the position of the boundary, but *as* the boundary.

ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων ὥσπερ ἐν μεταίχμιῳ
ὄρος κατέστην.

I stood between them like a *horos* in no-man's land.¹⁰

In order to overcome *stasis*, Solon intervened *as horos*, making himself into the boundary that would at once allow and force a division within the city that could then be overcome by the community and reinstate a normal condition to the body politic which would subsequently be reformed. The *horos* raises the question of space by putting the middle place into contention and materialising what is common to either side; i.e. the boundary. The *horos* raises a topography of contraries while simultaneously bringing these contraries together, and uniting them in its own material. It is the matter that puts both difference and similarity into question and provides the point at which the one can transgress into the other. The (albeit personified) *horos* in the case of Solon meant that what was static could be manipulated into returning to motion and bringing about a condition of unity. In a sense, by taking his place on the boundary in the state of exception, but refusing the role of sovereign, Solon transformed the civil-war into a simile for war. All he had to do then was to absent himself and the city could be reunited.

⁸ Vardoulakis, 'Stasis Beyond Political Theology?', p127.

⁹ Vardoulakis, 'The Ends of Stasis: Spinoza as a Reader of Agamben' in *Culture, Theory and Critique* 51(2), 2010, p155.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution, with The Eudemian Ethics, On Virtues and Vices*. trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1967, 12.5 (author's translation).

READING BOUNDARIES

In the ancient city and its surrounds the *horos* was found along roads, between counties, marking graves, and at the entrance to sacred sites and sanctuaries. Generally, it was to be found in public, but in the 4th century it was adopted to demarcate private property subject to a mortgage of sorts.¹¹ Nonetheless, the *horos* describes a boundary line that is not wholly representative of dimension. There is no certainty that the *horoi*, in their earlier manifestation, were supposed to be linked between one another in order to describe a closed boundary or a fenced-off region.

One should hardly imagine a continuous line drawn by means of numerous stones. More probably they stood at key points, at corners and where streets entered; here they would clearly say to any disqualified person, “Thus far and no father.”¹²

But how sure can we be that this stone presented a prohibition? The *horos* itself has no imperative attributed to it. The boundary stones of the *agora* may have signified a region into which the *atimoi*, those who had committed patricide and were therefore considered ‘unclean’, were not permitted to enter, and one would assume the *horoi* that marked temple lands would have performed much the same function. And yet, the *horos* that marks a grave, the *horos* that marks the boundary between one county and another, not to mention the *horos* in the philosophical text that describes the work of definition or determination, none of these suggest any kind of prohibition. The problem that adheres to the *horos* is not that of prohibiting transgression so much as it is that of marking a boundary which otherwise would not be recognised. If it is a matter of recognising boundaries, is this not rather a problem of reading? That is, is not this boundary found *in us* because we read it as such?

Horos is the same word that appears in the Septuagint to describe the stone which, according to Deuteronomy, ‘men of old placed as a boundary upon the land’.¹³ Here, the term ‘boundary’ is used without any reference to prohibiting transgression: ‘Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour’s landmark (ὄριον)’, insist the Levites shortly after

¹¹ Studies to date that investigate the *horos* as a marker of encumbrance are, John Fine, ‘Horoi: Studies in Mortgage, Real Security and Land Tenure in Ancient Athens,’ in *The Athenian Agora* 8, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1951; Moses Finley, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500-200BC: the ‘horos’ inscriptions*, New Jersey, New Brunswick, 1952; Edward Harris, *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens: Essays on Law, Society, and Politics*, New York, City University Press, 2006, pp163-241; Gerald Lalonde, ‘Inscriptions: Horoi, Poleitai Records, Leases of Public Land’, in ed. Merle K. Langdon, Michael B. Walbank, *The Athenian Agora, vol.19*. New Jersey, American School of Classical Studies, 1991, and Lalonde, ‘Horos Dios: An Athenian Shrine and Cult of Zeus’ in *Monumenta Graeca et Romana Vol.XI*. Leiden, Brill, 2006.

