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# *Cento Vergilianus De Magna Indunatione*

*Livia J. Hoffman*

## **Proem:**

1. *Dominus*<sup>1</sup>, | prima repetens ab origine pergam; (A.4.214 | A.1.372)
2. Sit mihi fas audita loqui: | sententia visa est. (A.6.266 | A.4.287)
3. Da facilem cursum | atque animis inlabere nostris. (G.1.40 | A.3.89)
4. Matres atque viri, | pueri innuptaeque puellae, (A.6.306 | G.4.476)
5. Accipite haec animis, laetasque advertite mentes! (A.5.304)

Lord, repeating, I will proceed from the first beginning; / allow me to speak the law having been heard: a plan has appeared (to me). / Make my path easy and pass into our souls. / Mothers and men, boys and unwed girls, / take these words to (your) mind, and give joyful attention!

## **The Creation:**

6. Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentes (A.6.724)
7. Ipse pater statuit | rerum cui prima potestas: (G.1.353 | A.10.100)
8. Hic ver purpureum | atque alienis mensibus aestas, (E.9.40 | G.2.149)
9. Sanguineisque inculta rubent aviaria baxis. (G.2.430)
10. Necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, (G.2.539)
11. Necdum impositos duris crepitare incudibus enses (G.2.540)

In the beginning, the Father himself established heaven, the lands, / and the watery fields, He who has supreme power over things: / here spring was purple, and summer came in unfamiliar months, / and the uncultivated territories of birds are red with blood-colored berries. / No ear of man had heard the call of war trumpets yet, / nor the clang of the swords on the harsh anvils.

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1. *dominum* → *dominus*

## The Fall of Humankind:

12. Deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas: (A.8.326)
13. Sol medium caeli conscenderat igneus orbem, (A.8.97)
14. Arebant herbae, et victum seges aegra negabat. (A.3.142)
15. Ausi omnes inmane nefas ausoque potiti, (A.6.624)
16. Condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro, (G.2.507)
17. Et Belli rabies et amor successit habendi. (A.8.327)

Until, gradually, the age weakened and paled: / the fiery sun had risen to the middle of the ark of the sky, / the grass withered, and the sickly harvest denied its fruits. / All dared a monstrous sin and attained what they dared, / another man collects treasures / and riches, and broods with his gold having been concealed, / and the madness of war and the desire for possession followed.

## God Begins the Flood:

18. Tum pater omnipotens, | hominum rerumque repertor, (A.10.100 | A.12.829)
19. Eurum ad Zephyrumque vocat, deinc talia fatur (A.1.131)
20. Et procul: "O miseri, quae tanta insania, cives? (A.2.42)
21. Tantane vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri?" (A.1.132)
22. Diffugient comites et nocte tegentur opaca: (A.4.123)
23. His ego nigrantem commixta grandine nimum, (A.4.120)
24. Desuper infundam, et tonitru caelum omne ciebo. (A.4.122)
25. *Non*<sup>2</sup> mea iam mutata loco sententia cedit!" (A.9.220)

Then the Father Almighty, the creator of men and things, / calling to the East and the West, voiced these things / from afar: "O miserable citizens, what so great a madness is this? / Has so great a confidence in your race taken hold of you humans? / The companions will scatter and will be covered by dark night: / on these men I will pour a dark cloud mixed with hail, / and from above I will rouse the whole sky with thunder. / My judgment, having already been changed, does not depart from its place!"

## Description of the Flood:

26. Id vero horrendum ac visu mirabile ferri! (A.7.78)
27. Seraque terrifici cecinerunt omnia vates: (A.5.524)
28. Fit sonus, ingenti concussa est pondere tellus. (A.9.752)
29. Olli caeruleus supra caput astitit imber, (A.5.10)
30. Intonuere poli, et crebris micat ignibus aether, (A.1.90)
31. Exsultans rorem late dispergit amarum, (G.4.431)
32. Et genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum. (G.3.480)
33. Involvere diem nimbi, et nox umida caelum, (A.3.196)
34. Abstulit | et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem, (A. 3.197 | A.1.509)
35. Impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem. (G.1.468)
36. *Ipsa*<sup>3</sup> Iovis rapidum iaculata e nubibus ignem, (A.1.42)
37. Terram inter fluctus aperit; fruit aestus harenis. (A.1.107)
38. Horror ubique animo, simul ipsa silentia terrent! (A.2.755)
39. Sternit argos, sternit sata laeta bovumque labores (A.2.305)
40. Dilutit: inplentur fossae et cava flumina crescunt. (G.1.326)
41. Disicitque rates evertitque aequora ventis, (A.1.43)
42. Adparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto— (A.1.118)
43. Quam multa in silvis autumnii frigore primo lapsa cadunt folia—  
(A.6.309)
44. In partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat, (A.8.20)
45. Insequitur clamorque virum stridorque rudentum: (A.1.87)
46. Tum vox taetrum dira inter odorem. (A.3.229)

A truly remarkable and horrible sight was brought! / Frightful prophets sang of all these late signs: / there was a sound, and the earth was shaken under huge weight. / Then a dark-blue rain cloud hung overhead, / the poles thunder and the aether flashes with frequent fire, / all around bitter drizzle splashing up scatters far and wide, / and all livestock and all wild beasts, were handed over to death. / The clouds enveloped the day and the rainy darkness stole the sky, / the black night removed color from things, / and the impious world feared eternal night. / He himself, having hurled the quick fire of Jupiter from the clouds, / reveals the land between the wave; and the surge rages with sand. / Horror was everywhere in the spirit, and even silence itself terrifies! / He covers the fields and the fertile orchards, and washes away / the work of oxen: trenches filled up and the deep waters swell. / He hurls rafts around and overturns the seas with winds, / scattered men appear, swimming in a vast whirlpool— / As many as leaves gliding and falling in the forest at the first chill of Autumn— / and He whirls them in different directions and turns over everything, / and the shouting of men and the creaking of ropes follow: / then there is a deadly shriek amongst the foul stench.

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3. *ipsa* → *ipse*

## Noah Pleads to God:

47. Tum pietate gravem ac meritis, | mirabile dictu, (A.1.151 | A.1.439)
48. Atque haec ipse suo tristi cum corde volutat, (A.6.185)
49. Continuo | alacris palmas utrasque tetendit (A.3.196 | A.6.685)
50. Effusaeque genis lacrimae et vox excidit ore: (A.6.686)
51. “O pater, O hominum rerumque aeterna potestas, (A.10.18)
52. Ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco! (A.1.666)
53. Heu quianam tanti cinxerunt aethera nimbi? (A.5.13)
54. Parce pio generi, et propius res aspicias nostras. (A.1.526)
55. Hic pietatis honos? Sic nos in sceptris reponis? (A.1.253)
56. Talia perstabat memorans fixusque manebat. (A.2.650)

But one man, abounded in piety and merits, marvelous to say, / himself ponders these things with his saddened heart, and / immediately he stretches out both of his hands eagerly— / tears having poured down from his cheeks—a cry slips from his mouth: / “O Father, O eternal power over people and things, / I take refuge to you, and humbly beseech your divinity! / Alas! Why do such storm clouds shroud the sky? / Spare my pious people, and look upon our affairs more closely. / Is this the reward of piety? Do you restore us to power in this way?” / Uttering such words, he stood still and remained motionless.

## God Addresses and Reassures Noah and his Men:

57. Hos inter motus, | media inter talia verba, (A.11.225 | A.12.318)
58. Incipit et dictis divinum aspirat amorem: (A.8.373)
59. “O praestans animi iuvenis, | absiste precando: (A.12.19 | A.8.403)
60. Praecipites vigilate, viri | timor omnis abesto: (A.4.573 | A.11.14)
61. Parce metu: | quae dicam animis advertite vestris (A.1.257 | A.2.712)
62. Hoc etiam his addam, tua si mihi certa voluntas: (A.7.548)
63. Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis!” (A.1.207)

In the midst of these things, as such words were spoken, / he begins and breathes divine love into his words: / “O outstandingly brave young man, give up your pleading. / Be ready and alert men, and let all fear disappear: / spare your fear: heed what I say in your minds. / To this I would add, if your will for me is certain: / endure, and preserve yourselves for better things!”

## Conclusion of the Flood:

64. Sic ait, et dicto citius tumida aequora placat: (A.1.142)
65. Aera dimovit tenebrosum et dispulit umbras, (A.5.839)
66. Collectasque fugat nubes, solemque reducit. (A.1.143)
67. Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit, (A.4.129)
68. Et vastas aperit syrtis, et temperat aequor. (A.1.146)
69. Iam sole infuso, iam rebus luce rectis, (A.9.461)
70. Fundit humus flores | et frondes explicat omnes (E.9.41 | G.2.335)

The Lord spoke, and more quickly than his word subdued the swelling of the floods: / he moved the murky air apart and dispelled the shadows, / disperses the collected clouds, and brings back the light. / Meanwhile, rising dawn leaves the ocean, / and from the sand-strewn shore out-ebbing far he appears and calms the whole sea. / And as the sun's rays were spreading out, and as things were revealed in light, / the land scatters flowers and unfolds all its foliage.

## Noah and his Companions Speak to God and Receive the Sign of the Dove:

71. Postquam cuncta videt caelo constare sereno, (A.3.518)
72. Talia voce refert: | "vigor et caelestis origo, (A.1.94 | A.6.730)
73. Omnipotens, | quove ire iubes? Ubi ponere sedes? (A. 10.100 | A.3.88)
74. Hi nostri reditus expectatique triumphis? (A.11.54)
75. Nunc, ad te et tua magna, pater, consulta revertor: (A.11.410)
76. Da, pater, augurium, atque animis inlabere nostris!" (A.3.89)
77. Avia tum resonant avibus virgulta canoris (G.2.328)
78. *Et*<sup>4</sup> gemere aerie cessavit turtur ab ulmo (E.1.58)
79. O dolor atque decus, | tantarum gloria rerum! (A.10.507 | A.3.232)
80. *Paternas*<sup>5</sup> agnovit avis laetusque precatur: (A.6.193)

Afterwards, when he sees that all was still under a peaceful sky, / he says such things with his voice: "O strength and origin of the heavens, / all-powerful Lord, where do you command us to go? Where should we settle? / Is this our return and our awaited triumph? / Now, Father, I turn to you once again and to your great plans: / give us a sign, Father, to stir our hearts!" / Then the thickets resound with singing birds, / and from the airy elm the dove ceased its groaning: / O grief

---

4. *et* → *nec*

5. *Maternas* → *paternas*

and honor, glory of such great things! / He recognized the bird of his Father, and happily prayed:

### **Noah Thanks God and Addresses his Companions:**

81. "Salve, sancte parens: iterum salvete, recepti! (A.5.80)
82. Ore favete omnes, et cingite tempora ramis: (A.5.71)
83. Audite, O proceres," ait, "et spes discite vestras. (A.3.103)
84. Ergo agite, et laetum cuncti celebremus honorem! (A.5.58)
85. Exstruimusque toros dapibusque epulamur opimis." (A.3.224)

"Hail, sacred Father: again, hail, you having rescued us! / All be silent now, and wreathe your heads: / listen, my noble men," he said, "and learn your hope! / Come and let us all celebrate this sacrifice with joy! / Let us set up couches and dine at a rich feast."

### **Noah and his Men Feast and Give Thanks to God:**

86. Circum omnis famulumque manus, | mirabile dictu, (A.11.34 | A.1.439)
87. Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant: (A.1.152)
88. Ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet. (A.1.153)
89. Continuo, caedit binas de more bidentes (A.5.96)
90. Totque sues, totidem nigrantis terga iuvencos. (A.5.97)
91. Tergora deripiunt costis et viscera nudant. (A.1.211)
92. Tum victu revocat vires fusique per herbam (A.1.214)
93. Implentur veteris Bacchi pinguisque ferinae. (A.1.215)
94. Postquam extempa fames et amor compressus edendi, (A.8.184)
95. Molirique arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa. (A.4.55)
96. O fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt! (A.1.437)

The whole band of attendants all around, marvelous to relate, / having caught sight of him, are silent, and stand with raised ears: / that man rules their spirits with his words, and calms their hearts. / He immediately kills two sheep as customary, / and two pigs, and as many black-backed cows. / They rip the hides from the ribs and bare the flesh. / Then they revive their strengths with food, and scattered through the grass, / they are filled with old wine and rich venison. / When hunger had been driven away, and the desire to eat was allayed, / the companions make

a citadel, and with their own hands roll up the rocks. / O blessed are they, whose walls now rise!

## Conclusion:

97. Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas! (G.2.490)  
 98. Ex illo celebratus honos, laetique minores (A.8.628)  
 99. Servavere diem | tot iam labentibus annis. (A.8.929 | A.2.14)  
 100. Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt! (A.1.609)

Happy is she, who was able to know the causes of things! / From this, the honor is celebrated, and happy posterity / saves the day already, with so many years now slipping away. / Your honor, your name, and your praise will always remain!

## Reflection on my *Cento Vergilianus De Magna Inundatione*

For my final project, I have composed a 100-line Vergilian cento revolving around the story of the Great Flood from the Old Testament, in order to better understand the literary cultures of both Late and Classical Antiquity.<sup>6</sup> A cento is a poetic form composed entirely of lines from other poets, with the Homeric cento being a precursor to the Vergilian cento.<sup>7</sup> As the cento genre relies on canonical works for its sources, my poem is derived from lines within the three major works of Vergil: the *Aeneid*, the *Georgics*, and the *Eclogues*.<sup>8</sup>

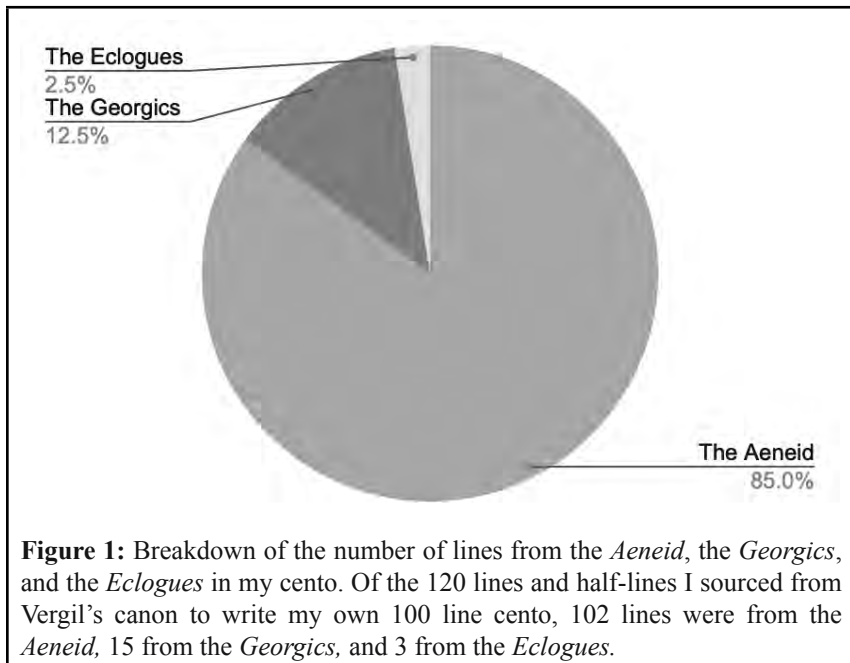
6. The Latin word, cento, is derived from the Greek κέντρον, which means “prick” or “needle”—thus metonymically, the poem is a piece of needlework. See Usher and Aelia Eudocia, *Homeric Stitchings: the Homeric Centos of the Empress Eudocia*, 1. Regarding the Vergilian cento in particular, sixteen survive from antiquity, ranging from c. 200 to c. 534 CE. Twelve of these centos are concerned with mythological and secular subjects, while the other four are concerned with Christian topics. See McGill, Scott, *Virgil Recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity*, xv.

7. McGill, Scott, *Virgil Recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity*, xvi. McGill also notes that the Vergilian cento likely arose as a counterpart to the Homeric cento, as, within the Roman world and its literary culture, Vergil was viewed as equal in stature to Homer. See McGill, Scott, *Virgil Recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity*, xvi.

8. Generally, centos of antiquity and late antiquity rely on canonical works for their sources—for Greek centos, the primary source is Homer, and for Latin it is Vergil. See Usher and Aelia Eudocia, *Homeric Stitchings: the Homeric Centos of the Empress Eudocia*, 2.

The outline of my poem's plot is as follows: my cento opens with a brief proem, in which I invoke God (rather than the Muses, as Vergil did) and ask him to assist me in narrating the story of the Great Flood. After thus addressing my audience, I transition into detailing the story of creation and the Fall of Man, helping to frame the focus around the heart of my poem, the Great Flood. In my adaptation of this Biblical narrative, I conclude with a scene of Noah and his men, having received the Sign of the Dove sent by God and feasting, celebrating, and offering sacrifices to God. I then close my poem with a brief epilogue, where I exclaim my joy in relating such a story and praise God for acting as my inspiration. In crafting my proem and epilogue, I examined those of Proba and Aelia Eudocia (in translation) for guidance.

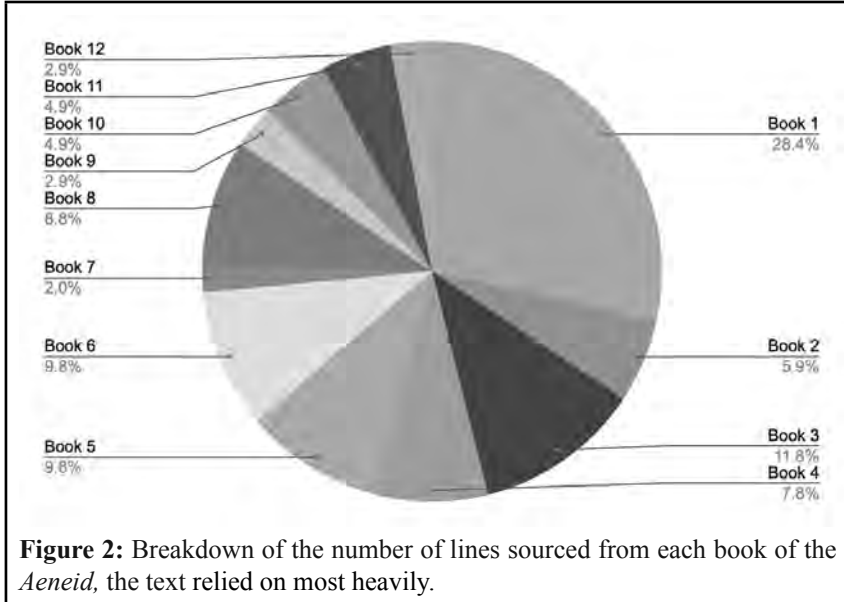
As I composed my cento, I found that most lines and half-lines were selected from the *Aeneid*, the work that is not only the largest of Vergil's output but also the one I am most familiar with. However, I did endeavor to include verses from the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues* to ensure that I had gathered lines from the entirety of his canon.



The majority of lines I collected from the *Aeneid* are from books 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8. I found the passage of the storm to be a useful source for lines related to the Great Flood, and Books 3 and 5 provided useful dialogue for the sacrifice and feast that Noah and his men perform at the conclusion of my poem. The



lines used for the character of Noah are primarily sourced from those concerning Aeneas, whereas the majority of lines for God are attributed to those of Jupiter (frequently—and conveniently—titled *pater*). However, in some cases lines referring to God were matched to Venus, and these lines had slight alterations of gender (e.g. *Ipse (sic) Iovis rapidum iaculata e nubibus ignem* [*ipse* is originally *ipsa*, referring to Venus]).



One difficulty encountered during my composition was describing Noah’s family using Vergilian lines. In the end, I decided instead to address them as “companions” and “noble men,” as I found many useful lines involving Aeneas (who was the main source for Noah) while addressing his men (whose lines I appropriated to describe Noah’s family).

As I wrote my cento, I aimed to preserve themes that are integral to the *Aeneid*, most specifically that of *pietas*, or piety.<sup>9</sup> The defining characteristics of *pietas* in the *Aeneid*—loyalty to one’s nation, devotion towards one’s family and ancestors, and reverence towards the gods—are embodiments of traditional Roman values. One goal I had when composing my cento was to incorporate elements of Classical Roman ideals into my poem alongside those of Christianized Rome:

9. I wished to keep *pietas* in its original Latin form, as I believe its translation as meaning ‘piety’ is limiting; the term *pietas*, which was itself considered to be a traditional Roman value, carries a variety of connotations (e.g. patriotism, dutifulness, respect for social, political, and religious order, etc.) which I believe are diminished when simply translated as ‘piety’.

thus, I endeavored to weave this theme throughout my poem, using *pietas* as an adjective (*pious*) to describe both Noah and his family. Moreover, I attempt to emphasize the *lack* of *pietas* that existed before God began the Great Flood—this functions to provide what I hope is an interesting juxtaposition, and also ties into the Christian conception of piety, which is associated with devotion to God and Christ. Had I not used Vergil’s canon as the source for my cento (e.g. had I instead decided to use lines from Homer), I would not have been able to achieve this integration of piety—of its traditional Roman definition (*pietas*) with its Christian one—in my poem.

I also wished to incorporate imagery of sacrifice and feasting from the *Aeneid* within my cento. I did not find any depiction of such events in Proba’s cento, and this was one way in which I wished to differentiate my poem from hers. Moreover, I found that the inclusion of an epic feasting scene situated the appearance of the Dove—a clear invocation of Christian symbolism—in a more Vergilian (and thus a more traditionally Roman) setting, as the feast and sacrifice immediately precedes the scene of Noah receiving the Sign of the Dove from God.

And, while my feast’s inclusion of sacrificing two sheep may appear odd (given the biblical context of boarding two animals of a species on the Ark), I felt this description achieved my goal of uniting the Roman with the Christian.

It is possible that Proba’s omission of depictions of sacrifice or feasting might hint towards a shift in sensibility from Classical to Late Roman Antiquity: possibly the act of feasting conflicted with the tenets of asceticism, which valued restraint from corporeal and sensual pleasures (food included). Moreover, the depiction of the Last Supper, which *is* present in Proba’s cento, might be a Christianization of this Vergilian and epic feast scene (aspects of which are still invoked by Proba through her conscious decision to utilize the cento genre, which draws lines from Vergil’s texts).

In addition to reviewing the works of Vergil, I also researched the centos of Proba (as mentioned), Aelia Eudocia, Luxorius, Ausonius, and Hosidius Geta. Throughout my compositional process, I relied on the Christian examples of Proba and Aelia Eudocia, with Proba having the greatest influence on my project, in part because she also sourced Vergilian lines. Proba composed her Vergilian cento, titled *Cento Vergilianus De Laudibus Christi*, in the mid-fourth century, narrating key biblical episodes from both the Old and New Testament (beginning with Genesis and concluding with the Ascension of Christ into Heaven) (Cullhed and Proba 2015: 1, 113). Proba’s cento holds a renowned position in the cento tradition, as hers is one of the earliest known Christian Vergilian centos (Ibid: 5-6). The skill and detail with which Proba executed her cento are extraordinary, and it is evident from manuscripts that her intelligence and poetic prowess were recognized and emphasized by her contemporaries (Ibid: 26).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the

10. In one illuminated manuscript, Proba is depicted at a desk with a book, holding in one hand a pen and in the other a knife, which symbolizes her “cutting” of Vergil’s work and her reassembly of his diction to create a Biblical and Christian narrative. See

study and appreciation of her work were not limited to her lifetime—in the pre-Carolingian period her cento was appraised, and in the Carolingian period her cento was canonized along with other Christian poems (Ibid: 111).<sup>11</sup>

During Proba's era, the favored lifestyle among Christians was asceticism, as the age of martyrdom had ceased (Hatch and Proba 1981: 110). As Christians were no longer widely persecuted for their faith, martyrdom in part served as inspiration for Late Antique asceticism, which transformed dying for one's faith into a rigorous *self*-denial and mortification of the body. This shift to emphasizing restraint may have also been influenced by the privileging of restraint for men in Roman culture, with asceticism functioning as another venue for Christian Roman men to emphasize their self-control. Yet, it appears that Proba does not solely stress and emphasize the importance of the ascetic lifestyle: rather, according to Elizabeth Clark, she was instead concerned with "merging the value systems of two different worlds: that which upheld the Classical Roman virtues of filial devotion, domestic harmony, and family reputation, and that of her newly adopted religion, which counseled more rigorous self-denial" (Ibid: 111). It was this combination of the values of Classical and Late Roman Antiquity with those of Christianity that most interested me, and revealed how these values were not mutually exclusive—rather, they could merge with each other in interesting and innovative ways, as revealed both through studying Proba's cento and through composing my own.

I found during my composition process that Proba's cento was the most valuable and relevant to my own product, and as such, she and her work (aside from those of Vergil) were my main sources of inspiration. In my cento, I attempted to mirror some of her stylistic choices—specifically, I included brief descriptions of the Genesis story and the Fall of Man, in order to emulate the layout of her cento, which connected multiple biblical narratives in a teleological fashion. However, due to the length of my cento, I decided to focus on material from the Old Testament and to make brief connections between multiple biblical stories.

Despite a heavy reliance on Proba and her poem, my project was also inspired by the cento of the empress Aelia Eudocia. Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius II, was a key figure in fifth-century society, holding (albeit briefly) a central role in the Byzantine court (Sowers 2020: 5). As the daughter of the Athenian sophist Leontius, Eudocia had an opportunity to receive a classical education—and this,

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Cullhed and Proba, *Proba the Prophet: the Christian Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*, 28.

11. The largest library in the Carolingian empire was the Benedictine abbey of Reichenau at the end of the ninth century, which included a copy of Proba's cento. Moreover, her cento played a role in Latin education during the Carolingian era, as early manuscripts indicate her text was used when studying the Latin language. See Cullhed and Proba, *Proba the Prophet: the Christian Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*, 89 and 91.

coupled with her artistic talent, enabled her to compose such an innovative work (Ibid: 18). Having been alienated from court and exiled from Constantinople, Eudocia traveled to Jerusalem, where she composed this piece.<sup>12</sup> The creation of Eudocia's cento reflects the renewed emphasis on women in the Theodosian dynasty, and a rejection of the traditional Roman view that women should be entirely secluded in the domestic sphere. Even prominent imperial women of Classical Rome, such as the first empress Livia, could not openly and publicly express themselves to the extent Eudocia had in her cento. Like Proba's cento, Eudocia's poem consists of a single and continuous narrative; moreover, both centos begin with the story of Genesis and conclude with the Ascension of Christ (Usher and Eudocia 1998: 3). However, one major difference is that Eudocia composed a Homeric cento and for this reason, I relied more heavily on Proba's *Cento Vergilianus De Laudibus Christi*.<sup>13</sup>

While my cento is centered around a biblical narrative, I also wished to research and examine centos of a mythological and secular nature—thus I made encounters with the centos of Ausonius, Luxorius, and Hosidius Geta. Their poems not only illustrate the potential variety of the cento as a genre, but also highlight the fact that classical myths continued to hold a significant position in art, even after the advent and rise of Christianity as a religious, cultural, and even political force in the Late Antique Roman world (McGill 2005: 71).<sup>14</sup> While I relied less heavily on their poems when composing my own cento, I found that their works provided a useful juxtaposition to the Christian centos of Proba and Aelia Eudocia. These mythological and secular centos highlighted the continuity of traditional Roman culture, while the Christian centos illustrated how the traditional Roman culture was incorporated and combined with the values of Christianity. In a nod towards this continuation of the traditional Roman mythology within Christian literature, I referenced Eurus and Zephyrus (personified as the East and the West winds). In addition, I included a line in which God is shown to wield the quick fire of Jupiter—while I could have translated this (*Iovis rapidum...ignem*) as lightning,

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12. Eudocia found herself alienated from her husband and his circle of advisors, and was ultimately accused of having an affair with Paulinus, the master of offices. Yet despite her exile, it seems she was not dismissed in disgrace, as she continued to possess an imperial retinue (at least in the earlier years of her exile), and retained the title of Augusta until her death. See Sowers, *In Her Own Words: The Life and Poetry of Aelia Eudocia*, 37.

13. It is possible Eudocia's decision to compose a Homeric cento, as opposed to a Vergilian cento, was in part due to a shift in privileging Greek over Latin in the Byzantine East. However, it is also plausible that Eudocia chose to compose a Homeric cento due to her parentage, as her father Leontius studied and taught rhetoric in Athens.

14. Extreme Christians aside, most Romans would have viewed myths as a "natural and even an essential part of their culture throughout late antiquity." See McGill, Scott, *Virgil Recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity*, 72.

I purposefully kept Jupiter's name in my translation, in an effort to have Roman mythology preserved in my Christian cento.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed composing my cento: through this process, I was able to immerse myself into a poetic genre of which I had no previous knowledge, and I was also able to gain a greater appreciation of Late Antique personalities and poetic offerings. In researching the cento genre, I found that I was able to acquire a more complete understanding of the complex culture of the Late Roman world—the continuation of some traditional Roman values, and the alteration and incorporation of others with Christian beliefs. Had I more time, I would have attempted to include more half-lines in my cento, to have drawn more lines from the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues*, and to have expanded the length of my poem. Nevertheless, I hope that my project continues the tradition of the cento genre and that it might inspire others (or perhaps just myself) to re-engage the cento tradition—whether in Latin, Greek, English, or otherwise. Most importantly, I hope that my cento illuminates the culture of the Late Antique world, specifically the interesting continuity (and alteration) of Classical Roman values in tandem with those of Christianity.

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# Clodius in Drag: How Transmisogyny Embeds Itself in the Reception of the Bona Dea Incident

*Opal Lambert*

## Introduction

“[Today I Learned] Clodius, a Roman aristocrat, dressed up in drag and snuck into a sacred women-only ritual at Julius Caesar’s [sic] house, with the intent to sleep with Caesar’s wife,” reads a Reddit post on a popular message board devoted to fun facts (Dirty\_Russian 2016). It links Wikipedia as its source—the article on the Bona Dea incident states, “Well over a century after the Clodius scandal, Juvenal describes Bona Dea’s festival as an opportunity for women of all classes, most shamefully those of the upper class – and men in drag (‘which altars do not have their Clodius these days?’) – to get drunk and cavort indiscriminately in a sexual free-for-all.” Wikipedia cites Juvenal but no translator. However, the citation of Juvenal does not back up the idea that ‘men in drag’ participated in the Bona Dea festival: first, Latin has no word that maps onto the English term ‘drag,’ and the translation of Juvenal provided does not even mention drag in the first place. Nevertheless, some translators do explicitly put ‘drag’ in Juvenal’s mouth. In his Penguin Classics translation, Peter Green writes: “What altar does not attract its Clodius in drag?” (Green 2004: 308). So why is drag centered in the reception of the Bona Dea incident, despite the term’s inaccuracy? This essay argues usage of the term ‘drag’ indicates the specifically transmisogynistic cultural anxiety academics and non-academics alike have imposed on the Bona Dea incident—a cultural anxiety which did not even exist in Republican Rome.

## How P. Clodius Pulcher Is Characterized

The Roman noble Publius Clodius Pulcher was and is a controversial figure, whose reputation as scandalous must be noted when considering the usage of ‘drag’ later in this essay. The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World begins

its entry on Clodius with mutiny he supposedly incited. Wikipedia's biographical entry describes Clodius as a "populist Roman politician and street agitator." While Wikipedia may not necessarily always be a reliable source, it is often the first place one visits to learn about a historical figure; thus, any reader previously unaware of Clodius immediately learns that he is seen as scandalous.

Importantly, however, the Bona Dea incident originally did not cause such outrage. When Clodius disguised himself as a woman to sneak into the Bona Dea proceedings at Julius Caesar's home with the intent to seduce Caesar's wife, the first response was not to bring Clodius to court. Held in honor of a goddess whose identity now remains unknown, only women could participate in the Bona Dea festival. By entering the celebration, Clodius had committed a heretical act, but it's likely that redoing the celebration (*instauratio*) was all that was legally required (Tatum 1990: 204). The best primary source for the incident derives from Cicero's letters to Atticus. Letters 1.12-1.14 and 1.16 all relay the incident to his friend Atticus in his letters with varying degrees of severity: Cicero only really places judgment onto Clodius once called in to testify against him. Cicero actually speaks quite neutrally about the incident in his first description to Atticus.

The incident came to court only because an ex-praetor called it to the Senate's attention (Cic. *Att.* 1.13.3). Prior to the trial, Cicero did not have any particular relationship with Clodius; afterwards, the two were bitter enemies. The reason for the rapid shift in relationship between the two is often debated. However, it is likely that, although Cicero did not hold much stake in the incident at first, he later decided to side against Clodius in the trial. Cicero continued to levy the incident against Clodius as an invective past Clodius' death, even though the court did not end up convicting Clodius, potentially due to bribery or violence from Clodius' supporters (Cic. *Mil.* 21.55; Lacey 1974: 90) A scandal that would have otherwise been remedied through *instauratio* became a defining part of Clodius' image. Importantly, the vast amount of Cicero's surviving works means that Cicero's narrative surrounding Clodius has shaped Clodius' received reputation.

## Effeminacy as an Attack on Roman Identity

Cicero's accusations of Clodius' effeminacy actually attack Clodius' status as a male Roman citizen, or a *vir*. Romans considered masculinity a midpoint on a spectrum between effeminacy and vulgarity: freeborn Roman men could not pay too much attention to their appearance but could not neglect it either (Olson 2014: 187). Unlike modern Western understanding of gender, social status—such as citizenship, birth, and respectability—lay encoded in the Latin word *vir* (Skinner 2005: 195). Furthermore, the Roman *vir* centered the body and sex in its "penetrator" and "penetrated" dichotomy: the gender of the *vir*'s partner did not



matter so long as the *vir* held the active role (Olson 2014: 184). The passive role lay at the effeminate end of the spectrum, “characterized as womanish, servile, and emasculated—a role well suited to slaves, prostitutes, and women but problematic if filled by another adult citizen” (Ibid.). An example of Roman masculinity’s dependence on sexual position occurs in Catullus 16, where Catullus defends his masculinity by threatening to forcefully take the active role in sex (Catull. 16). Similarly, the Latin language itself reflects this dependence: Men who took the passive role in sex “suffered womanish things” (*muliebra pati*) (Richlin 1993: 531). Thus, effeminacy could not be untangled from the passive role in intercourse but did not gender someone as it would in the present. To emasculate another *vir* was to attack their social status, not what we would characterize as their gender identity.

In fact, many authors employed invectives attacking the masculinity of another Roman *vir*. Among the ten most common accusations in Roman oratory, implying femininity was one (Corbeill 2002: 201). Cicero in particular utilizes femininity to attack moral character; many times, he does so to undermine his subject’s identity as a *vir*. For example, he utilizes Verres’ effeminacy to imply that Verres is no longer Roman in his prosecution of the governor (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.86). Furthermore, Cicero describes some of Catiline’s co-conspirators in feminine garb and “drenched in perfume” indicating he considers these signs that these men were not actually *viri*—after all, how could these men be respectable if they were trying to destroy Rome (Cic. *Cat.* 2.5, 2.22)? Furthermore, perfume also implied foreign influence, further proving that these men were not “real men” (Olson 2014: 190). So in his attacks on Clodius, Cicero’s remarks on femininity double as attacks on Clodius’ social status as a patrician adult male Roman citizen. In fact, of Clodius Cicero states, “If someone must destroy the Republic, let it at least be a *vir*” —explicitly attacking Clodius’ social status in the *De Haruspicum*. In his very next breath Cicero links this attack to Clodius’ sexual preferences: namely, implying Clodius has taken the passive role in sex *Responsis* (Cic. *Har. resp.* 42). Thus, Cicero in part attacks Clodius’ Roman identity and his citizenship in his attacks on Clodius’ effeminacy.

## Understanding Drag’s Cultural Context

Drag itself can be difficult to define and its origins difficult to trace, but integral to any account of drag is an understanding of performance. In anthropologist Esther Newton’s book *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators of America*, she explains drag queens as “highly specialized performers. The specialty is defined by the fact that its members are men who perform exclusively, or principally, in the social character of women” (Newton 1979: 5). Butler criticizes Newton’s simplifications,

pointing out that drag plays with American normative understandings of gender, since anatomy, gender identity, and gender performance are all placed at odds. To Butler, the performance of drag:

suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. As much as drag creates a unified picture of ‘woman’ (what its critics often oppose), it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. (Butler 1990: 137)

Both Newton and Butler focus on drag’s careful attention to the *American* woman—drag queens, as Newton points out, do not perform as “Hopi ‘women’ or Chinese peasant ‘women’” (Newton 1979: 5). The basis of drag, then, is not just performance but a performance of the American woman. So, even divorced from the geographic context, Cicero in no way can call Clodius’ crossdressing ‘drag’ because he never implies that Clodius performs as a woman or plays with the constructed identity of women. After all, the constructed identity of an American woman in no way can map onto the constructed identity of a Roman woman, just as American men do not place themselves in between effeminacy and vulgarity nor do American men include their citizenship status in their gender identity. Furthermore, Romans had no conception of heterosexuality and homosexuality; they prioritized sexual role rather than the gender of one’s partner.

Somewhat problematically, neither Butler nor Newton dwell on the role of trans\* women in drag.<sup>1</sup> While the terms for drag queens’ identities have shifted over the past couple of decades, trans\* women certainly would have been visible to Butler or Newton. For example, in the same year Butler published *Subversive Bodily Acts*, Jennie Livingston’s *Paris Is Burning* premiered in theaters. *Paris Is Burning*’s interviews of different New York City drag queens reveals a complicated and nuanced understanding of gender: many drag queens considered themselves women, but not all did. One trans\* woman on the beach exclaims that she is “a real woman” after sexual reassignment surgery, while another drag queen emphasizes she is not a woman at all (Livingston 1990). However, though some of these women considered themselves women, many people in society did and do not consider trans\* women as women.

Furthermore, transgender women still remain an active part of the drag community and continue to be conflated with cisgender gay men in drag. For example, GLAAD uses a large red exclamation mark to draw attention to their clarification that ‘transgender woman’ and ‘drag queen’ are not synonyms. GLAAD and other activist groups striving to combat misinformation expect this particular assumption to be widespread. Therefore, it’s clear one cannot separate

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1. Not all of these women used “transgender,” as the term became popular later on. Many used transsexual or transvestite to describe themselves, so I am using trans\* as an umbrella term here.

either transgender women or cisgender gay men from the term ‘drag’ nor can one ignore the continuing conflation of the three groups.