¹² Homer Thompson and R.E. Wycherly, *The Agora of Athens: the history, shape and uses of an ancient city center*, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, New Jersey, Princeton, 1972, p118.

¹³ Deuteronomy 19:14, interlinear translations and interpretations from the Septuagint and King James Version. Available on-line: <http://biblehub.com/interlinear/> (accessed Feb 2015).

prohibiting graven images, ‘which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it’.¹⁴ Again in *Proverbs*, ‘Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set’ (μὴ μέταιρε ὄρια αἰώνια ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου).¹⁵ The Hebrew term is גְּבוּל *gəbūl* translated by the Greek *horion*, though more frequently in the plural form *horia*, the neuter noun of the masculine *horos*, as it is throughout the Septuagint. The Hebrew comprises a similar ambiguity to the Greek; the noun has multiple meanings ranging from ‘boundary’, ‘limit’ and ‘line’ to ‘land’, ‘area’ and ‘territory’. The primitive root of the verb (גבל) means at once ‘to bound’ and ‘to border’ as well as the added Hebraic causative verbal stem, the Hiphil stem, where the effect caused is indirect or mediated, ‘to cause to set bounds’, generating the alternative translations of the noun as ‘wall’ and ‘territory’.¹⁶ In translation the term encapsulates the coincidence between the boundary and the mark. For example, in *Deuteronomy*, ἐπικατάρατος ὁ μεταπιθεὶς ὄρια τοῦ πλησίον, ‘Cursed *be* he that removeth his neighbour’s landmark[s]’.¹⁷ If there is any prohibition here it adheres to the stone itself, the place of the stone as such, and the prohibition is directed not against crossing the boundary, but *removing the stone*.

The ‘name’ of the stone in the Greek cannot be separated from the inscription, nor can the name of the stone be separated from the word for boundary. *Horos* is both stone, inscription and boundary. These three terms coalesce in the single name ‘*horos*’. In which case any reference to such a stone, would also suggest the implicit presence of the boundary. If there is a boundary that is recognised by those on either side, the stone itself functions as the mark of this mutual and common act of reading. The stone is a boundary, marked and marking. Can we separate that which marks the boundary from the boundary itself, given that they are both signified by a single word? Does either side of the boundary take its peculiarities from the boundary, or do their differences generate the boundary? What comes first; spatial opposition or the position in between? If the stone was ‘placed’ then we could, along Hegelian lines, conceptualise this landmark as the point that negates space. And yet in the *horos* the point is confused with the line, as much as the word is with the stone.

¹⁴ Deut 19:14.

¹⁵ Prov. 22:28.

¹⁶ Bruce Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1990, p433.

¹⁷ Deut. 27:17

THE FIRST LAW

It is not only a spatial problem that is thus raised, but a legal one. For we must ask *who* placed the *horos*, *to whom the boundary belongs*, and, thus also, *who* stands to either side, divided and opposed? And, then consequently, who is expelled or made the exception of the boundary? These last questions, however, are only raised secondarily to the boundary. The first question that is raised and remains with the boundary as what *belongs to the horos* is not the generation of space on either side, but the question of difference, the question of similarity that remains with the boundary. The *horos* raises the question of space by putting place into contention and materialising what is common to either side, so that the boundary is the ‘common term’ (κοινὸς ὅρος) even though either side differ.¹⁸ The *horos* raises a topography of contraries while simultaneously bringing these contraries together, and uniting them in its own material. It is the matter that puts difference into question, by posing the question of what is common.

In *The Laws* Plato states that the prohibition against removing boundary stones is the first law of Zeus, punishable twice over, first according to the justice of the gods, then by the laws of man.