## Clodius in Drag

When both scholars and non-scholars claim Clodius dressed in drag, the connotation drag holds must be examined, especially when considering the prevalence of the usage of ‘drag’. Googling ‘Clodius “in drag”’ obtains 3,320 results.<sup>2</sup> Some results seem mostly innocuous: books, book reviews, articles examining the portrayal of Clodius in the works of Cicero or Catullus, sometimes even analyzing Juvenal and his portrayal of women. Clodius in drag is a passing thought, rarely the center of whatever book, review, or article that mentions it. Others, however, are more troubling. David Stone Potter, who holds not only a tenured position at the University of Michigan but a titled tenured position, writes of Clodius:

It is easy to think of President Trump in terms of Nero — public buffoonery, lack of attention to detail, sexual peccadillos, an interest in showmanship in place of statesmanship — but he might also evoke thoughts of some figures of an earlier era. Publius Clodius, once caught in drag trying to seduce Caesar’s wife at a religious ceremony, went on to a lively career with a political platform based on avenging personal slights and feathering his own nest. He might be just as relevant a parallel, reminding us that democracies can and have failed. (Potter 2018)

In comparison, Nicholas K. Rauh writes in his review of Jeffrey Tatum’s book *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher*:

In the...scandal, he penetrated the house of the pontifex maximus, Julius Caesar, dressed in drag, in an audacious effort to steal the affection of Caesar’s wife, while Caesar’s mother and sister were present. Tried for this sacrilege, he obtained acquittal through flagrant bribery and rapidly emerged as a darling of the urban underclass, embarking on what was arguably the most demagogic Roman political career on record. (Rauh 2002: 262-263)

This particular review appeared in *The American Historical Review*, a prominent historical journal. Neither Potter nor Rauh are obscure scholars; they are both writing from a place of authority. So what implication does Clodius in drag hold? What do Potter and Rauh imply here? For the articles quoted to hold any weight, the authors rely on an important assumption: their reader will

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2. Placing quotations around the phrase ‘in drag’ ensures that every result contains the phrase.

understand drag as unprofessional and embarrassing, a terrible irony when drag *is* a profession. Just the innocuous phrase ‘in drag’ holds a culturally inappropriate connotation that authors associate with Clodius Pulcher’s general reputation of scandal. Even Wikipedia’s description of the Bona Dea incident clearly links drag with debauchery.

For one of Clodius’ main descriptors to be ‘in drag’ potentially comes from a place of prejudice. However, ‘drag’ itself could evoke homophobia *or* transmisogyny. But because Clodius sneaks out to perform a *heterosexual* act, the social anxiety projected onto Clodius when he is described as ‘in drag’ is not that Clodius was gay. Thus, the relevant societal anxiety must originate from transmisogyny.

The book *Rome’s Last Citizen* contains a great example of the way the *Bona Dea* incident can become a tool for explicit transmisogyny. Transmisogyny, coined by Julia Serano in 2007, describes the specific ways in which misogyny and transphobia interact in the prejudice levied against transgender women (Serano 2021). The book describes the Bona Dea incident in detail:

Clodius had launched the implausible scheme of dressing in drag as a lute player, infiltrating the all-female religious ceremony of the Good Goddess, and seducing the hostess, Pompeia, Caesar’s wife and Clodius’s hopeless crush (but no relation to Pompey). Before he could lay a hand on Pompeia, a maid discovered Clodius wandering Caesar’s house and asked if he needed help finding his way back to the service—and when she heard his baritone voice, she screamed for the other ladies. Clodius was found hiding under a bed. (Goodman and Soni 2012: 141)

The book exploits a very specific transmisogynistic narrative: transgender women are actually men in disguise infiltrating women’s spaces to cause them harm. The book uses predatory language (“lay a hand on”) to emphasize the wrongness of Clodius’ deed and imply a kind of violence or unwelcome touch. Here the actual problem of Clodius as a *vir* or even Clodius’ religious transgression are put aside for a narrative that was not of concern in the Roman Republic. The book itself gained good reviews, and one Roman history scholar even stated that the book was so well-researched that she’d recommend it to her students (Gaughan 2013). Works like *Rome’s Last Citizen* use drag to evoke a cultural anxiety about transgender women.

## Conclusion

Though not every piece about Clodius ‘in drag’ reveals its transmisogynistic current as explicitly as *Rome’s Last Citizen*, any mention of Clodius ‘in drag’ is transmisogynistic because Clodius’ reception expects scandal. Due to that link

between scandal and drag, current misconceptions about drag and transgender women are impossible to avoid. Furthermore, since Cicero does not characterize Clodius as a performer, ‘drag’ cannot ever be an accurate representation of Clodius’ behavior during the Bona Dea incident—even if one chooses to overlook drag’s uniquely American cultural context. Articles written for other scholars and for the general public use the phrase without second thought; from Wikipedia to Reddit, news pieces to book reviews, it is difficult not to stumble eventually upon Clodius portrayed in drag. The fact that this mischaracterization is so rampant both in educated and uneducated receptions of the Bona Dea incident should be seen as not only astounding but downright embarrassing.

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# I'll Be Your Mirror: Dhuoda's *Liber Manualis* as an object of devotion

Mia Brossoie

Dhuoda's *Liber Manualis* fits into the tradition of *specula principum* ("mirrors for princes"), a genre steeped with biblical and cultural implications. She calls her project a *libellus* ("little book") (*Incipit Textus*), a term that obscures the vast complexity and layers of meaning in her words. Given the didactic nature of the *Liber Manualis*, "knowing" and "understanding" are emphasized as the main objective, achieved through reading and the emulation of a mother's words.

However, I'd like to suggest that, beyond serving as a simple mirror for mimicry and mastery of behaviors, this text can be likened to a two-way mirror. On the one hand, at surface level, the text is composed of *exempla* from which William is to learn how to become the best version of himself. On the other hand, Dhuoda seems to have imposed a double meaning in many of her words, which one might not catch upon first glance. These latent messages lie behind the initial reflective surface of the project. After William has practiced prudent and constant observation of his mother's advice might he begin to take note of the small tells of the mirror. Once he reaches an awareness about the very mirror upon which he gazes, he can penetrate it and venture to the other side, thus reaching a sense of understanding and knowing. Although anachronistic, I believe that this model provides a fuller realization of the text's difficulties and intricacies.

The physicality of the *Liber Manualis* is another important consideration when thinking about the book's power. Distance between mother and son necessitated the conception of this work, thus there are several strains of tension that are key to unlocking Dhuoda's words: there is a tension between body and soul, a horizontal tension in the distance between mother and son, and a vertical tension between the worldly (*saeculum*) and the heavens (*caeli*). The book itself stands as a physical representation of mother for son and, in this way, it can stand as an object of devotion. The *Liber Manualis* encourages divine devotion, as well as familial devotion (both to father and mother). The emphasis on the *speculum* and its associated images is interesting to compare to the Western ideas on reliquaries and physical religious images. In describing the role of the religious image, Hans Belting posits that "The image...was an agent of religious experience as it represented the reality of the presence of the holy in the world, on terms similar to those of the relic" (Belting 1993: 302). The idea that the image could be just as

powerful as a physical presence is a moving thought in thinking about a mother sending off a verbal “mirror” for her son to see a better version of himself and, in the process, to catch a glimpse of her, too.

For this project, I have translated selected passages from the *Liber Manualis* that I feel are the best representatives of the aforementioned themes. Each passage was translated with the aim of staying as true to the Latin text as possible.

## The Text Begins<sup>1</sup>

At present this little book is set up to correspond to three shoots. Read everything and, in the end, you will have the power to know it fully. Indeed, in a similar way, I want it to possess a name according to the most useful sequence of authority in these three strings: it is the Standard, the Form, and the Handbook. Each of these parts of speech involves us wholly: the Standard comes from me, and the Form is for you. The Handbook is as much from me as it is for you— assembled from me and received by you.

That is to say, the “Hand” in handbook is realized in many ways: sometimes as the power of God, sometimes of the Son, sometimes even the Son is realized himself. The power of God, just as the Apostle said: *You were humbled under the hand of God’s power*<sup>2</sup>; the power of the Son, as Daniel said: *His power is power eternal*; sometimes the Son himself, as the Psalmist says: *Send your hand from on high*, that is, send your Son from the height of the heavens. All these things or things like this are realized as divine grace and power, for the hand signifies the work as complete. As Scripture says: *and the hand of the Lord was brought about above me*, that is redemption, which always leads those believing to completion; likewise: *For instance, the hand of the Lord was consoling me*, and likewise: *for his hand is with him*.

Nevertheless the suffix “-alis” holds many meanings too. Yet, I will unwind it in at least three senses here according to the opinions of the Fathers, that is *scopon* which is appointed as “aim”, and *consumatio* which is understood as perfection/ completion, and *secutio* which is the conclusion; or certainly “bird” is realized as the herald of daylight; drawing off the end of the night, it sings the light of the hours. What meaning could the expression of that which is called “Manualis” hold if not the end of ignorance? And the herald is understood as being prescient of the light of things to come, and if he should say: *“the night has gone before, while the day draws near”*, that is, Christ, who evidently said himself: *“If I am the day and you are the hours, follow me”*, *et cetera*.

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1. The Latin text for this translation is from Thiébaux 1998

2. Italicized as per Thiébaux 1998



Similarly, from the beginning of this book all the way to its end, both in its craft and in its feeling, and in the meter of its verses and in the articulations and movements of the flow of its divisions, know that everything has been written for you—all things and through all things and in all things—for the salvation of your soul and of your body. What I want is for when this book has been directed from my hand to you, in your hand gladly will you take the work and encircle it. Holding it, turning it over, and reading it, strive to be fulfilled by the worthiest work. Let it be said that indeed the modest book itself is a type of Handbook, this is a discourse from me as an action in you, and as a certain person said: “*I planted the seed, Apollo watered it, but God has given it growth.*” What else is possible to say here, son, except that because of your excellent merits in this effort, with enthusiasm for this work, *I have fought the good fight, saving the faith I have finished the course of the blessed?* And in whom are these things strong, except in those who said: “*Has it been done?*” In fact, whatever I described in this Handbook, outlined in this chapter, either according to Hebrew phrases, Greek letters, or Latin expressions, all the way to the end I have finished the project in that one who is called God.

## In the Name of the Holy Trinity

The book begins, Dhuoda’s Handbook, which was dispatched to her son William.

I determined that many women in the world rejoice in their children. Yet I, Dhuoda, my son William, see that I have been withdrawn at a distance from you, because of this I am almost filled with anxiety and a longing to be of use for you. Rejoicing, I guide this little work to you, written from my name to be read as an exemplum. If I am absent in body, this book will be present for you. When you read it, it will lead your mind to what you ought to do for me.

## The Prologue Begins

Many things are apparent to many women, yet to me they are latent. Those who are also like me with an obscured sense are also devoid of understanding. If I say less, I say more. He “*who uncovers the mouth of the silent and makes skillful the speech of the infant*” is always at my side. Yet Dhuoda, of the frail sex, lives undeservedly among those who are worthy—nevertheless, I am your mother, my son William, to you now the word of my handbook is being steered,

just as the game of tables, among other worldly functions of entertainment, is suitable and appropriate chiefly for youths. Surely a share of some women from a larger portion are accustomed to seeing their appearances in a mirror so that they might wipe the dirt away, producing a radiant complexion, and bustle about to give worldly pleasure to their husbands. Thus, I desire that though burdened among the mundane and worldly crowd of activities, you read this little book from me directed to you frequently. On account of my memory, tend to it, with lightheartedness just as women looking in a mirror and children playing upon a tablet.

Granted that you may have many books in an increasing collection, may the frequent reading of my meager project be pleasing to you, and, with the support of all-powerful God, may you prevail to understanding to your own advantage. You will discover in this (abridged) work whatever you might wish to know, and in it you will also find a mirror in which you could indisputably observe the salvation of your soul so that you are able to give pleasure to not only the world but to him. He who *formed you from mud* through all things. What is essential for you through all things, my son William, is that you are able to be useful in both activities you present in the world and be pleasing to God in every way.

My many concerns, son William, are to guide words of salvation to you. Among these words, my watchful spirit burns restlessly to relate to you, with God's aid, your birth. In this volume of a book written from my desire, the matters will follow as usefully prearranged.

## **Book 1.6, on Morals (selection)**

And what am I to say, a frail vessel? Now I will shift to many others as if I were their ally. Certainly, if the sky and the fields were drawn out through the air in the manner of a sheet of parchment, and the swellings of the sea were changed in form, saturated with diverse colors and all inhabitants of the earth itself were writers, born into the world—because of an increase of the cleverness of human nature which is impossible, contrary to nature—according to the beginning all the way to present day, no one would have had the power to take the greatness and breadth of the All-Knowing One and the loftiness and tell the profundity of the sublimity, and of divinity, of knowledge, of piety, of the mercy of Him who is called God. Since He is such and is so great that no one has the power to comprehend His essence, I beg you so that you fear and you love Him *from your whole heart, whole mind, whole intellect*, and in all ways and in your works, praise him and recite: *Because He is good, because His compassion is without end!*

## Book 10.7, Advice regarding this

Now too I advise you, my beautiful and lovable son, William, that among the mundane concerns of this world, may you not be reluctant to acquire very many volumes of books. Whereby, through the most sacred teachers of your doctors, you ought to understand and to learn something greater and better than what has been written above about God the creator.

[...]

And what more is there to say? Dhuoda is always near as an exhorter for you, son, and if I, weakening, were absent in the future, you have this little book as a memory of morality, and just as in the image of a mirror you are able to consider me in mind and body and in praying to God, and you are able to discover what you ought to submit yourself to fully on account of me. Son, you will have doctors who will teach you many important and useful lessons, but not in equal standing as me, not with a soul more passionate than mine, as I, your mother, do for you, my firstborn son.

Read these words directed from me to you, understand and fulfill the work. May you not be sluggish to encourage your younger brother, whose name I am presently unsure of—when he has taken the grace of baptism in Christ—from good into better, to instruct him, to raise him, and to love him. And this little text, Handbook, conceived by me, and addressed in your name, when he has reached the perfect age of speaking or reading, show it to him, and remind him by reading, as he is your flesh and your brother. I, your mother, Dhuoda, now advise both of you as it were, suppressed among the mundane concerns of the world at that time, *may you hold a heart on high; look to the one ruling in the heavens* who is called God.

## Book 10.3, Words after the preceding section, on public matters

The words of this little book are completed, which I, as I was able, composed with a cheerful spirit, and I ordered the form to be transcribed for your advantage.

Indeed, I want and bid that when you have come to the perfect age, with God's aid, you will distribute your home through the right steps to your advantage. As a certain man has been written about, *as if the most tender worm of the wood*, in public business you must complete all things faithfully and in due course.

Let me be healthy until that time, so that I may see it. I stand uncertain, uncertain about my merits, uncertain about my health, in my fragile effort I am shaken by waves. Although these feelings are such in me, nevertheless in the

presence of the all-powerful all things remain possible since it is not in the power of man to do all that we want, but what God bids to happen. And according to what Scripture said: "*It is not in running, nor in willing, but in the mercy of God.*" Because of this, I am confident in that mercy, I say nothing else, except *As was his will in heaven, so it may be done.* Amen.

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# A Classical Allegory in the Old Norse *Ectors Saga*

Alexander Mayo

## Introduction

The stories of Classical Antiquity held a remarkably strong sway in Medieval European societies, including those outside the reach of the Roman empire, far from both Greece and Italy. In Iceland, the 13th and 14th centuries brought a translation of some Classical literature into the vernacular, Old Norse, and these stories took on a surprising importance. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the translated classical stories mixed with the already-flourishing Icelandic literary tradition and with other vernacular European traditions, creating interesting new combinations, and classical themes were used in a wide variety of ways, including commonly to historicize narratives. In this essay, I argue that the author of *Ectors Saga*, writing around the year 1400, uses Classical themes to legitimize and historicize the saga's narrative, and that this use of classical themes in an established, precedented manner helps to hide an allegorical reading of *Ectors Saga*. Further, I interpret the hero Ector as a representation of the god Þórr ('Thor') and the antagonist Eneas as a representation of the foreign bishops, i.e., bishops appointed by the Pope, and not by the Archbishop of Norway. The allegory, then, is in support of local control of the Icelandic church. The use of Classical themes in an established way—to historicize the narrative—helps to conceal the allegory, and to hide the subversive and, in many ways, radical nature of the author's argument and agenda.<sup>1</sup>

*Ectors Saga*<sup>2</sup> tells the story of the hero, Ector, and six of his knights. Ector, the focus of the story, is a long-removed descendant of King Priam of Troy. Ector, Priam's son, appears to Queen Gelfridr, the wife of King Karnotius of Troy, in a dream and instructs her to name her son "Ector" in his honor. In *Ectors Saga*, Ector fights in a tournament, for which he is given the weapons of several

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1. I would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Conant for his helpful comments on previous iterations of this essay.

2. *Ectors Saga* can be translated literally as "Ector's story"; the -s ending is the genitive case marker (related to the English -'s suffix); the nominative, which I use throughout everywhere except the title, is "Ector." This Genitive + *saga* construction is typical for the title of Icelandic sagas.

Classical heroes, and defeats six knights, who then decide to enter into his service. Eventually, Ector and his six knights decide to go off individually in search of adventure, and agree to return a year later. They all go their separate ways, and the narrator relates each of their exploits, which all take place during that year. Each is successful in his exploits, and all return, with one exception: the knight Aprival. Ector and his companions then set out to rescue Aprival, with the saga culminating in a great battle to secure Aprival's freedom from King Troilus and his son Eneas. Ector and his companions return home victorious, and the saga ends with each of their marriages.

*Ectors Saga* was quite popular in Iceland until around the turn of the 20th century, and survives in over 40 manuscripts, the latest of which are paper manuscripts from the 19th century, and the earliest of which are 15th century vellum manuscripts (Kalinke and Mitchell 1985: 51). The primary scholarly edition of the Old Norse text of *Ectors Saga* is Agnete Loth's 1962 *Late Icelandic Medieval Romances*, with helpful English language summaries at the bottom of each page by J.B. Dodsworth (Loth 1962). No English translation exists, nor does any extensive commentary outside of Dodsworth's summaries. Loth attempted, when possible, to base her edition on the longest, oldest surviving vellum manuscript, and generally, her edition of the text lacks any significant lacunas.

## The Literary Background of *Ectors Saga*

Although *Ectors Saga* at first glance has many Classical elements, the scholar Marianne Kalinke has argued that it is really Arthurian in plot and narrative structure—and that this is unique among surviving Norse sagas (Kalinke 2012). The main and driving plot of *Ectors Saga*—a knight in search of adventure to prove one's worth and demonstrate one's capabilities—is Arthurian in nature, and the fame gained while alive is in contrast to the Greek ideals of κλέος (kleos, “fame”), which so often involved dying in battle (Mares: 2016). This connection between fame and life may reflect the reality of life for previous generations of Scandinavian authors, who would often have fought in their leader's retinue in addition to their literary duties.

The *riddarasaga* (lit., “Saga of knights”) genre originated with King Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263), or King Hákon *inn gamli* (“the old”), who commissioned translations of several vernacular European romances. The earliest surviving *riddarasögur*, *Tristrams Saga* and *Elis Saga ok Rósamundu*, are both translations of, respectively, *Tristan* and the *chanson de geste Elie de Saint Gille*, and date probably to the second quarter of the 13th century. King Hákon intended to bring Norway and its court up-to-date with European culture, and he wanted to ameliorate Norway's international reputation as a backwater (Ross 2010: 81).

These translations are fundamentally different from both the originals and from the Old Norse *fornaldarsögur*, or “Legendary Sagas” (sg. *fornaldarsaga*), a group of probably Icelandic compositions written roughly contemporarily to the *riddarasögur*. The *riddarasögur* remove the internal monologues characteristic of vernacular Romances, and they further remove much of the narrator’s commentary on the action. These edits omit much of the irony which can shine through in the original European Romances; the translated *riddarasögur* therefore have a much more didactic tone overall.

A distinction can be made between earlier and later *riddarasögur*, the earlier being translated works and the later being the so-called “indigenous *riddarasögur*.” The foremost difference, naturally, is that the later *riddarasögur* were composed in Scandinavia, usually in Iceland, and were not translations of romances composed elsewhere in Europe, as the earlier *riddarasögur* were. These indigenous *riddarasögur* nonetheless are clearly the successors to the earlier *riddarasögur*. The main themes of chivalry, love and the royal court are still present, and, unlike the *Íslendingasögur* (the earlier indigenous Icelandic literature) and *fornaldarsögur*, they often take place outside of Scandinavia and without any (or, as in the case of *Ectors Saga*, without any meaningful) Icelandic characters.<sup>3</sup> *Ectors Saga* is one of these indigenous *riddarasögur*, and was written probably around the year 1400. The three major themes—chivalry, love and the court, which are uncharacteristic of other forms of Icelandic prose, are all at the forefront of *Ectors Saga*. Contained within *Ectors Saga* are references to a previously translated *Trojumanna Saga*, and without an understanding of *Trojumanna Saga*, we would be lacking a critical piece of source material for *Ectors Saga*.

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3. The only distinctly Iceland-sounding names in *Ectors Saga* are in Chapter 21, when seven of Ector’s stable hands are listed by name. These seven names are all distinctly Icelandic, and Dodsworth suggests in his summary that they might be named in honor of friends of the author. This suggestion is far from certain, however—several of the Icelandic names given have prestigious epithets, such as Magnus “the Skald” (*skalldi*) and Sigurd, “King,” (*kongr*), which would not likely have been the author’s friends’ genuine names. Neither Magnus nor Sigurd—nor any other of the names in the list—appear to have any obvious historical parallels; Sigurd may be referring to Earl Sigurd of Orkney (960-1014), but likely he would have been called by *Jarl*, not *Kongr*. Further, he was commonly known as *Sigurðr digri*, or “Sigurd the stout,” these factors combined with the chronological distance between *Ectors Saga* and Earl Sigurd’s lifetime make that parallel unlikely.

## *Trojumanna Saga*: The Old Norse Story of the Trojan War

*Trojumanna Saga* is a retelling of the story of the Trojan War, one of a number of Medieval works on this topic. *Trojumanna Saga* is a translation of the Latin work *Daretis Phrygii De Excidio Troiae Historia*, which was written probably in the first half of the 6th century AD (Galli 2013: 800). *De Excidio Troiae* was written anonymously and claims to be the eyewitness account of Dares Phrygius, a soldier fighting in the Trojan War. Dares's account (for lack of a better name for the anonymous author) differs from the Homeric story in several ways, and he specifically distanced himself from Homer, writing, "anne Homero credendum, qui post multos annos natus est, quam bellum hoc gestum est?" or, "Can Homer be believed, he who was born many years after this very war was conducted?" (quoted in Eldevik 1987: 3).<sup>4</sup> While this serves a rhetorical purpose within *De Excidio Troiae*—to emphasize Dares's eyewitness perspective—it is nonetheless also reflective of the significant differences between Homer's account and Dares'.

It should be noted that it is very unlikely that the author of *Trojumanna Saga* was in contact with Homer's Greek itself. Not only was knowledge of Greek very rare in Iceland at the time of *Trojumanna Saga*'s composition, but the knowledge required to read Homeric Greek would have required additional training beyond what would be required for day-to-day life in Greece at the time. Further, nothing in *Trojumanna Saga* indicates a direct knowledge of Homer's Greek—i.e., everything in the plot of *Trojumanna Saga* comes from either *De Excidio Troiae* or the *Ilias Latina*, a Latin adaptation of Homer (Eldevik 1987: 10-12). Further, elements present in the *Iliad* but absent from *De Excidio Troiae* are also absent in *Trojumanna Saga*, such as the use of chariots in warfare (Eldevik 1987: 24).

Although *Trojumanna Saga* is a translation of *De Excidio Troiae*, *Trojumanna Saga* also modifies the story of *De Excidio Troiae*—the story of Troy—to make it more Scandinavian, and, really, to make it more Icelandic. For example, medieval Iceland lacked warfare on the large scale of the Trojan war, and the Trojan war lacked naval combat, a significant part of Scandinavian warfare in the Medieval era. As such, the author of *De Excidio Troiae* needed to add explanatory passages to his narrative—either in the form of explanatory blocks of text or more subtle additions as the narrative goes along (Eldevik 1987: 20-30). This is seen in another modification which the translator of *Trojumanna Saga* makes. When the Trojan prince Troilus attacks the Greeks on horseback, in *De Excidio Troiae*, he quickly falls and is killed; in *Trojumanna Saga*, Troilus falls and stands up, continuing to fight. Eldevik argues that this is reflective of the different roles mounted cavalrymen played in 6th century and 13th century warfare: the author of *Trojumanna Saga* would have been accustomed to mounted warfare; the author of *De Excidio Troiae* would not have been (Eldevik 1987: 25-26).

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4. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.



*Trojumanna Saga* was written around the middle of the 13th century, placing it firmly in the earlier generations of translated *riddarasögur*, and making it over a hundred years old by the time of the writing of *Ectors Saga*. It is clear from *Ectors Saga* that the author of *Ectors Saga* was familiar with *Trojumanna Saga*'s existence, and that they expected their audience to be familiar with it as well—at one point, *Ectors Saga* says “suo sem s(egir) ij Troiomenna sogu,” or, “thus it is said in the saga of the Trojans” (*Ectors Saga*: ch. 2). This attribution is also seen in other contemporary sagas, such as *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, where, the narrator at one point refers to “Umeris skáld í Trójumanna sögu”, or “the poet Homer in the saga of the Trojans” (quoted in O’Connor 2005: 146), indicating a wider cultural knowledge of the Trojan war and its (pseudo-)historiographical tradition.

The context for *Ectors Saga*'s citation of *Trojumanna Saga*, though, is quite interesting. *Ectors Saga* places this citation after a description of the shield of Achilles—similar in tone, though shorter, to the Homeric depiction of the shield of Achilles. However, this depiction of the shield of Achilles is not in *Trojumanna Saga*, but rather is in *Ilias Latina*, which in turn draws it from Book XVIII of the *Iliad*. The *Ilias Latina* describes the crafting of Achilles' shield by Vulcan, the Roman name for the Greek Ἥφαιστος (Hephaestus), while *Ectors Saga* merely describes the shield itself, and states that it was Achilles's—indicative of the different time-frames the two stories are set in: *Ectors Saga* takes place at least three generations—and likely many generations—after the Trojan War, at which point the forging of Achilles's shield was well in the past. *Ectors Saga* also names the shield—it calls it “Cefalskutum,” the former part of uncertain origin and the latter part likely related to the Latin word “scutum,” meaning shield.

This also touches tangentially on another possible, and novel, interpretation of *Ector's Saga* reference to *Trojumanna Saga*: namely, that the phrase “*Trojumanna Saga*” in *Ectors Saga* does not refer to the book we now call *Trojumanna Saga*, but instead merely refers to the commonly-known story of the Trojan war, or to another book—or another version—entitled *Trojumanna Saga*.

As seen above, the author of *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* attributes *Trojumanna Saga* to Homer. This shows an awareness of Homer's existence—though Homer was certainly not the author of the Norse-language *Trojumanna Saga* published in 1300 and discussed extensively above. Instead, I suggest, the phrase *Trojumanna Saga* has an ambiguity—it can refer either to the Old Norse work thus entitled or to the story of Troy more generally. Thus, in *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, í *Trójumanna sögu* might be better translated as “the story of the Trojans”. With this meaning, *Umeris skáld* would recognizably be the author of an important poem concerning Troy, and the issue described in *Ectors Saga* where Achilles's shield is wrongly attributed to the *Trojumanna Saga* is resolved—the narrator would then be referring to the story of the Trojans in a broader sense, and not to the literary work *Trojumanna Saga*.

## The Historicity of *Ectors Saga* and the *Riddarasögur*

While *Ectors Saga* is recognized today as a work of fiction, it is far from certain that the contemporary audience received it in that way, and the generic requirements of the *riddarasaga* genre insisted that the author demonstrate the validity of their story. The depiction of the shield of Achilles shows how the narrator of *Ectors Saga* uses Classical antiquity to demonstrate the veracity of their story. The scholar Ralph O'Connor argues that Medieval Icelandic *riddarasögur* were viewed historically by Icelanders at the time—and therefore that every saga-writer had an obligation to demonstrate their credibility to their audience. One way of doing that was through an appeal to another work—one which would have been generally accepted as factually accurate, which the author of *Ectors Saga* does both through their explicit reference to *Trojumanna Saga* and through their description of the Shield of Achilles. In fact, the narrator in *Göngu-Hrólf's saga* specifically references *Trojumanna Saga* as a saga in which fantastical elements have been “turned into truth” by *eptirkomandi meistarar*, or “later scholars/masters,” with the narrator saying *eðr Umeris skáld í Trójumanna sögu, ok hafa eptirkomandi meistarar þat heldr til sanninda fær*, “...or the poet Homer in the saga of the Trojans [said fantastic things], and later scholars have turned them into truth” (quoted in O'Connor 2005: 146).

The translation of *til sanninda fær* is discussed extensively by O'Connor, who offers two possibilities for its interpretation, in contrast to previous interpretations arguing that this showed that Medieval Icelanders viewed *Göngu-Hrólf's saga* and *Trojumanna Saga* as fictitious. Firstly, he suggests that this scholarly tradition may have, in good faith, misrepresented the facts of the story given in *Göngu-Hrólf's saga*: in this case a wild tale about a man's feet being reattached by a magical dwarf. Secondly, he argues that *sanninda* could be translated as “evidence,” and that the scholarly tradition has used Homer and Master Gautier (the poet of the Medieval Latin epic *Alexandreis*) as evidence for the possibility of remarkable deeds and actions beyond human understanding and comprehension (O'Connor 2005: 146-147).

This second interpretation—that the assumed historicity of ancient chronicles is used to legitimize or historicize fictional Icelandic writings, at least within the context of the story—is supported by a passage in *Ectors Saga* which O'Connor does not cite in his paper. In this, the author says that the actions described therein might seem unbelievable, but that one should remember that in fact similar deeds were done by Charlemagne (“Karlo Magnno”) and Alexander the Great (“Alexandro Magno”). The narrator of *Ectors Saga* adds a further layer of attributions to other sources in this section. Rather than saying the above directly, the narrator attributes it, in indirect speech, to *meistarinn*, or, “the master”. Thus the narrator appeals to the authority of the *meistar* and he, in turn, appeals to other, familiar stories (*Ectors Saga*: ch. 10). At the very end of *Ectors Saga*, in ch.

28, the narrator attributes the story to “meistara Gallteri”, or “Master Galterus,” saying that he found the story of the Trojans and the story he retold in *Ectors Saga* within his works. Here, again, the narrator is attributing the story to someone else, and thus legitimizing its factual accuracy.

As mentioned earlier, at face value, very little of the narrative of *Ectors Saga* is Classical in theme—the scholar Marianne Kalinke has argued that it is “An Arthurian Pastiche in Classical Guise” (Kalinke 2012). However, despite the difference in subject matter, *Ectors Saga*—a story with many fantastical elements—draws its legitimacy from its callbacks to Classical mythology and literature, and the depiction of the shield of Achilles features prominently in this. As such, in the words of Karoline Kjesrud:

I *Ectors saga* ble klare referanser til eldre lærde kilder presentert i motivet. Med tilknytning både til *Iliaden* og til *Trojumanna sögur*, forsterkes bildet av Ectors saga som en saga der det er sentralt å formidle historie og encyklopedi.

In *Ectors Saga* there are clear references to older scholarship present in this motif [i.e., ekphrasis]. With connections both to the *Iliad* and to *Trojumanna Saga*, the fact that it is a saga where it is central to convey history and factual knowledge is reinforced [by these references]. (Kjesrud 2010: 192)

Kjesrud is arguing that the story of Troy has cemented itself in the Icelandic literary and historical mind to the extent that they function as authorities and authenticators of historicity. Therefore, *Ectors Saga* uses these stories to emphasize and verify the factual accuracy of what it says beyond these works.

## Politics and Religion in *Ectors Saga*

*Ectors Saga* does not deal overtly with the political situation in Iceland in the 14th and 15th centuries, the principal defining factor of which was the Norwegian crown’s rule over Iceland. However, there are certainly allegories which can be read as commentary on Iceland’s political situation, particularly in the relationship between Ector and his knights. In one passage in particular, at the beginning of chapter 19 of *Ectors Saga*, the author writes that “Next Aprival chose the North, for as the North serves the East he also is [a servant] to Ector” (*Ectors Saga*: ch. 19).<sup>5</sup> In this situation “the East” can be taken as representing Norway, and “the North” as representing Iceland—though Iceland is west of Norway geographically, the political center of Norway was well to the south and east of Iceland.

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5. *Ectors Saga*, ch. 19, ON: “Nu forstod Parival ath svo sem nordrijt þjonar austrinu var hann og svo Ector”

There are also religiously subversive messages in *Ectors Saga*. As described above, towards the beginning of the saga, Ector, the son of Priam, appears to the Queen Gelfriðr, and informs her that she will give birth to a son, and that her son should be named Ector, after him. Ector appears in a silk robe, an image which would have appeared exotic and Eastern to the readers of the saga. The baby Ector is then baptized and given his name. While the narrator stops short of suggesting that Queen Gelfriðr's birth was virginal, the appearance of anyone in a dream to a pregnant woman immediately draws parallels to the Archangel Gabriel's annunciation to the Virgin Mary before the birth of Christ. Just as Gabriel tells Mary that her son will be a great man, so too does Ector tell Gefridr that her son will one day be great. There is a further subversive element here: namely, Ector's lineage as the son of Priam. According to *Snorra Edda*, the Norse god Odin traces his ancestry back to King Priam of Troy—thus, Ector, as a son of Priam (though not an ancestor of Odin) is divine in the pagan sense (Snorri 1987: 1-3). For him to appear in a dream to Gefridr makes a subtle statement about Christianity and paganism in Medieval Iceland. This apparition blurs the lines between paganism and Christianity while falling short of asserting the supremacy of paganism—an assertion that would surely have not been popular in Medieval Iceland.

Another role that Ector takes on in Medieval Europe more broadly may be of interest: that of one of the so-called Nine Worthies. Consisting of three Jews, three pagans, and three Christians, the Nine Worthies are the epitome of chivalry in the Medieval mind. Homer's Hector, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar comprise the three pagan Worthies (Hancock 1985). *Ectors Saga*, then, by deifying—or anglifying—the son of Priam, is raising him above the rest of the Nine Worthies. However, Ector is in a place where, out of all the pagans, it would be most reasonable for that to happen to him: in short, while the parallel to the Archangel Gabriel is an imposing one, if any pagan man could fill those shoes it would be Ector.

Another possible pagan influence on *Ectors Saga* is in its descriptions of Troy, which mimic those of Snorri's *Prose Edda*. The author of *Ectors Saga* at one point refers to the 12 kingdoms of Troy, stating that Ector's father, Karnotius, was the high king there, as Priam, his ancestor, had been before him. This mirrors Snorri's description of Troy as a city divided into 12 kingdoms, and Snorri's description of Priam as the ruler over the twelve kings of Troy (*Ectors Saga*: ch. 1; Snorri 1987: Prologue). This likely indicates the ubiquity of the story of the Trojan war among learned, literate Icelanders in the Medieval era.

## An Allegorical Reading of *Ectors Saga*

Allegories dealing with well-known stories of Norse myth are seen elsewhere in Norse literature, such as in the *Niðrstigningsaga*, or the “saga of the descent into Hell.” *Niðrstigningsaga* combines the biblical description of Christ’s descent into Hell with two interpolations, which focus on a fishing metaphor. In this story, some scholars argue, God takes on the role of Þórr, the Cross takes on the role of Þórr’s fishing hook, and Leviathan takes the place of the *Miðgarðsormr*, or world-serpent (Wellendorf 2010). While other scholars have argued against this interpretation, saying that the would-be-Norse elements have their origins in patristic theological texts, and not in Norse mythology, the interpretation which attributes these interpolations to an allegorical insertion of Norse mythology carries weight to this day. (Wellendorf 2010, Braithwaite-Westoby 2019, but cf. Marchand 1975).

I will now propose a novel allegorical reading of *Ectors Saga*, focusing on how the author of *Ectors Saga* uses the Classical literature which he draws from to mask—or to create plausible deniability for—his allegory. From 1380 to 1460—around the time of *Ectors Saga*’s composition—Iceland endured the era of the *útlendir biskupar*, or ‘foreign bishops.’ These foreign bishops were the first bishops appointed in Iceland by the Pope—previously, bishops had been appointed by the Archbishop of Nidaros, a Norwegian position (Frost 2017). These foreign bishops would naturally have been grating to an independence-minded Icelander—or even an Icelander who preferred Norwegian influence over religious influence of a church even farther afield.

Ector can be taken, allegorically, to represent the god Þórr. The Norse god Þórr was the primary focus of pagan Icelandic worship pre-conversion (Gunnell 2015: 61), and, therefore, would have been the banner to which a pagan Icelander would rally, or with which they would be most familiar. In this reading, Aprival takes on the role of Iceland—and Þórr must rescue Iceland. The character Eneas—Aprival’s captor—can be taken as representative of the foreign bishops, but more specifically as representative of Rome, and of the Pope’s direct appointment of the foreign bishops. This name, then, makes sense, as Eneas is the quasi-mythological founder of Rome. Thus Þórr must rescue Iceland from the dungeon of Rome, i.e., bring back the old, traditional Icelandic faith and oust the new foreign, Christian faith.

The Ector-Þórr connection is present elsewhere in Icelandic literature. Snorri, at various points, says that Ector (of Troy) and Þórr are the same person, with their identities simply distorted over the years. The scholar Kathleen Noelle Cruz has argued that this choice by Snorri was an intentional one, with the effect of appeasing the Norwegian king with his outward-looking views. Further, Cruz argues, the depictions of Ector in *Trojumanna Saga* are similar to the depictions

of Þórr in Norse mythology, and the changes made from *De Excidia Troia* in the translation of *Trojumanna Saga* emphasize this continuity.

This parallel between Ector and Þórr can be observed in places elsewhere within *Ectors Saga*. In *Ectors Saga*, Ector, while on his quest, must fight a poisonous snake. This draws parallels with Þórr's mythological fights with the snake Jörmungandr, described in the *Poetic Edda* (Ross 1989). While Þórr is generally (though not always) depicted as losing the fight with Jörmungandr, Ector unambiguously wins his fight with the serpent. While the results of Þórr's and Ector's fights with the snakes have different results, the parallels between the two have resonance beyond their results.