The first law, that of *Horos* Zeus [Διὸς ὁρίου] shall be stated thus: No man shall move earth’s *horoi*, whether they be those of a neighbour who is a native citizen or those of a foreigner (in case he holds adjoining land on a frontier), recognising that this is truly to move the immovable; sooner let a man try to move the largest rock which is not a *horos* than a small stone which marks the boundary between friendly and hostile ground under the oath of the gods. For of the one Kinship Zeus is witness, of the other Foreigner Zeus; who, when aroused, brings wars most hostile. He that obeys the law shall not suffer the evils which it inflicts; but he who despises it shall be liable to a two-fold justice, first and foremost from the gods, and second from the law.¹⁹

Could it be assumed that every *horos* is the mark of the omnipresence of this Zeus of the *horos*? On the outskirts of Athens there was a temple to an unknown Zeus marked by a *horos* of this name, dated amongst the oldest of the Athenian *horoi*, bearing the rupestral inscription HOΠΟΣ : ΔΙΟΣ [retrograde] (*horos of Zeus*). As one epigraphical study suggests,

¹⁸ Aristotle, *The Categories, with On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, trans. Harold P. Cook and Hugh Tredennick, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1962, 4b20.

¹⁹ Plato, *Laws*, trans. R.G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1967, 843A-B (author’s translation).

this “Horos of Zeus” is a type of abbreviated marker of shrines, in which the word ἱεροῦ or τεμένους is either understood as part of the meaning of ὁρός, and a byname of the god was perhaps assumed as known.²⁰

The implication is that the *horos*, by marking the site, consecrates it, and is coterminous with the sacred quality of the place it identifies. If we take this to apply to all *horoi* we could assume that any boundary-stone to be recognised as such must be the guiding thread of the sacred; it need not be accompanied by a prohibition as it already stands in order that the sacred remain inviolate, and in this case any boundary could be said to be ‘sacred’. Therefore, as Plato informs us, the first law must be the prohibition against the transgression of the boundary-stone, and he who is guilty of moving *horoi* is guilty of attempting to remove the very stones that draw up the boundaries, that define the boundaries (and here we see the verbal form of the *horoi*, ὀρίζοντα) sanctioned in oath by the gods (ἔνορκον παρὰ θεῶν). And not only this, for, just as the boundary-stone of *Deuteronomy* was not to be removed from the boundary, so here in the *Laws* the removal of the stone is also a trespass on logic, to move the immovable (τὸ τὰκίνητα κινεῖν).

It is essential to note that neither the stone nor this first law prohibit the transgression of the boundary. The intention is not the prohibition of people passing from one side to the other, but rather it has to do exclusively with the material of the boundary itself, with the boundary *as marker*. It is a law that does not deal with people’s movements but with the matter of marking the boundary, or the terms of the boundary. It is not *we* who are prohibited from crossing the boundary, it is the boundary itself that must remain without motion, and, being put out of motion it is thus beyond human authority, making it at once an object of divine justice and corroborated by the law of man. It would be wrong to assume that this law, given its divine sanction, is therefore not a human law. It may not be inscribed on the tablets of the city, but this does not mean that it is not inscribed. The law of *horos* Zeus is, properly, *topographical*. It is written into the land as the first law of the land, the first law that protects the laws of logic – it draws up the boundaries between the possible and the impossible in language. This law thus finds its true topos in language, in *logos*.

It is a linguistic boundary that the *horos* marks. Not only because the word itself means ‘definition’ and therefore marks that point where the definition of one word is at once separated off from other words while simultaneously relying on them, and thus crossing over into further definitions. But also because as the boundary between two peoples, or two regions, it marks the linguistic barrier, the point of difference between kin and stranger. More likely than not, it is where two different languages meet, where

²⁰ Lalonde, ‘Horos Dios: An Athenian Shrine and Cult of Zeus’, p6.