The obfuscation of the Classics—for example, setting Ector and Eneas, named for two Trojans, against each other, serves to make *Ectors Saga* appear harmless—just a story with some superficial Classical elements spread throughout. But the subtle allegory—relying on Eneas's role as the founder of Rome and the Ector-Þórr equivalency, demonstrates the subtlety and elegance with which the author of *Ectors Saga* composed it. At first glance, the allegory is difficult to see, even for modern scholars. As Ector and Eneas were both Trojans, their combat against each other would confuse someone familiar with the Trojan war story, and possibly lead them to discount *Ectors Saga* as a whole. But these classical themes serve to both legitimize the narrative, in a way seen elsewhere, and to mask a religiously and politically subversive allegory which the author of *Ectors Saga* would not want to be immediately clear to any individual reader.

This attribution of the story to *meistara Gallteri*, briefly mentioned earlier, is more significant in this respect than it might seem at first glance. In 12th and 13th century Latin poetry, works attributed to “Galterus” or “Gauterus”—the difference in the name seems to be negligible—were generally thought of as satirical works, indicating, in part, that the purpose of the work may have been to lampoon the church (Bridges 2012). An attribution to a “Galterus” is not uncommon elsewhere in Icelandic prose, though in some cases the Galterus is identifiable as the author of a translated work such as *Alexanders Saga*, which was based on the work *Alexandreis*, by Galterus de Castellione; in others, such as *Hrólfs saga kraka*, which was probably written around the turn of the 14th century, and of course here in *Ectors Saga*, the attribution to Galterus seems to be merely an appeal to a further authority (Wolf 1988; Ármann 1999). Nonetheless, the satirical use in the Latin works suggests the possibility that this attribution is not merely to historicize, but also to tinge the narrative with a touch of satire, to indicate to the reader that the parallels between the narrative of *Ectors Saga* and real-world events are not just imagined.

Finally, we must analyze the significance of this allegory, and what it means politically for the author and reader of *Ectors Saga*. At the end of *Ectors Saga*, after the great battle between Eneas and Ector, Ector spares Eneas's life, marries his sister, and frees him. The two kings then live in peaceful harmony, at least for as long as the book continues. As such, the end of the allegory is victory for Þórr,

and a life of peace and happiness for Eneas, and thus for the Church outside of Iceland. Þórr-Ector is not a proselytizing figure, but rather one seeking Aprival's freedom from Eneas and his father, King Troilis. This ending provides a more muted political message. Where so much of the saga focuses on the violence between Ector, his knights, and the outside world, the end of the saga pictures a world where all can live in peace.

While at first glance this might be seen as arguing for a repaganization of Iceland, the reality of the political and social situation in Iceland indicates that Þórr-Ector should be interpreted as representing local Christianity, and not local paganism. Iceland was, by that time, a devoutly Christian place—it had been Christianized some 400 years prior, and soon thereafter Christian place-names began to take hold in Iceland, indicating a certain ubiquity of the religion already present 300 years prior to the writing of *Ectors Saga* (Cormack 2010). Iceland did, however, have an unusual relationship with paganism in the Medieval period. Iceland's official conversion, traditionally dated to 1000 AD, had been a peaceful one, and Christianity spread throughout Iceland over the next couple of generations. Adam of Bremen, for instance, says that Iceland's conversion really occurred a half-century after 1000 AD (Sawyer 1988). Iceland's literary tradition prior to *Ectors Saga* had been kind to its pagan forebearers; the *Landnámabók*, which tells the story of the settlement of Iceland, states clearly that many of these settlers were pagan. Further, the *Landnámabók* sometimes describes settlers positively with epithets directly relating to paganism, such as 'blótmaðr mikill,' or 'great sacrificer' (Jochens 1999). Snorri Sturluson, in his *Edda*, written around the turn of the 13th century, well after even the latest dates for a general Icelandic conversion, makes use of traditional pagan mythology in a guide to writing poetry, meaning that even after Iceland was a Christian nation, the educated class viewed their pagan history as something to be studied and learned from, and not something to be ignored.

Therefore, the allegory should be interpreted as against the foreign bishops specifically, but not against Christianity in Iceland on the whole. Given the radicalness of this repaganization idea, it is incredibly unlikely that the allegory's point is a repaganization of Iceland, but rather a localization of the church officials seems likely considering the surrounding historical circumstances. Further, while it is possible that the allegory *is* arguing for a repaganization of Iceland, Snorri's effective secularization of the Norse gods as tools for poetry makes it plausible that the author of *Ectors Saga* is simply using Þórr as a secular stand-in for Iceland; similarly, a repaganization of Iceland would have been such a radical idea as to be unbelievable.

## Conclusion

In summary, the author of *Ectors Saga* uses classical themes for two interwoven purposes. Firstly, they use classical literature to historicize and legitimize the saga's narrative—something which the Icelandic audience would have expected from a *riddarasaga*, and which was a necessary component given the at-times unbelievable plot of *Ectors Saga*. Secondly, the author uses classical characters and themes to supplement and to hide the radical nature of his allegory, which supports the localization of Christianity in Iceland in response to the foreign bishops era, though probably not a repaganization of Iceland in the 15th century. The combination of this classicization and this historicization serves to disguise the allegory further, as the Classical themes used in the allegory have another plausible and established use within the story.

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## Hymn to Aphrodite

*Original artwork by Lena He, used with permission*

# Sappho, 94

David Sacks

Translator's Note: *My translation philosophy for this poem came down to capturing the word order and meter, so as to convey the sense of Sappho's words as well as possible. Doing so perfectly is, in my experience, impossible; thus, I took certain liberties in constructing a poem of my own that still faithfully renders Sappho's meaning, including but not limited to the aspects I have prioritized.*

...

To die is simply my only wish;  
She left me alone, forsaken – weeping  
Very much, and this she said to me,  
“Such, such wondrous woes we’ve endured,  
Sappho, on my heart, I left you unwillingly.”  
This said I in response to her,  
“In joy may you now go and me  
Remember – know how you I cherished so;  
If you don’t, still I would like to show you  
A reminder of ...  
the countless sweet and beautiful times we had;  
for many wreathes of violets made  
and of roses twined together, and herbs  
of fennel before me you blithely placed  
And many beguiling garlands woven  
together around your beautiful neck  
Made from flowers of lovely scent.  
And with much myrrh,  
Costly ...  
And queenly you anointed yourself,  
And on the softest beds  
For tender girls ...  
You would satisfy your yearning...”



# Men among Men: Defending the Freedmen's Humanity in the *Cena Trimalchionis*

Helen Zhou

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* of the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter, we witness interactions between members of three Roman social classes in the Roman Empire: freedmen, slaves, and freeborn men. Trimalchio's dinner party occurs through the eyes of our narrator Encolpius, who, along with his companion Ascyltos, is posing as a freeborn declamation enthusiast while their lover Giton assumes the role of their slave. Throughout almost the entirety of the *Cena*, Encolpius and his companions, as well as the freeborn declamation instructor Agamemnon, fade to the background as mere observers while Trimalchio and his fellow freedmen dominate, contributing a series of dialogues that provide a commentary on the social hierarchy of Rome. Through their defensive behavior, the freedmen of the *Cena Trimalchionis* demonstrate their belief that it is not unchangeable differences in inherent humanity, but instead differences in circumstance, that separate the slaves and freedmen from the freeborn guests. They do so in a way that specifically references the emphasis on wealth and physical pleasures (food, drink, and carnal delights) characteristic of their social class. Because this viewpoint sets them at odds with Roman social stratification, the freedmen take advantage of the atmosphere established by Trimalchio's dinner party to defend their self-worth to the freeborn guests and, by extension, Roman society at large.

We first turn to Trimalchio, whose attitude towards the Roman social hierarchy is unique in that he, among all the freedmen of the *Cena*, has come the farthest from his slave origin. If not for his uncertain status in society and gauche behavior, his wealth would easily align him with the patrician class of freeborn Romans. The reader witnesses Trimalchio, as the predominant figure of the *Cena*, oscillate wildly between two seemingly incongruous extremes. In one moment, he is overly harsh toward his slaves, in another, surprisingly sympathetic. Especially in the beginning of the *Cena*, Trimalchio attempts to distance himself from his servile past, assuming the social authority that was associated with wealth and success for freeborn Romans. When Encolpius first enters Trimalchio's house, he observes a notice that reads: "*quisquis servus sine dominico iussu foras exierit, accipiet plagas centum.*" "Whichever slave has exited the doors without the master's order

will receive a hundred lashes” (28.7). With this, Trimalchio not only highlights the lowly nature of his slaves to anyone entering his house, but also asserts his own authority over his slaves as their master. Notably, Trimalchio’s threat provides no indication at all that he was once a slave. Thus, from the very first impression that he makes on his freeborn guests, Trimalchio tries to conceal the fact that he has any affiliation with or sympathy toward the slave class. He exaggerates the notice to an absurd degree—for the petty crime of leaving the house, he threatens the harsh punishment of a hundred lashes. Based on Trimalchio’s later behavior, it is likely that this is a deliberate show to dissipate any potential doubts that his slaves or guests might have toward his authority.

As the feast progresses, Trimalchio gradually abandons his attempt to detach himself from his slave past by acting overly cruel. Increasingly, he empathizes with his own slaves through unexpected gestures of kindness, as if remembering his own slave past and wanting to spare his own slaves from similar levels of dehumanization. In one particularly candid moment, he departs from his previous assertion that the “*putidissimi servi*,” “most foul slaves,” would negatively affect the dinner party with “*frequentia sua*,” “their crowding” (34.5). Instead, he welcomes his slaves in to eat with him, saying to his guests that “*et servi homines sunt et aequae unum lactem biberunt, etiam si illos malus fatus oppressit*.” “Even slaves are men and equally they drink the same milk, even if they were crushed by an evil fate” (71.1). As Trimalchio becomes more uninhibited from drink throughout the dinner party, he welcomes a leveling of the social hierarchy, where slaves are no longer an imposition to the partygoers but instead are equal to all the other men. In this appeal to the innate humanity of slaves, he attributes the subhuman role that they must play due to their poor lot in life—any “foulness” on the part of his slaves is not an inherent character defect but a temporary consequence of their station. At this point, we see all three Roman social classes represented in the *Cena Trimalchionis*—slave, freedman, and freeborn citizen—dining together. If the world of the freedman revolves around food, money, and pleasure, as is shown to be the case in the *Cena*, it is fitting that Trimalchio establishes equality and mutual humanity in his dining room through a shared feast. He encourages Encolpius and the other freeborn men to view the taint of slavery as temporary, using his own life to exemplify this claim.

Trimalchio lays out his life story in a series of murals along his portico, beginning with his sale at the slave market, through the various roles he held as a slave, and ending with his manumission. These serve a specific purpose for the guests viewing it, since Trimalchio conveys through these images his perspective on his own past. Most prominently, Trimalchio aligns himself here with the god Mercury, not only in his role as patron deity of commerce but also as the Psychopompus, who bears souls from the mortal world to the next. In his time as a *capillatus*, a long-haired pet slave, Trimalchio portrays himself as “*caduceum tenebat*,” “hold[ing] Mercury’s caduceus,” juxtaposing the image of Trimalchio at his most submissive and powerless with a symbol of godly power

(29.3). This fulfills two objectives: to emphasize Trimalchio's own lack of shame and reduce scrutiny from guests about the *capillatus* era of his life. In his lengthy autobiographical account at the end of the *Cena*, Trimalchio further defends his former position as the pet slave of his master:

*Ad summam, quotidie me solebam ad illum metiri, et ut celerius rostrum barbatum haberem, labra de lucerna ungebam. Tamen ad delicias [femina] ipsimi [domini] annos quattuordecim fui. Nec turpe est quod dominus iubet.*

In short, I was accustomed to measure myself by (a candlestick) every day, and so that I would have a bearded face quicker, I was oiling my lips from the lamp. Nevertheless, I was the pet slave of my master until fourteen years of age. It is not shameful (to do) that which the master orders (75.10-11).

Trimalchio himself sees his stint as the "*deliciae*" of his master as merely an obligation that he had to endure at the time, both to fulfill his duty as a slave and ultimately to advance his social standing. Thus, Trimalchio displays a defensive pride towards his past. Although the reactions of Encolpius or the other freeborn guests to Trimalchio's life story are not shown, Trimalchio is conscious of the fact that the sexual, subservient role of a pet slave is one that is commonly looked down upon by Roman society. Thus, he anticipates criticism from Encolpius and the others by justifying his actions unprompted. By stressing that his actions as a pet slave were done under his master's orders and therefore acceptable within the rigid hierarchy of Roman society, Trimalchio attempts to counteract expected ridicule from the freeborn guests.

Additionally, Trimalchio, in stating that he wanted to grow a beard faster and that he measured his growth every day, emphasizes his own reluctance toward being a pet slave, as if rebutting against anticipated judgment that he may have wanted or even enjoyed such a position. He also follows up this account of him playing a passive sexual role as a pet slave to his master with an allusion to his more conventionally masculine sexual role in pleasuring his mistress, hinting at his virility and skill in the bedroom with mock humility: "*Ego tamen et ipsimae [dominae] satis faciebam. Scitis, quid dicam: taceo, quia non sum de gloriosis.*" "I nevertheless was doing enough for my mistress. You know what I am saying: I remain silent, because I am not from the boastful ones" (75.11). In his defense of his actions as a slave, Trimalchio once again refers to one of the cornerstones of freedman life—not food, this time, but carnal pleasure.

As described earlier, Trimalchio offers his own life as an example of the upward mobility that slaves may attain. We see the reference to Mercury again in the final scene of Trimalchio's life depicted on the portico: "*Levatum mento in tribunal excelsum Mercurius rapiebat,*" "Mercury was seizing Trimalchio, lifted by the chin, onto a high tribunal seat" (29.5). Here, Mercury, in his role as Psychopompus, metaphorically raises Trimalchio from his former life as a slave

to his next life as a successful freedman, signifying that, from a social standpoint, Trimalchio the slave has died and Trimalchio the freedman is all that remains. Combined with the earlier reference to the caduceus, it is also apparent that Trimalchio, not only asserts his humanity, as we see with the other freedmen and slaves, but goes further in affiliating himself with divine qualities. Furthermore, Trimalchio's association of himself with Mercury also reveals what he believes to be the ideal relationship between master and slave. Not only is Mercury responsible for Trimalchio's transformation into a true man, but Trimalchio himself then metaphorically adopts the position of Psychopompus for his wife, Fortunata: "*De machina illam sustuli, hominem inter homines feci.*" "I raised her from the slave platform, I made her a man among men" (74.13). Therefore, in an analogy that equates the power and actions of a master to those of a god, Fortunata too is blessed with a new life that effaces any servile vestiges and raises her up to be a "man among men," once again establishing the humanity of the freedmen.

This is the third occurrence of the phrase "*hominem inter homines*" within the *Cena Trimalchionis*; the second is discussed later and the first refers to Trimalchio's former master and Trimalchio himself: "[*Patronus meus*] *me hominem inter homines voluit esse.*" "My patron wanted me to be a man among men" (39.4). Trimalchio's favorable attitude toward his former master is largely explained by the upward mobility that he granted Trimalchio, which Trimalchio repeats for Fortunata. Therefore, Trimalchio has respect for masters that reward dutiful service with freedom. This provides somewhat of a resolution to Trimalchio's seemingly hypocritical, erratic attitude toward the proper roles of a slave and a master, as he believes that while slaves are men tainted by their social class, the process of manumission is a sort of apotheosis that masters can bestow upon their slaves, making them true "men among men."

Furthermore, Hermeros, a freedman character who serves largely as Trimalchio's yes-man and Encolpius's informer on the characters of the *Cena*, provides additional insight on Trimalchio's attitude toward Roman social norms. He displays extreme trust toward Trimalchio and extreme suspicion towards the freeborn guests, accepting and broadcasting every one of Trimalchio's claims, no matter how absurd. For example, Hermeros describes the luxury of Trimalchio's house in response to Encolpius's questioning: "*Vides tot culcit[r]as: nulla non aut conchyliatum aut coccineum tomentum habet. Tanta est animi beatitudo,*" "You see so many cushions: none do not have either purple- or scarlet-dyed stuffing. So great is the blessedness of his soul" (38.5). There is no way that Hermeros, or any of the guests, would know if Trimalchio's cushions were filled with purple and scarlet stuffing, but nevertheless Hermeros repeats this assertion to Encolpius, encouraging him to think the same. Not only are the freedmen understandably defensive of their own accomplishments and claims, but Hermeros responds to Encolpius's inquiries defensively on Trimalchio's behalf. This stems from Hermeros's view that Trimalchio represents the ideal of what a freedman can achieve. Therefore, when Hermeros defends Trimalchio's grand statements of



wealth, he is really defending what the freedmen stand for and what Trimalchio represents, addressing a larger social issue rather than a personal one. Hermeros's role in the *Cena* is to ensure that Encolpius buys into the image of grandeur that Trimalchio wants to project, hoping to win over the sympathy of the freeborn guests through an overt display of luxury. Moreover, the nature of Hermeros's defense against possible skepticism reveals the priorities of the freedmen. In believing that luxury permeates every aspect of Trimalchio's lifestyle, Hermeros draws the seemingly tangential conclusion that Trimalchio's wealth reveals the blessedness of his soul. By doing so, he implies that Encolpius, too, should be convinced that Trimalchio's wealth proves his inherent, god-given humanity.

Not only does Hermeros defend the self-worth of the freedmen with his complete trust in Trimalchio, but he also demonstrates this belief through his responses to the provocations he sees from the actions of Ascyrtos and Giton. In response to a perceived slight by Ascyrtos, Hermeros expresses annoyance that someone like Ascyrtos would look down upon the freedmen. He explains, "*Ipse me dedi in servitute[m] et malui civis Romanus esse quam tributarius. Et nunc spero me sic vivere, ut nemini iocus sim. Homo inter homines sum.*" "I gave myself into slavery and I preferred to be a Roman citizen rather than a tax-payer. I hope that I live thus, so that no one may jest [at me]. I am a man among men" (57.4-5). Therefore, Hermeros dismantles the assumption that servitude is a permanent state of being, rather than a transient position, given that he was not born a slave but sold himself into slavery for his own benefit. He also uses the phrase "*homo inter homines*" in its second chronological occurrence within the *Cena*, drawing a parallel between his own manumission and those of Trimalchio, Fortunata, and possibly all the freedmen by extension. Not only is Hermeros wrapped up in Trimalchio's tales of grandeur emerging from humble beginnings, but he too believes that he no longer bears the taint of servitude, invalidating any ridicule on the part of the freeborn guests.

In the next two chapters of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, Hermeros continues his rebuke against Ascyrtos and Giton. Like Trimalchio, Hermeros was also a pet slave, as implied by the phrase "*puer capillatus*" (57.9). Like Trimalchio, Hermeros's past as a pet slave seems to be a major source of defensiveness, which he counteracts in a similar way: "*Dedi tamen operam, ut domino satis facerem, homini malista et dignitosso, cuius pluris erat unguis quam tu totus es.*" "However, I gave the work, so that I would do enough for my master, a man of greatness and dignity, whose fingernail is of more [worth] than your whole body is" (57.10). Hermeros alternates between affirming and scorning the traditional social dynamic between the Roman slave and master. This seems hypocritical on the part of both Trimalchio and Hermeros, which shows just how little wiggle room the freedmen have—unable to be a true part of Roman society, they are forced to oscillate between extremes in an argument that ultimately asserts that slaves and masters both have a duty. The slave's role is to be obedient, in the hopes that he will one day become a "*homo inter homines*," while the master's

role is to reward a slave who has earned his freedom. By asserting the worth of his master, Hermeros asserts his own self-worth, as a slave who “gave the work” to deserve manumission. In doing so, he also manages to disparage Ascyltos for neither understanding the burdens of a slave nor possessing the dignity of a true master, one who would respect slaves for their toils, despite their lower station.

Giton’s, who is still pretending to be a slave, further offends Hermeros by laughing. Whereas before Hermeros seemed sympathetic to the plight of Roman slaves, his rage is incited by the very notion that a slave might look down upon Hermeros himself, a freedman. He launches into a tirade that attacks both the “slave” Giton and his “master,” Ascyltos: “*Tu autem’ inquit ‘etiam tu rides, cepa cirrata? Io Saturnalia, rogo, mensis december est? Quando vicesimam numerasti?’*” “You, moreover, even you laugh, you curly-haired onion? Ah, Saturnalia, I ask, is it December? When did you pay out your five percent for manumission?” (58.2). Whereas he previously displayed a sort of protective pride in his past as a “*puer capillatus*” (57.9), he does not show nearly the same consideration for Giton, who is ostensibly playing the same role. With his references to Saturnalia and the manumission tax, Hermeros is astounded that Giton would act so insubordinately as to express derision towards freedmen, something he does not even tolerate coming from Ascyltos, a freeborn master. In Hermeros’s eyes, only when Giton has earned his freedom would his laughing be even slightly justified within the Roman social hierarchy; to mock Hermeros when Giton himself is still a slave is simply unacceptable. Hermeros takes the opportunity to reinforce what he believes are the proper roles of slaves and masters, referring to Encolpius and Ascyltos as “*isti [...] qui tibi non imperant,*” “*those ones who do not command you [Giton]*” (58.3). Thus, Hermeros believes that it is not only Giton’s fault for acting insubordinately and laughing, but also Encolpius and Ascyltos’s fault for not exerting enough authority over their disobedient slave. His use of the derogatory pronoun “*iste*” here reinforces his contempt for Encolpius and Ascyltos, a sentiment furthered by Hermeros’s next sentence: “*Plane qualis dominus, talis et servus*” (58.3). He believes that “like master, like slave,” revealing his distinction between “good” and “bad” slaves and masters, in which the freedmen and their former masters belong to the first category and Encolpius, Ascyltos, and Giton belong to the latter. A good master will produce obedient slaves who will eventually be granted freedom, whereas a bad master will either not manumit good slaves, or will permit disobedient slaves to be freed undeservingly. Hermeros, whether through defending Trimalchio’s blessedness, his own motivations, or the overall duties of masters and slaves, overall serves to reinforce of Trimalchio’s beliefs and therefore those the freedman group at large.

Within the *Cena Trimalchionis*, Trimalchio and Hermeros give the most fleshed-out justifications for the inherent humanity of freedmen; however, the minor characters Echion and Niceros also contribute to their argument. Even in Trimalchio’s absence, the freedman Echion responds to perceived slights within the behavior of freeborn rhetorician Agamemnon. “*Quid iste arguat molestus?*”

*quia tu, qui potes loquere, non loquis. Non es nostrae fasciae, et ideo pauperorum verba derides.*” “Why is that annoying one babbling? Because you, who are able to speak, do not speak. You are not of our band, and therefore you mock the words of the poor” (46.1). Given the implication that Agamemnon was not actually speaking to mock the speech of the freedmen, we can see that Echion here is putting judgmental words in Agamemnon’s mouth. Like Hermeros, Echion also uses “*iste*” to convey contempt, which here is completely unjustified and exemplifies the freedmen’s tendency to either see nonexistent slights or to blow small issues out of proportion. He implies that even though Agamemnon is a freeborn Roman, he nevertheless should be respectful of the freedman’s speech despite its low qualities. Echion goes on to try and convince Agamemnon that slaves and freedmen are indeed able to achieve education, offering up his “*cicaro*” (46.3), his slave-boy, to be educated by Agamemnon. The implication behind this is that, in giving Agamemnon an opportunity to lift up his slave-boy from his humble origins, that all freedmen are former slaves, who have earned through manumission their right to be treated without mockery. The nature of Echion’s defense against Agamemnon’s perceived ridicule is also characteristic of the freedmen’s food-centric world. He invites Agamemnon to come down to his house: “*Inveniemus quod manducemus, pullum, ova: belle erit [...] inveniemus ergo unde saturi fiamus.*” “We will find that which we may eat, a chicken, eggs: it will be good [...] we will therefore find the things from which we will become satisfied” (46.2). Echion’s words have a double meaning—not only will they be satisfied by the food, but Echion will become satisfied by gaining Agamemnon’s respect. This reintroduces a concept held firmly by the freedmen of the *Cena*: those who dine together become equals.

Niceros also addresses the perceived mockery by the freeborn guests before his story about the werewolf, which itself is a commentary on the social status of freedmen within Roman society. He is initially reluctant, despite Trimalchio’s encouragement, to begin his story: “*timeo istos scholasticos, ne me [de]rideant. Viderint: narrabo tamen: quid enim mihi aufert qui ridet? Satius est rideri quam derideri.*” “I fear those declamation enthusiasts, that they mock me. Let them, nevertheless I will tell the (story): for what does he who laughs take away from me? It is better to be laughed at than to be mocked” (61.4). Once again, the use of “*istos*,” along with Nicero’s uncaring demeanor, sets up the contemptuous tone of the dialogue. He claims that it does not matter to him if Encolpius and Ascyrtos, the declamation enthusiasts, mock him. However, the fact that Niceros even brings up their derision as a fear of his indicates that it is on his mind more than he lets on. Interestingly, Niceros brings up the distinction between being “laughed at” and being “mocked,” where laughter indicates good-natured humor and mockery represents ridicule from perceived social superiors. As we have seen, this fear of derision provokes not only Niceros, but all the freedmen of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, revealing their self-consciousness about their freedman identity.

Overall, the impression that the *Cena Trimalchionis* gives of the freedmen is one of fickle extremes. Trimalchio himself is alternately harsh and permissive toward his slaves, he and Hermeros are at once proud of and self-conscious about their pasts, and all the freedmen criticize and seek favor from the freeborn guests from one moment to the next. This seemingly contradictory behavior is indicative of the dual identity imposed upon freedmen by the social hierarchy of Roman society—one where the freedmen have both attained equal standing to the freeborn guests via manumission, but at the same time are tainted by their former role as slaves, with the rights and duties of a mere animal. It is against this conundrum that the freedmen argue so fiercely, taking advantage of the freedman-centric world contained within Trimalchio's house to express themselves in a way they cannot in greater Roman society. Rather than freeborn men and masters holding power over slaves and freeborn men, the dynamic at Trimalchio's dinner parties is reversed so that the opinions of the freedmen dominate. Therefore, with a desperation and intensity that betrays the difficulty of their social position, the freedmen of the *Cena Trimalchionis* assert time and time again that their worth as men is not diminished by their former servile status, countering the belief that the taint of slavery stays with a person for a lifetime. They formulate their arguments in a way that betrays their uniquely freedman viewpoint, linking luxury, sexuality, and physical pleasures to character and self-worth. Thus, the mindset of Petronius's freedmen is one that is at turns contradictory, defensive, and hedonistic, but nevertheless one that at its core strives for validation—to be recognized, fundamentally, as men.

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# Nature and Justice in the Fragments of Anaximander and Heraclitus

*Grace Wilson*

The Presocratics, a group of 5th and 6th century BCE Greek thinkers, took great interest in the themes of justice and reparation, often calling upon the cycles and phenomena of nature to understand them. Anaximander, an early thinker from the Ionian city of Miletus, and Heraclitus, who came just after the Milesians and pursued the questions they sought to answer, were particularly focussed on these notions. Both Anaximander and Heraclitus meditated upon the idea of opposites in nature, such as hot and cold or pure and foul, in an attempt to understand cosmic justice. Despite calling upon the same idea of opposites, the thinkers produce differing conclusions. In this paper, I will focus on one fragment from Anaximander (fragment 5.20) and one from Heraclitus (10.83) which encapsulate their views on the matter (see below).

5.20 The things that are perish into the things from which they come to be, according to necessity, for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice in accordance with the ordering of time (McKirahan, 43)

10.83 It is necessary to know that war is common and justice is strife and that all things happen in accordance with strife and necessity (McKirahan, 120)

I will begin by putting forth the arguments of each thinker and exploring the relevant implications of their arguments. I will then explore whether human beings as intrinsic components of the natural world fit within Anaximander and Heraclitus' narratives. After establishing a weakness in Anaximander's view and considering a counterargument to it, I will conclude that Heraclitus' view aligns more closely with the Presocratic understanding of the natural world.

I will first define some appropriate terminology; justice (in Greek, *dikē*) and its inverse, injustice (*adikia*), have both evaluative and descriptive forces. In *Philosophy before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary*, author Richard McKirahan describes this system; he explains that, descriptively speaking, injustice is "taking something not one's own," which is evaluatively bad, and that this evaluation "applies to all acts which, descriptively, are unjust, regardless of the nature of the agent" (McKirahan 2011: 45). Furthermore,

the ideas that justice and retribution are inevitable and that justice is fair to adversaries are central to this conceptualization of *dikē*. Finally, justice is not necessarily served in the normative sense (ie. “in the case of human judges”), but is necessary in the case of cosmic law.

Anaximander’s fragment is syntactically layered, warranting some clarification. McKirahan offers a useful roadmap of the argument, explaining:

“We have a picture of a world full of change — things coming to be and in turn perishing. These changes are ordered in two ways: (1) when a thing (*a*) perishes, it turns into something definite — the same sort of thing that perished when *a* came to be; (2) each thing has a determinate time span. In addition, comings-to-be and perishings are acts of injustice which one thing (*a*) commits against another (*b*) and for which *a* is compelled to make restitution to *b*.” (McKirahan, 43-44)

Opposites, which are of special importance to Anaximander, are at the core of this argument. Injustice, to Anaximander, seems to involve an interplay between pairs of opposites such as light and dark, hot and cold, and wet and dry. McKirahan explores in detail the pair of hot and cold through the alternation of the seasons to elucidate the implications of Anaximander’s argument on real-world opposites which I will presently paraphrase to the same effect. The summer signals the act of injustice hot is committing against cold by expelling it and settling in its territory (McKirahan 2011: 44). The season of fall operates as the first indicator that hot is being penalized and cold is being recompensed, but by wintertime, cold commits an act of injustice against hot, inciting a new cycle of penalty and recompense. And so goes the pattern of seasonal change where opposites alternately dominate. Anaximander intends for his fragment to account for the interaction of other opposites as well. It remains unclear whether or not Anaximander’s fragment applies to other “things that are,” such as the case of humans and animals being made of elements of the earth and returning to these basic elements after death. Nonetheless, Anaximander’s ideas of injustice remain relevant to humans, considering that he, along with other Presocratics, “place[d] humans squarely in the natural world,” meaning that the injustice that hot commits on cold is the same sort as that which a thief commits on another person (McKirahan 2011: 45). In both cases, something is being wrongfully taken from an owner, and either the law or “time according to necessity” will ensure that what was taken is restored and an additional penalty is instated.

Whereas Anaximander views the world as a place of opposites in continual conflict determined by necessity and justice, Heraclitus believes that justice is an active agent in the opposition of the universe. To Heraclitus, flux and opposition are, themselves, just. This argument is greatly intertwined with Heraclitus’ belief in the unity of opposites. All existing entities, he posits, maintain contrary properties. Some examples McKirahan gives to support this claim include that “mud is both more and less desirable than pure water: more desirable to pigs,

less so to humans,” that “if I step into the same river at different times ... the water that wets my feet is different each time,” and that “whatever is cold must at some time become hot” (McKirahan 2011: 131-2). The unity of opposites can also be applied to pairs of opposites, such as night and day. Heraclitus asserts that the unifying factor for these opposites in pairs is the “regular alternation between opposite states” (McKirahan, 132). Seasons change from winter to spring to summer to fall, and then back to winter, the tides ebb and rise, the moon wanes and waxes, and the day brightens, fades to night, and dawns again. There exists, to Heraclitus, a dynamic tension between these opposites, where no given opposite is completely victorious. There exists a necessity for strife and a balance of opposites which keeps the world in order. Heraclitus likens this harmonious tension to a bow in fragment 10.68 (“The name of the bow [*biós*] is life [*bíos*], but its work is death”) (McKirahan 2011: 119). Of course, part of the significance of this fragment lies in this play on words (which is only useful to those with an understanding of Greek), but the physicality of a bow and lyre is also indicative of the harmony which emerges from tension. Perhaps the ends of a bow are trying to pull apart, but the strife keeps the bow working; the seemingly calm state of rest is not possible without the battling opposites. Justice keeps opposites from overstepping their bounds — winter from lasting too long or getting too cold, the bow from snapping, night from extending into endless and infinite darkness.

Overall, Anaximander and Heraclitus both call upon opposites in the natural world to formulate their positions on justice and injustice. To summarize their viewpoints briefly, Anaximander holds that justice is the resolution of strife, while Heraclitus maintains that justice involves the continuation of it. I am interested now to see if both arguments are supported by *all* facets of nature, specifically the role of human beings in nature. As I cited earlier, Presocratics took humans to be unequivocally within the natural world as intrinsic components, so human behavior and tendencies should fit seamlessly into Anaximander and Heraclitus’ paradigms.

Anaximander’s view seems to only align with human behavior when it comes to matters related to the legal or justice system. After all, fragment 5.20 appears to be a legalistic metaphor derived from human society. Anaximander’s anthropomorphic metaphor would suggest that the obtaining of something at the expense of an adversary is an ‘injustice,’ and that this wrongdoing can be resolved by inflicting punishment and restoring equality. The application of the fragment to human behavior is unconvincing when we think of the processes and substances of nature as endlessly cyclical. The human wrongdoer may be deprived of part of his original substance, leaving the victim with surfeit, effectively making it so that the former victim is committing injustice on the former aggressor. Though this dynamic has come full circle, it lacks repetition. The same two individuals are highly unlikely to participate in the same pattern of injustice and retribution once more, let alone on an infinite loop.

It could be said that Anaximander's fragment makes no mention of continuous or endless action and, as such, the aforementioned weakness does not hold. This refute is very plausible as there exist opposites which interchange only once, but not on an infinite loop. Such is the case with a heated substance that becomes cool again; this substance is not guaranteed to heat and consequently cool again, especially without external interference. This issue of external interference, which could also be called upon to refute the ideas in Anaximander's fragment, does not always apply to the natural world. It could be argued that the phrase "the things that are" excludes anything which is externally acted upon. For example, rain water will not vaporize and turn into a cloud again if it is collected, frozen, and used later in a glass of iced tea. Human beings are undoubtedly acted upon externally. Perhaps the only things truly natural and inevitable in the lives of humans are birth and death. The cycle of birth and death does indeed fit within Anaximander's paradigm, in an "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" way.

I argue that this counterpoint, while plausible, is refutable depending on our understanding of Anaximander's "things that are" and "the ordering of time." I posit that continuity and its adjoining repetition are inherent to the things that are and the ordering of time, rendering the point that Anaximander doesn't explicitly mention endless cycles useless. This clarification does not entirely resolve the fact that certain opposites may not engage in interplay due to external interference, which leads me to believe that Anaximander's fragment could benefit from an additional amendment regarding substances or states which are unpredictably altered.

I will now turn to Heraclitus' fragment, which I find to be largely applicable to a natural world involving living beings. Heraclitus stresses the importance of the conflict of opposites in the continuation of life, and it seems that humans are continually suspended between a series of opposites, both psychologically and physically. Being alive is the intermediate state between birth and death, and the internal battle between these two opposites supposedly gives life meaning. Less abstractly, living beings are caught between sadness and joy, starvation and nourishment, motion and inertia. Heraclitus' justice keeps humans from only engaging in one member of an opposing pair, allowing them harmony and normalcy; our existence depends on the strife Heraclitus lauds. Although fragment 10.83 deals wonderfully with human life, there are instances in which human beings lean too far toward an extreme within an opposing pair, such as in the case of an individual who is overcome with depression and commits suicide. Although these outlier examples exist, they are presumably only as frequent as any outlier instance may be to any given, well-founded claim.

Having evaluated how Anaximander and Heraclitus' claims function under scrutiny, it appears that Heraclitus' discussion of justice in 10.83 is more applicable to an inclusive, Presocratic definition of the natural world than Anaximander's discussion of injustice and retribution in fragment 5.20. Anaximander sees acts of injustice in nature as a series of perishings and comings-to-be. Heraclitus,



on the other hand, sees the alternation between opposing states as a process of justice itself. To Heraclitus, contrasting powers of opposites make the world and its dynamic nature possible; it follows from this that justice is simply a pattern of domination of one power over its opposite. Considering humans are intrinsic components of the Presocratic notion of the natural world, both thinkers should appropriately account for human beings within their characterizations. However, after assessing how their definitions situate human affairs, addressing an objection, and refuting it, Heraclitus' conception of justice holds in a more universal way than Anaximander's ideas.

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# Rāmāyaṇa Retold

*Srinaath Perangur*

*The Rāmāyaṇa—one of the two major Sanskrit epics (the other being the Mahābhārata)—is said to be composed by the sage Vālmīki. Contemporary scholarship dates the work to between the sixth century BCE and the third century CE. The basic story is as follows:*

*Rāma (the eponymous hero) is exiled from his kingdom for fourteen years by his jealous stepmother, who wants her son to be king instead. Rāma, accompanied by his brother Lakṣmaṇa and new bride Sīta, lives in a forest hut during his exile. One day, a demon king named Rāvaṇa abducts Sīta in the hopes of convincing her to marry him. He imprisons her in his palace in Laṅka (present-day Sri Lanka). Rāma eventually lays siege to Laṅka, kills Rāvaṇa, and rescues Sīta with the help of an army of anthropomorphic monkeys (vānaras). Citing the fact that she spent several months in the palace of another man, Rāma publicly questions her chastity. Sīta has no choice but to endure a fire ordeal: she walks through a blanket of flames and emerges unscathed, proving her chastity. Years after Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sīta's happy return to their kingdom, rumors circulate among the populace. This leads Rāma to publicly question Sīta's chastity once again. In her furious dismissal of the allegations, she requests the goddess of Earth to open the ground beneath her and consume her whole, preferring to die than to be subjected to another humiliation.*

*In Vālmīki's original version, Rāma is cast as a tragic hero, "forced" by the populace to humiliate his wife on two occasions, thus losing her.*

*Several historical retellings of the Rāmāyaṇa, including one by the sixteenth-century female Bengali poet Candravatī, recast the story from Sīta's perspective to question whether Rāma's choices were correct after all. I am much more intrigued by these versions of the Rāmāyaṇa. My telling below is one such version. It begins at the end, with Sīta's death. By situating her with respect to her ultimate demise, I hope to portray her as a tragic heroine of the Rāmāyaṇa in her own right.*

4—Epilogue

the earth swallows her                      indignant, for  
    her bosom heaved before                  God's  
between spokes of autocracy                  there is room for splinters  
    her manners                      not forgotten but dreams today

sink into past murmurs                      the soil soft  
    around their dense memory                  she remembers  
    what the fires stripped                      from him  
        —not love                      but mercy

3—War & Beauty

Lanka burns her sari's sheen                    bright & full around her    as she strides  
    into the fire                                    night  
    wrapped neatly in                            her hair

2—Monkey Kingdom

sentience crashes                    against a bridge too  
     jagged with                    silence in her wake  
—emptiness the hero all mettle       through the trees, up  
the mountains leaving            for her his self-  
     relegation                    a purpose  
     fizzled with                    -out her  
mention





## **Remains of the Villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga**

*Original photograph by Rachel Sklar, used with permission*



# Tiberius and the Phoenix: An Examination of *Annales* 6.28

Lia Ortner

Chapter 28 of Book 6 of Tacitus' *Annales* begins much like any other, with the introduction of a new year through the consuls in power at the time: "Paulo Fabio L. Vitellio consulibus..." However, the rest of the chapter marks a significant departure from Tacitus' ordinary material. The passage tells of a phoenix appearing in Egypt, which is the only event occurring in the chapter, with the rest going on to discuss various accounts and descriptions of the bird. Tacitus casts into doubt even the fact of whether or not this singular episode actually happened, and though he often employs this literary ambiguity in the *Annales*, its use here only serves to underscore the main question one is left with upon reading this passage: what purpose does it serve? As a historian in Ancient Rome, Tacitus was tasked with a far more literarily complex endeavor than modern historians, and this passage is emblematic of that fact. Chapter 28 must be read primarily as a metaphor for the surrounding historical accounts presented by Tacitus, with the central image of the phoenix representing Tiberius' inheritance of the throne, and the transition of power within the empire. Tacitus employs the metaphor of the phoenix to create a division within the book between the first and second half, each describing one of two distinct periods of Tiberius' reign, as well as to foreshadow the death of Tiberius at the end of the book.