two different customs or codes find their point of confrontation, a place where one must take care not to offend. A certain danger adheres to the boundary, but only if one is not welcome on the other side. That is because the relation that the boundary describes can never be entirely determined. Despite the solidity of the stone, the boundary must be recognised by both parties on either side in order for it to be maintained as such, otherwise the boundary itself becomes not a point of definition, but a site of hostility, of undetermined contention. The boundary itself would come into question. This is how we should understand Plato's law. For if the boundary is maintained *in friendship*, it can be transgressed and yet remains in place. The boundary that is maintained and protected out of fear and aggression always already calls into question the boundary. The boundary marked by walls and barriers insinuates a question: if the barrier was not protected by military surveillance and arms, could its character as boundary be maintained? Would it still be recognised as a boundary? The barrier already implies that the boundary *is not legitimate*, because it is not agreed upon by both sides, it is not common to both sides. The word *horos* also means 'term', and here we can see that the boundary, although it is the mark of difference, also stands as a common term, it is exactly the boundary that is shared, and held in common by either side. The legitimacy of the boundary-stone is not first and foremost prescribed by law, rather it is written and read as a common understanding.

The single stone protected by *Horos Zeus* comprises the internal confrontation or conjunction between two other epithets of Zeus named by Plato as Zeus of kinship (ὁμόφυλος Ζεὺς) and Zeus of hospitality (ξένιος). The boundary-stone here gives definition to the difference between kinship and hospitality by drawing up a secondary relation, that between friend and enemy (φιλίαν τε καὶ ἔχθραν). This second relation belongs to hospitality, *xenia*, which is the friendly relation one has with strangers. The word for 'stranger', *xenos*, is also that of 'guest' and includes the obligation to play 'host', also *xenos*. Kinship Zeus must be presumed to protect relations *within*, i.e. *on this side of*, the boundary while *Xenios* Zeus stands guard over the relations between here and there, that is, between strangers; there where we cannot be told apart except by what defines us in common. We are, both of us strangers to one another. Our identity is pure reduplication: *xenos xenos*. But there is a boundary that nonetheless separates us and offers us the possibility of transgressing over into difference, of welcoming one another and introducing ourselves as something more than strangers, of learning the other's, and also giving ourselves, a name, place, heritage and so forth.²¹ This boundary is the possibility of *xenia*, of the hospitable relation. The stone demands what

²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p25.

the text prohibits, at least in regards to *crossing over*, or the maintenance of friendly relations. But, then, this can occur only if we both recognise the presence of a boundary that makes us *both* strangers, one to the other.

Of course, this interpretation coincides perfectly with the archaeological history of the *horos*, which states that a *horos* is differentiated from other stones only insofar as it is *read as such*. The *horos* is the stone that is distinguished from the 'natural' stone *according to logos*, (whether inscribed or not) it is called *horos*. The question, therefore, of the law is not here a question of authority or authenticity, of who wrote the law, in whose power the law resides. The question that must precede any question of writing is deflected by the question that the stone itself raises, which is: who *reads* the *horos*? Who recognises the boundary? The difference that is thus generated by the *horos* is between those who read the *horos* as *horos* and those who fail to do so. This division takes place as the basis for the laws of the land which subsequently belong to whomsoever has the capacity to distinguish them.

In this case, there is something mutual about the boundary. A boundary that is not in contention becomes a common bond, a boundary that divides, yes, but also a bond that permits transgression so long as it is transgressed *in friendship*.

Therefore the *horos* gives onto, and gives only onto hospitality, to the possibility of two different people sharing something in common, even if this is none other than the boundary itself which divides them. It suggests a bond to those who transgress it in friendship, whether they belong to the same tribe or are bound in a relation of hospitality with that tribe. But it exactly ceases to be (read as) a boundary the minute that it is crossed in enmity, because in that case the aggressor simply doesn't, or refuses to recognise it as such. Thus, the *horos* raises the question of hospitality and puts hostility out of the question. But this is because the *question of hospitality* itself already raises the possibility of hostility. In the words of Plato, the *horos* draws up the boundary between friendship (*philia*) and hostility (*echthra*). Of the former kinship Zeus is protector, of the latter *xenios* Zeus, hospitality Zeus. This is no archaic Schmittian parallel maintaining a distinction of estrangement between friend and enemy.²² On the contrary, since the *horos* binds these two epithets it singularly permits, or rather *demand*s a relation that as such both makes possible and proscribes enmity. Hostility is only possible under the protectorate of *xenios Zeus*, as the possibility of hospitality failed, transgressed, perverted. Hospitality and hostility are not contraries, the latter is, rather, dependent upon the former as an inherent possibility. If hostility isn't experienced as a

²² Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2007.

possibility, hospitality ceases to be something freely given. This is the definition (*horos*), the *horizon* of hospitality.