Tacitus is far from being the first to write about the phoenix, and his description acknowledges and reflects other versions of the mythological bird from those *qui formam eius effinxere*.<sup>1</sup> Mentions of the phoenix go back as far as Hesiod, who wrote about the length of the bird's life in *Precepts of Chiron*.<sup>2</sup> The Ancient Greek historian Herodotus, writing around 440 BC (preceding Tacitus by centuries) wrote about a sacred bird called the phoenix. According to his account, the bird appears in Egypt once every 500 years, when it dies. It has red and golden plumage, and is the approximate size and shape of an eagle. The bird originates in Arabia, from whence it comes carrying the parent, in a ball of myrrh, and brings it to the temple of the sun where the phoenix burns its parent (Hdt. Bk. 2). This

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1. "Who depict its form"

2. In this fragment, Hesiod offers the information that "the phoenix outlives nine ravens, but... the rich-haired Nymphs, daughters of Zeus the aegis-holder, outlive ten phoenixes."

description is almost identical to that given by Tacitus. Pliny the Elder, writing in the first century CE also wrote about the phoenix. His account bears many similarities to those of Herodotus and Tacitus. He describes a gold, purple, and red bird, about the size of an eagle, which comes from Arabia where it is considered sacred to the sun. He also describes the process where, in the bird's old age, it lies down to die and in doing so procreates, and then is covered in incense and carried off to be buried by its offspring at the altar of the sun. Pliny, like Tacitus, also acknowledges that there is much dispute about the existence of the bird, but while Tacitus concludes that "aspici aliquando in Aegypto eam volucrem non ambigitur,"<sup>3</sup> Pliny is slightly more skeptical, and he writes that he is "not quite sure that its existence is not all a fable" (Plin. *HN* 10.2).

As a fable, the phoenix remains as relevant in modern culture as it was in Tacitus' world. Though we now understand the bird to be entirely mythical, its process of rebirth at the end of its long life carries much of the same significance that it now does: a symbol of resilience, renewal, and cycles. This last theme in particular is central to the passage, and Tacitus refers to it in the opening sentence of the chapter with the phrase *post longum saeculorum*.<sup>4</sup> In these three simple words, and particularly in the word *saeculorum*, Tacitus reveals the key idea that his conception of the phoenix is tied to the cyclical nature of history. Just as a sighting of the phoenix indicates its imminent death and the creation of its singular offspring, its presence in the text marks the end of one section of the history he relays, as well as the beginning of a new one. Chapter 28, though placed in the middle of Book 6, marks the start of a new segment of that book. Chapters 1 through 27 of the book deal with the aftermath of the fall of Sejanus, the former advisor of Tiberius. In particular the last few chapters recount the deaths of numerous notable figures in the story – among them being Asinius Gallus, Agrippina, and Julia. The symbolic death of the phoenix refers to the ending of these characters' lives, as well as the closing of the era in which they lived. In the chapters following 28, Tacitus moves into a new era, focusing largely on the Parthian War. This latter half of the book also emphasizes geopolitical factors, with Tacitus moving the narrative to Armenia and often marking certain distinctive geographic features of the regions in which the war occurred. This enhanced focus, too, is introduced in chapter 28. Tacitus does not simply mention that the bird was seen *in Aegyptum*, but goes on to reference the location of its past three sightings (the city Heliopolis), as well as the ruler at each of those times. These details were carefully chosen by Tacitus, and the focus on the geopolitical history of the phoenix offers a transition into the second half of Book 6. The fact of chapter 28 as the dividing line between two distinct portions of the book is also supported in the concluding passage of Book 6. This final chapter summarizes Tiberius' life within 5 stages. The fourth, taking place before chapter 28, is identified as having to do with his relationship to Sejanus, while the fifth and final

3 "It is not ambiguous that the bird is seen sometime or other in Egypt"

4 "After a long age"

stage contains the events after chapter 28, which are those immediately preceding Tiberius' death, in which *suo tantum ingenio utebatur* (6.51).<sup>5</sup>

Also central to the story of the phoenix presented by Tacitus is that of the filial-paternal relationship. The passage frames familial responsibility as a core component of the phoenix, as well as the piety involved in the sacred relationship of the bird to the Sun God. Tacitus uses these two ideas to outline the expectations for a ruler of Rome, and by likening Tiberius to the young phoenix rising from the death of his father, leaves his readers to determine whether Tiberius has fulfilled his duty to the empire, and to the late Augustus. First, Tacitus tells us that *primam adulto curam sepeliendi patris*,<sup>6</sup> a moral which may be easily applied to the history he relays. A son must bury his father, with the implication being that he must enact the proper funeral rites, and dutifully pay his respects. The specific gendering of the bird as masculine through the word *patris* only serves to underscore that this phoenix is representative of Tiberius succeeding the throne from his father Augustus, and that the lineage of the phoenix is a patrilineal one, just as the emperorship is. Tacitus stresses the idea of worthiness in the line *ubi par oneri, par meatui sit*,<sup>7</sup> which aside from merely stating that the bird must be equal to the burden and journey before undertaking its task, also includes the emphatic doubling of the word *par*, meaning equal. Given how concise Tacitean phrasing generally is, the repetition shows how important this word (and idea) is. He contrasts this with the idea of acting *temere*, identifying rashness as a negative quality for a son and leader.

The concept of piety is also important. The first line describing the phoenix tells that *sacrum Soli id anima*,<sup>8</sup> and later in the passage Tacitus tells of how the bird *subire patrium corpus inque Solis aram perferre atque adolere*.<sup>9</sup> Piety, being sacred to the god(s) and willing to go to great ends to pay homage, is another quality necessary for a good leader, but with the constant references to Tiberius' erasure of religion in efforts to increase his own fame and power throughout the *Annales*, Tacitus implies that Tiberius is lacking in this quality. Furthermore, at the end of this story, Tacitus inserts his own observation that *haec incerta et fabulosis aucta*.<sup>10</sup> *Incerta* is an adjective often used to describe Tiberius and his speeches, such as in Tacitus' commentary on one of his first speeches given as emperor, when he writes of Tiberius: *in incertum et ambiguum magis implicabantur* (1.11).<sup>11</sup> In this way Tacitus further the comparison of Tiberius to the phoenix. With this line, Tacitus openly acknowledges that the story of the phoenix is questionable, which,

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5. "His own such disposition was made use of"

6. "First the responsibility of the adult is it must bury the father"

7. "When being equal to the burden, equal to the journey"

8. "The animal is sacred to the Sun"

9. "It goes under the body of the father and carries it through the altar of the sun and burns up"

10. "This increased uncertainty and fabulousness"

11. "He was always in a state of uncertainty and obscured his words"

in addition to supporting its metaphorical usage, refers back to his characterization of Tiberius whose speeches are also often described as *ambiguus*. By relating this all through metaphor, rather than explicitly mentioning Tiberius (though his name is briefly brought up in the line *inter Ptolemaeum ac Tiberium minus ducenti quinquaginta anni fuerunt*<sup>12</sup> as a reminder of the real purpose of this chapter), Tacitus is able to maintain a level of impartiality. Rather than directly offering condemnation or approval of Tiberius, he lays out the way in which a dutiful son should behave – with respect, temperance, and piety – and leaves it to the reader to consider whether Tiberius has acted nobly. Of course, the unspoken answer is that Tiberius has failed, and is an unsuitable leader, but through this metaphor, Tacitus encourages his readers to arrive at their own indictment of Tiberius and his fallibilities as princes.

The final line of the chapter also offers a unique insight into the nature of Tacitus' writing. Though he admits to his readers that *haec incerta et fabulosis aucta*, he closes the passage by asserting that *ceterum aspici aliquando in Aegypto eam volucrem non ambigitur*. In a chapter driven entirely by metaphor (which is unusual for the *Annales*), through this last sentiment about the phoenix, Tacitus also offers a defense of the chapter's place in the book. Though the chapter itself is full of doubt and myth, its importance is *non ambigitur*.

The structure of *Annales* is unique in its hexad configuration, centering around a count of six, more traditional for poetry than prose. As such, Book 6 marks the conclusion of the first hexad, and begins the continuation into the second hexad (books 7 through 12). In addition to the cyclical nature of the history itself, the phoenix is emblematic of the cyclical structure of the *Annales*. Here Tacitus approaches the end of the first hexad, which gives way for the second to follow. Ultimately, chapter 28 serves two primary purposes: one based in structure and the other in character. The passage serves as a midway point within Book 6, bisecting it into two distinct periods of Tiberius' reign, offering a conclusion to the first and an introduction to the second. Perhaps more importantly though, using a culturally significant mythical figure, Tacitus offers a final condemnation of Tiberius and his time in power before beginning the sequence of events leading to his death, as well as foreshadowing that death. Just as the death of Augustus is represented in the death of the phoenix which allows for the succession of responsibility to its son, given the cyclical nature of the phoenix, it also signifies the repetition of this cycle, which is the death of Tiberius, and the consequent succession of Caligula. Lastly, it leaves readers prepared to question Caligula as they just have Tiberius. Will this new leader take up the mantle with the responsibility and piety of the phoenix? Or will he too act rashly and obscurely, unfit to lead just as his predecessor was?

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12. "Between Ptolemy and Tiberius were less than 250 years."

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# Krishna Drinking Flames: A Brief Analysis of a Kaṅgra Painting of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Catherine Nelli

The stories of Krishna (Kṛṣṇa) in Vṛndāvana in the tenth book of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa have been—and remain—one of the “most influential textual sources of religious narrative in the Hindu religious landscape...if we are to judge on the basis of the themes that have surfaced in Hindu drama, poetry, dance, painting, song, literature, sculpture, iconography and temple worship over the last millennium and more” (Bryant 2003: x). At the courts of Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, painters represented Krishna’s life as it was described in Bhāgavata. Their work “may be read as a part of their struggle to develop a language complex enough to absorb the shapes and colors of the literature the visual medium was created to illustrate” (Levine 1971: 143). The strength of the visual medium to depict scenes of the Bhāgavata is especially apparent in the work of the Kaṅgra (Kaṅgra) school. This paper will recapitulate a brief background on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the history and characteristics of Kaṅgra paintings before analyzing one painting of a forest fire scene from the tenth canto of the Bhāgavata alongside the Sanskrit text. This analysis will demonstrate the painting’s careful attention to many details of the text—and unique interpretation of a particular half-verse—along with its superimposition of the story onto the background of the Kaṅgra Valley.

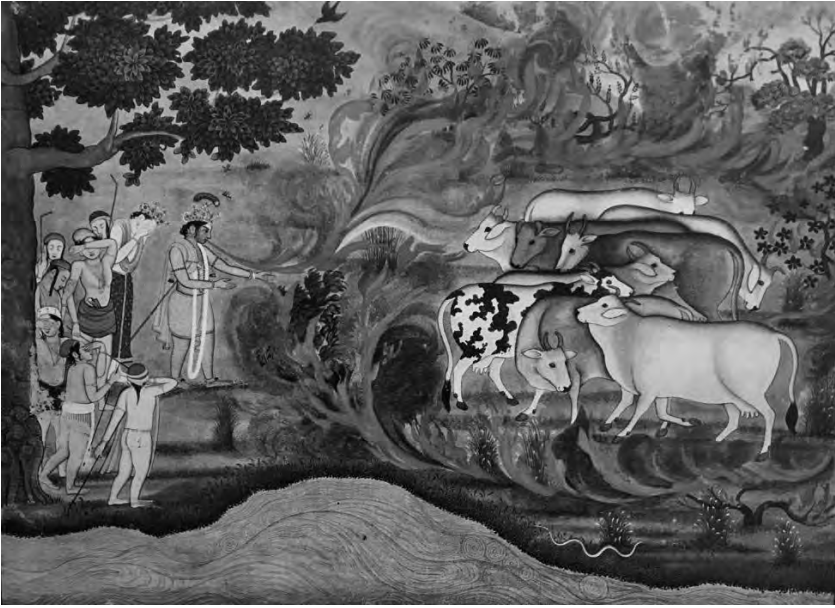
Though the exact date of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa’s composition is unknown, and its oral composition began many centuries earlier, Indian specialists on the Purāṇas date the completed written form of the text to the Gupta period (fourth to sixth centuries CE), and modern western scholars believed it was finished between the ninth and thirteenth centuries CE (Bryant 2003, xvi). However, the worship of Krishna is much older than the Bhāgavata or the Mahābhārata; the earliest known story of Krishna as a divine being dates to the end of the Vedic period in the late fifth to fourth centuries BCE (xviii). The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is a Vaiṣṇava text (a text which worships Vishnu) comprised of a claimed 18,000 verses, 4,000 of which are in the tenth book (xiii). It focuses on Bhagavān, “the glorious lord,” “who assumes multiple forms, avatāras, to address the needs of the world and

engage with his devotees” (Gupta and Valpey 2017: 9). The tenth book narrates the “incarnations and activities” of Krishna (Bryant 2003: iv), both as a child and as an adult. The first section, on his childhood, depicts “God stealing butter from the cowherd women and feeding it to the monkeys, hiding from his mother in fear as she chases him with a stick on account of his mischief, or dallying with the gopīs (cowherd girls) in the moonlit forests of [Vṛndāvana].” It is this section on Krishna’s life that bhakti (devotional) art most often depicts (xxiii).

The Bhāgavata’s unknown “geographical provenance,” in addition to “the wide variety of scripts represented in Bhāgavata manuscripts are indicative of its wide distribution throughout the Indian subcontinent” (Gupta and Valpey 2017: 4). Bhakti to Krishna was expressed in Mughal, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Basohli, and Kangra styles (Randhawa 1960, 32). The Kangra style, which I will focus on in this paper, was developed by artists painting in the Mughal style who migrated to the Punjab Hill States after Nādir Shāh’s conquest of Delhi in 1739. The Mughal technique of miniature paintings used opaque watercolor on paper or sometimes cotton cloth (Welch 1978: 12). A “concern for naturalism was infused into the tradition [of miniature paintings] by the Mughals, whose pictures were closer to prose” (11). Court artists fleeing Delhi found refuge in such courts as Raja Govardhan Chand’s in Haripur Guler and Raja Ghamand Chand’s in Kangra (Randhawa 1960: 34). The Kangra style began to develop in Ghamand’s court before flourishing in the court of his descendent, Raja Sansār Chand II (1775-1823) (Goetz 1963: 79). The Kangra school flourished from the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries (Encyclopædia Britannica). Painters represented scenes from texts including the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa, and Mahābhārata (Randhawa 1960: 35). It is believed that the Kangra paintings of the Bhāgavata were completed around 1790-1806, during Raja Chand II’s rule. There are more than 120 paintings in this series, each sized around twelve inches by eight inches (Randhawa 1960: 38).

The “translation of poetry into painting is a unique feature of Kangra painting,” giving the works a “lyrical quality” (35). The Kangra style focuses on natural images and superimposes the scenes from canonical texts onto the backdrop of the Kangra Valley. Rather than depicting the scenes of the Bhāgavata on the plains of the Indo-Gangetic Region, Kangra artists paint the “low undulating hills” of Kangra (36-37). The Kangra style is distinguished from the Basohli style by its “curvilinear line, easy flowing rhythms, calmer colours, and a mood of sweet lyricism” influenced by the Lucknow and Delhi Mughal styles (Encyclopædia Britannica). In the section below, I will analyze these qualities in a painting of a forest fire from the Bhāgavata.





Reprinted Plate X of Kangra Painting of the Bhagavata Purana by M.S. Randhawa (1960). Dark border surrounding the painting is omitted.

This painting depicts a scene from the sixteen-verse Chapter Nineteen of Canto Ten. In the chapter, while the gopas (cowherds) are busy playing, their cows wander away looking for grass. The cows, along with goats and water-buffaloes, become thirsty because they end up in a field of dry grass. The gopas realize the cows are missing, become worried, and begin to search for them. After finding the cows, the gopas start leading them back to the village. The cows become overjoyed when they hear Krishna calling out to them, but then a forest fire arises on all four sides of them, assisted by a strong wind. The gopas pray to Krishna, who then tells them to close their eyes as he drinks in the fire with his mouth. Krishna, along with his brother Balarāma, collects the cows and return to Vraja, with Krishna playing his flute (Ramanan 2005: 1980-2003).

The painting makes an interesting interpretation of the first half of verse seven, which details the fire bursting into existence. The *vana-dhūmaketuḥ* (forest fire) arises *yadṛcchayā* (accidentally) *samantāt* (on all sides) (1988). The text does not explicitly state whether “on all sides” refers to all sides of both the gopas and the cows, only the cows, or only the gopas, though verse eight describes the fear felt by both the gopas and the cows (1990). The unspecified assumption would be that “all sides” means all sides of the entire party, rather than one group or the other. The Kangra painting makes what may be an unusual choice by depicting the fire surrounding only the cows, while the gopas stand to the side under a tree. Based

on the leaf shape, this tree could be a pipal, which were common in Kangra. The painting does stick to the general meaning of the rest of the verse. The second half of verse seven states that the fire, ulbaṇa-ulmukaiḥ (with immense flames), began vilelihānaḥ (licking or consuming) sthira-jaṅgamān (inanimate and animate objects). In the painting, the flames cover just over half of the horizontal space. The smoke surrounding the flames indicates that it is burning strongly, and a tree in the background has fallen over, having succumbed to the flames. Another small tree in the foreground has caught fire and has nearly split apart from the damage. Wild animals, including a bird and a snake, are fleeing the carnage.

After the gopas pray, Krishna comes to the rescue. In verse eleven of the text, Krishna says, “nimīlayata mā bhaiṣṭa locanāni” (1995). Krishna directs this order at the gopas. Nimīlayata (from nimīl) is an imperative meaning “close” or “shut,” and locanāni (from locana) meaning eyes. His second directive, mā bhaiṣṭa (from bhī) means “do not be afraid.” This is an injunctive mood unique to Sanskrit, which stands in for an imperative or subjunctive meaning following the indeclinable prohibition mā (Burrow 2001: 346). The Kangra painting above appears to follow the directions of this verse closely. The gopas, standing to the left, have their eyes closed, and some even have their hands or arms shielding their eyes. Verse twelve of the text then reads:

tathā nimīlitākṣeṣu bhagavānagnimulbaṇam |  
pītvā mukhena tāṅkrchṛādyogādhiṣo vyamocayat ||(Ramanan 2005: 1997)

Ramanan translates these verses as: “On closing their eyes (as instructed by our Lord), our Lord Shri Krishna, who is the lord and Master of all the Yogas, drank this forest fire through His mouth and mitigated the sorrow and difficulty of these surrendered Gopas” (1997). In the painting, Krishna, depicted with his usual blue skin, is pītvā agnim mukhena (drinking the fire with his mouth). He holds his arms steady toward the bright red strokes encircling the cows as he swallows the flames.