WITHOUT HORIZON

Derrida states that when it comes to hospitality there is an opening without horizon.²³ It is no coincidence that he uses the word ‘horizon’ to explain this point. For horizon functions in two senses here. On the one hand, it is the perspective that we share, in the Husserlian sense, it demarcates the limits within which live. It describes our world as one lived in a common and expandable relation to and between the objects that surround us.²⁴ But the word horizon is also derived from the word *horos*, it is the verbal adjective that the Greeks used to describe the circular boundary that embraces the world, ὁ τοῦ ὀρίζοντος κύκλος, ὁ ὀρίζων κύκλος.²⁵ The horizon is what gives definition, what marks the limits of our world, drawing up the boundary between the world and the heavens.

Is this horizon experienced as a limitation? It is certainly a limit, just as the *horos* itself can be translated as ‘limit’, but perhaps a limit that does not act as a restriction as such. And we must not fail to note the etymological link between the *horizon* and the *horos*, as if the nominal *horos* was put into action in the spectral limits of our world. Without this limit (*horos*), a term that must be read even though it provides no terms as such, hospitality retains the possibility of offering itself as hostility. But the *horos* is also the limit that asserts that hospitality must remain hospitality. Without such a limit, in the absence of some kind of term or boundary, the idea of hospitality is meaningless. Here we could say, then, that the *horos* is necessary for hospitality, opening up the possibility of transgressing boundaries, of coming to terms with confrontation, whether in friendship or enmity, before any conditions are placed upon guest or host as to whom is accepted or with what intentions the boundary is crossed.

We say ‘*horos*’, and this marks out the difference between a mere boundary and a mere stone: *horos* is exactly that which comes in between, it describes that difference but only because it is read by us. Hospitality proceeds from this limit, opening up or breaking through the horizon to further transgression and abuse. Thus Derrida suggested that ‘pure’ or ‘unconditional’ hospitality is an *aporia*, it always contains the

²³ Derrida, ‘Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A dialogue with Jacques Derrida’ in ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley, *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 1999, p70.

²⁴ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr, Evanston, North Western University Press, 1978, p184.

²⁵ Aristotle *Meteorologica*, trans. H.D. P. Lee, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1962, 363a27; *On the Heavens*, trans. W.K.C. Guthrie, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1960, 297b34.

possibility of flipping over into its opposite, or of failing to be given.²⁶ And consequently a 'pure' hospitality, is, as Derrida states 'without horizon', we could say it remains always on the boundary – that thin line – because it is the limit point as such (*horos*) that is itself unlimited.

If, however, there is pure hospitality, or a pure gift, it should consist in this opening without horizon, without horizon of expectation, an opening to the newcomer whoever that may be. It may be terrible because the newcomer may be a good person, or may be the devil: but if you exclude the possibility that the newcomer is coming to destroy your house – if you want to control this and exclude in advance this possibility – there is no hospitality. In this case, you control the borders, you have customs officers, and you have a door, a gate, a key and so on. For unconditional hospitality to take place you have to accept the risk of the other coming and destroying the place, initiating a revolution, stealing everything, or killing everyone. That is the risk of pure hospitality and pure gift, because a pure gift might be terrible too.²⁷

If we read this horizon as what remains of the *horos* in the present day then we can accept Derrida's conclusion that Hospitality appears as an *aporia*, a problem that does not permit passage, literally *a-* 'without', *-poros* 'passage'. It is a problem that must remain irresolvable because what marks the boundary is exactly the task of reading, of the mutual recognition of the boundary. And the boundary is therefore either maintained because it is held in common, or transgressed because it is disputed. But that is not the real issue, for it is easy enough for those who are privy to the boundary, for those who are able to read the stone, to choose in what manner they cross the boundary. But how does the boundary stand for the real foreigner, the foreigner who does not, because he cannot, read the stone as boundary, the foreigner who is unfamiliar with the laws of the land and therefore transgresses the boundary unwillingly, unwittingly or without the wherewithal to act in accordance with the laws of the land, and always at risk of defying the first law? This is where 'pure' hospitality is found, exactly where the boundary comes into question, not because it is revoked or removed, but simply because it is not read as such. Hence the *horos*, in being unperceived by the foreigner, signifies something beyond its own definition, term and limit. The *horos* itself always comes *in between* friendship and enmity, it is itself an open definition, but nonetheless material. The *horos* always remains with the boundary as the only position to which no determinate position belongs, and it is in this absolute relation with the boundary as such that we are all of us strangers.

²⁶ Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993, p11.

²⁷ Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A dialogue with Jacques Derrida' in ed. Kearney, p70.

THE QUEST(ION) OF HOSPITALITY

The *horos* stands as and marks out the aporetic structure of hospitality, or, better, it provides a horizon in contention, a boundary of confrontation, where the *aporia* of hospitality, the problem itself can be raised. Thus hospitality's 'purity' is based upon a certain boundary, which always presents itself as a risk. So long as the *horos* remains and is unmoved, this problem refuses solution, because so long as the boundary is observed there will always be those on one side, and those on the other. And then hospitality always remains as a possibility, whether offering it or receiving it, and so does hostility. If we put hospitality into question- as something that we might not give, if we conceptualise it not as a gift but as a right that must be permitted or held back, if we refuse it to some or place conditions on how it is to be received, then we put the boundary out of question. The boundary that does not remain open ceases to be mutual, it becomes proper to one side or the other, and ceases to be a boundary as such, it becomes a barrier and the boundary as such is deferred. And by being deferred, it is subject to question. Ironically enough, then, the state that privileges entry to some and refuses it to others can be seen to undermine the very existence of its own borders.

We can thus offer an alternate reading of Plato's first law against the removal of the boundary-stones by suggesting that it is not the transgression of the boundaries as such, but the transgression of the hospitable relation that rouses Zeus *Xenios* to inflict wars. Hostile is he who estranges himself from the obligation to play guest-host, not only to be the generous, bountiful host, but – and this is the harder – to be a stranger, to let oneself be defined *as the other of the other*.²⁸ This indebtedness (of self) to other is inscribed upon the land, both boundary and bond that cannot be proscribed or prohibited. Rather, as the question that would put the law of the 'same' out of play, it demands transgression by virtue of a certain similarity between guest and host that nonetheless remain in a common estrangement. Any relation with the stranger automatically puts one in the parallel position of stranger, and it is this universal notion of estrangement that binds men.

Hospitality always has the possibility of giving onto friendship *and* enmity, hence Derrida's neologism 'hostipitalité'.²⁹ The *horos*, however, gives only onto hospitality. In this case, however, the *horos* is not itself an *aporia*. It is not a problem, or a question as such, even though it *gives onto* or *raises problems*. If it is read as boundary then it *is* a boundary, if it is not read as such it retreats into its identity as stone. And, as Plato

²⁸ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, California, Meridian, 1999, p23.

²⁹ Derrida, 'Hostipitality', in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar, London, Routledge, 2002, p356.

says, to move the largest stone that is not a *horos* is just fine. The assumption being that we *already know which is which*.

The point is that when it comes to reading the boundary-stone one is not at liberty to choose sides. One simply finds oneself on one side or the other, or else, a man is so foreign that he can't even recognise the *horos* as such. The *horos* however is distinctly present as *material* and at once belongs to the past, standing as a rule that the present also belongs to the past. It is what gives distinction to he who reads the *horos* as a boundary, and he who doesn't. Without this mark there would be no difference between you and me, mine and yours, but nor would there be any frontline of battle, no boundary to fight over.

It is in this light that the insurrectionary stone-throw should be understood. For it is an act directed against the hubristic violence of the border and the barrier, the wall and property. The stone-throw gestures towards what is common by putting such boundaries into question and by transgressing them with the most stolidly inanimate material. For the stone-throw yet retains the possibility of the dissolution of the militarized border, or the armed aggressor. It is a symbol of friendship winning out over hostility, of offering out a hand for embrace in hospitality. All who wish it are welcome to join the insurrection. The problem every insurrection faces is, however, how long the people are prepared to fight guns with stones, before the injustices they have suffered compel them either to turn inward in despair and accept the terms of the victor, or to embrace the same means of violence as are directed against them. The thrown-stone raises the question of the boundary that separates us from them. But it also raises the question of lost bonds. By giving material form to both question and loss, the mere stone offers us alternate measures and social ties that would bind us to the destruction of the forces which occupy and seek to manipulate us and the archaic frontiers of our life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. *The Athenian Constitution*, with *The Eudemian Ethics*, *On Virtues and Vices*, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1967.
- . *The Categories*, with *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, trans. Harold P. Cook and Hugh Tredennick, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1962.
- . *On the Heavens*, trans. W.K.C. Guthrie, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1960.
- . *Meteorologica*, trans. H.D. P. Lee, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1962.

- Blanqui, Auguste. *Manual for an Armed Insurrection*, trans. Andy Blunden, 2003. Available on-line:
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/blanqui/1866/instructions1.html>
 (accessed Feb 2015) Source: *Instruction pour une prise d'armes. L'Éternité per les astres, hypthèse astronomique et autres textes*, Société encyclopédique français, Editions de la Tête de Feuilles, 1972.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993.
- _____. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, California, Meridian, 1999.
- _____. Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond, trans. Rachel Bowlby, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000.
- _____. *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar, London, Routledge, 2002.
- _____. *Deuteronomy and Proverbs: interlinear translations and interpretations from the Septuagint and King James Version*. Available on-line: <http://biblehub.com/interlinear/> (accessed Feb 2015).
- Fine, John V. A. 'Horoi: Studies in Mortgage, Real Security and Land Tenure in Ancient Athens,' in *The Athenian Agora vol.8*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1951.
- Finley, Moses. *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500-200BC: the 'horos' inscriptions*, New Jersey, New Brunswick, 1952.
- Harris, Edward M. *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens: Essays on Law, Society, and Politics*, New York, City University Press, 2006.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, London, Routledge, 2000.
- Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr, Evanston, North Western University Press, 1978.
- Kearney, Richard and Mark Dooley, *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 1999.
- Lalonde, Gerald V. 'Inscriptions: Horoi, Poleitai Records, Leases of Public Land' in ed. Merle K. Langdon, Michael B. Walbank, *The Athenian Agora, vol.19*. New Jersey, American School of Classical Studies, 1991.
- _____. 'Horos Dios: An Athenian Shrine and Cult of Zeus' in *Monumenta Graeca et Romana Vol.XI*. Leiden, Brill, 2006.
- Loraux, Nicole. *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens*, trans C. Pache and F. Fort, New York, Zone Books, 2006.

- Plato. *Laws*, trans. R.G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 1967.
- _____. *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, Loeb Classical Library, London: Harvard, 1935.
- Roudinesco, Elisabeth. *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2007.
- Thompson, Homer A and R.E. Wycherly. *The Agora of Athens: the history, shape and uses of an ancient city center*, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, New Jersey, Princeton, 1972.
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Charles Foster Smith, Loeb Classical Library, London, Harvard, 2005.
- Vardoulakis, Dimitris. 'Stasis Beyond Political Theology?' in *Cultural Critique*, Number 73, Fall 2009, 125-147.
- _____. 'The Ends of Stasis: Spinoza as a Reader of Agamben' in *Culture, Theory and Critique* 51(2), 2010, 145-156.
- Waltke, Bruce K. and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1990.