The scenery of this painting is important, as it likely depicts Kangra rather than the setting in the Bhāgavata. The scene is painted on the base of a hill, one of the many in the Kangra Valley. Furthermore, chapter nineteen in the Bhāgavata does not mention any water sources; in fact, the gopas and cows are described as thirsty. Yet in the foreground of the painting sweeps a river, depicted with spirals and curved lines. The riverbank is adorned with reeds. M.S. Randhawa describes Kangra as having “fresh water streams brimming with glacial waters of the Dhauladhars meandering through wave-like terraced fields” (Randhawa 1960: 36). It is evident that this painting upholds the traditional Kangra style—incorporating Mughal style naturalism and prose-like scenes of canonical texts into the setting of the Kangra hills. While the painting makes what may be a unique choice to surround only the cows with the fire, its devotional power is no less strong.

The painting is dynamic and reverent, depicting Krishna's heroism as he saves the cows from the flames. During the time, painters in India "developed a vocabulary of visual metaphor which, although deriving its inspiration ultimately from literary sources, dramatizes as no literary account could do, the complexity of Krishna's mythic role, and its significance for a society in which Krishna worship could become, not merely a passionate diversion, but a way of life" (Brown 1971: 144). Kangra painters enhanced bhakti by dramatizing scenes of Krishna from the Bhāgavata in their valley home.

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# *Animi Imperio, Corporis Servitio:* **Violence and Social Division in Sallust's** *Bellum Catilinae*

*Isaiah Goldsmith*

Roman history, especially in the period of the late Republic, was defined by change, much of which was accomplished with violence and political discord. The Catilinarian Conspiracy of 63 BCE offers an ideal case study in the use of violence as a political tool in terms of how it magnified and reflected larger political and social forces. The Conspiracy was fundamentally fractured, the product of the actions of two groups, each with different motivations and goals in their use of violence. The leaders of the Conspiracy, more politically established and historically wealthier Romans, sought to use violence as a force of limited change, aiming not to demolish the underlying political system but rather to change their position within it. The poorer and less well-connected Romans of the Conspiracy, chiefly veterans of Sulla's army, sought a similar end of social advancement but with an incompatible implication, as their ascendancy itself would challenge the underlying social order. In support of these claims, this essay will first explore the legitimacy and limits of reading Sallust as a historical source, will then provide background information on the Conspiracy and the world in which it occurred, and will finally identify and analyze the interests and motivations of the two aforementioned groups.

Additionally, before diving into the evidence, it is necessary to clarify the scope of this paper. In terms of the breadth of the evidence considered, this paper will focus primarily on the build-up to the Conspiracy and the first half of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* (BC), highlighting the intentions rather than the actions of the conspirators. Such an approach centers the factors which pushed the conspirators to violence, allowing for a clearer picture of their disparate motivations than would an analysis focused on the actual perpetration of violence. It is also necessary to avoid an excessively broad interpretation of this evidence. This paper does not suggest that the power dynamics seen in the case of Catiline were present in all of Roman Republican History, or even that they were present throughout Rome in the time of Catiline. These dynamics are, however, credible, and relevant to the case of Catiline and to other similar conflicts in the Late Republic. For instance, Lepidus's uprising in 78 BCE, per Appian's descriptions in *The Civil Wars*, also

included a wealthier, more powerful arm which included the uprising's progenitor, Lepidus, and a poorer group of farmers, in this case Italians, whose land had been confiscated (App. *The Civil Wars* 107). This bifurcated uprising structure parallels the case of Catiline, giving credence to the applicability of this analysis to other uprisings of its era.

The two most significant surviving sources on the Catilinarian Conspiracy are Sallust's *BC* and Cicero's *In Catilinam* (*IC*). Though *IC* provides valuable insights into many facets of the Conspiracy, it also comes with great bias and distortion given its intended use as a speech against Catiline. While Sallust is not impartial, his biases are less central to the content of the work than those of Cicero. To the question of the veracity of *BC*, though it is impossible to say that all or even most of the work is "truthful," it is a fact that the work was read by Roman audiences and was not rejected outright given its endurance. Thus, its representations of class and status are not entirely literary fabrications as they must have been believable to Roman audiences. This credibility suggests that Sallust offers a generally historically accurate representation of events, and any analysis of the text is not purely literary but rather is historical.

Having established the validity of using Sallust as a source on social divisions, it is now time to consider the background of the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Generally, Sallust presents a story of declining morals in the lead up to the events of 63 BCE. Though this understanding of history as directional is influenced by Sallust's agenda and his knowledge of the participants involved, it is still likely more credible than Cicero's writings. Sallust claims that Rome began in a morally high place but declined over time, a trajectory spurred on by the actions of Sulla and his men. In describing these men and their treatment of fellow citizens, Sallust writes that, "The victors showed neither moderation nor restraint, but shamefully and cruelly wronged their fellow citizens" (Sal. *Cat.* 11). On one level, this line is fascinating as it reveals assumptions about underlying Roman power dynamics and balance. There seems to be an expectation that there was a natural division in Roman society where one group held power over another. Thus, it is not unreasonable to believe that such a social structure, consisting of different groups of different statuses acting with different intentions, was present in the Conspiracy. However, there also seems to be an assumption of "fair use" (i.e., that this power, though distributed unequally, was not abused). Perhaps this is Sallust being sentimental or apocryphal, but either way his representation of power in Rome is credible as it was believable to Roman audiences.

It is also critical to consider Sallust's characterization of Sulla and his men within this world. Sallust notes that Sulla's men were won over with "luxury and license foreign to the manners of our forefathers" and that "voluptuous lands had easily demoralized the warlike spirit of his soldiers." (Sal. *Cat.* 11). Sallust argues that the accumulation of wealth and success experienced by Sullan veterans, beyond being a product of social violence, is a direct result of and a contributor to this larger Roman moral decline. These luxuries come at the expense of Roman

values: Sallust thus creates a conflict between the interests of Sulla's men and his own vision of what the Republic should be. Though clearly Sallust is personally biased in his analysis and description of these veterans, *BC* is still instructive in helping us understand the history, mindset, and interests of this group.

Now, having laid out Sallust's conception of the world of the Catilinarian Conspiracy, we can begin our characterization and analysis of the participating groups. Though this "group theory" approach to historical analysis, one which takes large-scale events with thousands of individual participants and attempts to break them down into a few buckets of actors, may seem inexact, there is historical precedent for such a method. For instance, in *IC II*, Cicero describes five archetypical groups of participants in the Conspiracy. Two of these groups fall into the category of indebted elites seeking advancement, two are also indebted but less elite and are looking for a larger social re-shuffling that would benefit themselves, and the final group is comprised of murderers, assassins, and the like (Cic. *In Cat. II* 8-10). The inclusion of this final group, which could not have been very large if it existed at all, serves to discredit the interests of the other groups. In any case, Cicero clearly provides a historical basis both for a group-level analysis of the Conspiracy and for two larger categories of conspirators: those of higher status and those of lower status.

Similarly, Sallust's first group of conspirators (Group 1), which included many of the leaders of the Conspiracy, was composed of elite Roman men who, spurred on by low morals and debt, sought to use violence to advance themselves within the traditional *cursus honorum*. Two leaders of Group 1 mentioned by Sallust are Gnaeus Piso and Catiline himself. Piso is described as "goaded on by need of funds and an evil character to overthrow the government" while Catiline possesses an "evil and depraved nature" and has debts that are "enormous" (Sal. *Cat.* 16, 5, 18). Sallust's inclusion of both moral and financial factors as motivating the actions of these figures positions them within the larger narrative of Rome's moral decline while also placing them as representatives of a particular class of indebted elites. These men had incurred debts from excessive spending (as opposed to mismanagement of a farm, as was the case for Romans of a lower class) and this financial burden was particularly dangerous when combined with the mindset of men of this elite class.

As explained by Hölkeskamp in *Reconstructing the Roman Republic*, "The personal identity and the 'persona' of an aristocrat were 'exclusively' defined and completely determined by his *cursus honorum*" (Höl. *Recon.* 91). As Piso and Catiline, though elite, were not consuls, and thus not atop the *cursus honorum* nor in a position from which they would have been more able to relieve their debts, ascension within this system was their goal. As Sallust himself notes, "Catiline himself had high hopes as a candidate for the consulship," clear evidence of the arch-conspirator's desire to ascend within, not to destroy, the *cursus honorum* (Sal. *Cat.* 16).

Sallust also writes that many “young men... of high position, were favorable to Catiline’s project; for although in quiet times they had the means of living elegantly or luxuriously, they preferred uncertainty to certainty, war to peace” (Sal. *Cat.* 17). This group of young men grew stagnant without the opportunity to rise within the *cursus honorum*. As their position within this system would have heavily influenced their self-worth, they were eager to elevate themselves, even at the expense of their financial and social stability. Thus, Group 1, characterized by elite social standing, low morals, and debt, was eager to use violence to socially advance. They did not intend to destroy the Republican system, merely to rearrange their own status at the top of it; instability and violence presented the perfect opportunity for this group to ascend.

On the other hand, Sallust also describes a second cohort of conspirators (Group 2), which was composed of Romans of lower status, including many Sullan veterans. As these men were not the leaders of the conspiracy and there is less extant information about them, it is critical to analyze their internal motivations as well as how they interacted with and were manipulated by Catiline. As Sallust notes, “The greater number of Sulla’s veterans, who had squandered their property and now thought with longing of their former pillage and victories, were eager for civil war” (Sal. *Cat.* 16). The differences in social status between the two groups stands out from this quotation. The members of Group 2 are not elites who could see themselves advancing, if not for their debt, but rather are now-poor veterans who have lost their farms and have no way of escaping their debt within the existing Roman social system. These men, as they first received their farms for participating in intra-Roman violence at the side of Sulla, view violence and its ability to shift fortunes as a useful tool for upward social mobility. They are “eager for civil war” not because they hate the Republic, but rather because they hate debt and poverty, and violence offers an escape.

To further understand the motivations of this socially downtrodden group, it is crucial to observe the rhetoric by which Catiline stirs them up. Specifically, in *BC* 20, Catiline connects the interests of the two groups, introduces a common enemy to further unite them, and makes specific promises to Group 2 around the topic of social advancement. Catiline first says, “You and I hold the same view of what is good and evil,” even before he has introduced an “evil” to which the groups can be opposed (Sal. *Cat.* 20). He creates an ideological and strategic connection between the factions and does so before introducing any alternative to ensure that there can be no “mental defection” at this point. He also says that together the groups will “emancipate ourselves” (Sal. *Cat.* 20). As the elite Catiline and his compatriots of Group 1 would not have thought of themselves as slaves needing emancipation, the inclusion of this word suggests that members of Group 2, with their debt and low status, may have seen themselves as slaves in some way.

Catiline continues by referring to a “few powerful men” whom he blames for Rome’s social ills and taxes, while he notes that those excluded from this power are “without influence, without weight, and subservient” (Sal. *Cat.* 20).



The introduction of the “few powerful men” is a savvy rhetorical tool and it demonstrates that, although Group 2 may not have had specific enemies in Rome’s upper echelons, they were generally resentful of the entire class. In referencing this hated shadow class, Catiline can harness the anger and energy of Group 2 without providing specific names or crimes. Further, having previously aligned the groups, Catiline avoids uncomfortable comparisons between himself and these very “few powerful men” of whom he warns.

Finally, Catiline ends his speech with specific promises around what his conspirators will receive upon the completion of their plan. He first mentions the riches of the tyrants, then describes the poverty and debt of the people, and then declares, “Freedom... riches, honour, and glory; Fortune offers all these things as prizes to the victors” (Sal. *Cat.* 20). The contrast between riches of the few and the debt of the many galvanizes support among his indebted followers, but the final line of this section is far more rhetorically intriguing. On one level, it promises these followers the very riches which they hate the tyrants for holding. On another level, the promises of honor and glory in the line suggest that with these riches would come power and thus an ascension to a higher social position. If taken at face value, this line would signify that Catiline wishes to replace the current elite class with his low-status indebted followers. However, it is also the case that Catiline is seeking ascension within the Roman system himself and for Group 1. The elevation of Group 2 would necessitate the destruction of the existing Roman system, anathema to Catiline’s personal goals, and thus his promises to Group 2 are hollow. He knows that both groups of his supporters are seeking social advancement, but he also knows that the implications of these goals (preservation of the system versus destruction of it) are incompatible. Here, he is deceiving Group 2 in the hopes of using their might to accomplish his own ends before the truth comes out. Thus, Group 2 is composed of less socially advanced Romans and includes Sullan veterans whose conception of social advancement is centered around violence against the structures of the state. Catiline attempts to align the interests of this group with the interests of his own, but he knows that such a goal is not feasible because of the incompatible perspectives of the groups around the preservation of the larger Roman social system.

Overall, Sallust’s *Bellum Catilinae* presents Catiline as leading a conspiracy supported by two groups with different backgrounds and different intentions. The first group, made up of indebted elites, seeks advancement within the Roman system and hopes to use violence to elevate itself without fundamentally destabilizing the state within which they hope to advance. The second group, made up of indebted Sullan veterans and other poorer Romans, views violence as a tool of larger social change and supports Catiline because he has guaranteed them a new start in a new system, a promise which contradicts Catiline’s own goals, but which is also necessary for the potential accomplishment of any social change.

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# Augustine in Milan

*Paul Michaud*

The day Augustine arrived from Carthage,  
a stolen pear still in his dusty pocket,  
he paused for a moment in the big hall  
where Ambrose kept a fire going  
every day of the year save Good Friday.  
(On that day, the venerable bishop declined to leave his bed.)

Everyone else in Milan had already seen how Ambrose read,  
but Augustine—fingering the bruised pear—  
was in disbelief for days:  
*Vox autem et lingua quiescebant.*  
*His voice and tongue were still.*

What is there to write about the way  
Augustine splits the tongue and the voice  
into two distinct things, each unable to animate the other?  
Here was something he never understood:  
Ambrose had tried to read in the ancient way, oratorically, but scripture silenced  
him.

From that day Augustine never read aloud,  
even when it was inconvenient not to.  
Even when it was his turn, in the little  
afternoon biblical study (wine provided) at Cassiacum.  
Later in his life, there was a rotating cast of pretenders  
who read his lectures for him, while he sat and thought of pears.

It was around that time that he tried to renounce everything,  
in the way some authors ask their friends  
to burn it all, hoping they will disobey.  
*The wise man never speaks*, Augustine said.  
*Only reads*, he meant.  
Of course he didn't say the second part aloud.



# The Carolingian Renaissance Critiqued: The Importance of Art and Reliquaries in the Early Middle Ages

*Rosella Liu*

## Introduction

Empire, papacy and monasticism—in front of the dramatic backdrop of 8th century political contention, reliquaries stood at the center of Carolingian cultural revolution. Because of their highly abstract and religious language and role as the medium between the material and the spiritual, in the swept of liturgical reform in Western Europe in 780-850, reliquaries underwent artistic transformations and became an integral part of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious' blueprint for their Christian empire.

In this paper, I will explore and critique the Carolingian Renaissance as the late eighth and ninth century cultural movement that profoundly impacted the reliquaries in artistry and form.

The cultural revival was dependent on both the revival of learning in antiquity and the reform of Christian institutions and the lives of Christian people under Carolingian rule. “Correction” was the renaissance’s major initiative, and the movement’s unwavering religiosity and dedication to classical culture not only influenced the trend of early medieval craftsmanship, but also revived the conversation and contemplation on the nature and function of art.

In the first section of the paper, I will trace the development of scholarship on the Carolingian Renaissance, revealing academia’s focus on the movement’s intellectual output as opposed to its artistic one. In the second section, I will present the Carolingian Renaissance’s artistic impact on both theological and material culture of the Carolingian dynasty—first, through analyzing *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, a fundamental work of medieval art analysis; then, through proving the elevated liturgic usage of reliquaries and comparing the Enger’s reliquary with the reliquary of St. Stephen, whose stylistic differences serve as visual evidence to the Carolingian Renaissance’s irrevocable change on early medieval art.

## The Carolingian Renaissance and its Art: An Examination of the Historiography

The Carolingian Renaissance's veneration of the classical era makes it comparable to several later European cultural movements, and historians in different periods have offered various remarks on its nature and impact. However, much of the Carolingian Renaissance's reception has been dismissive; when scholars do not dismiss it altogether, they only focus on the intellectual achievements.

The medieval writings on the Carolingian Renaissance are full of adulation; however, they focus on Charlemagne and seldom discuss the objects which were used as the means of worship.<sup>1</sup> While these medieval sources let Charlemagne's personal glory overshadow the civilization he nurtured, they are evidence of the early Carolingian era's acclamation as the "age of Gold" and illustrative of the period's powerful influence on popular and scholarly imagination (Tromf 1973: 2).

Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, there was no concept of a medieval cultural revival. Lorenzo Valla, the Italian humanist, declared that there was no cultural revival since the fall of Rome and describes the period between the Visigoth invasion and his own time as a *superiora tempora infelicia*—the unfortunate past (Valla 1572: 11). The author of *The Prince*, Machiavelli, hardly commented favorably on the Carolingian era (Tromf 1973: 5). According to historian G.W. Trompf, the early Carolingian dynasty receives little attention in most Renaissance sources beyond the establishment of a new empire. The age of Enlightenment, which encouraged rationality and individualism, had such contempt towards the Church and its domination over Europe that it denounced the middle ages for their profound Catholic tradition. For example, Voltaire vents on the era's clericalized culture and censures Charlemagne for his Christian subjects, even though feudalism did not flourish until the beginning of the tenth century (Tromf 1973: 5). In *The History of The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon goes so far as to deem Charlemagne's era deep with "ignorance and credulity," noting how "the grammar and logic, the music and astronomy, of the times were only cultivated as the handmaids of superstition" (Gibbon 1994: 172, 183). Crowning themselves as witnesses to the age of intellectual advancement, Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers overlooked the literary and artistic achievements made in the medieval era.

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1. In *Egloga*, written between 804 and 810 CE, the Frankish churchman and poet Moduin of Autun compares Charlemagne's regime to "Golden Rome," expressing his admiration without reservation. The following generations of the Roman emperors convey intense nostalgia for his rule. The eleventh century French epic *The Chanson de Roland* sanctifies Charlemagne, and in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century saga *the Divine Comedy* the Italian poet Dante Alighieri puts him in the circle of Mars as a warrior of Faith.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new trend in scholarship emerged, advocating for reevaluation of past scholarship on the Carolingian Renaissance. However, in their focus on refuting the Renaissance and Enlightenment claims, the scholars continue to overlook the artistic production achieved in the Carolingian Renaissance and simplify the nature of the movement as merely intellectual. In 1960, British historian Herbert Butterfield claimed that the impression of the Middle Ages as a dark age became gradually outdated as a new definition of the Renaissance took shape (Tromf 1973: 7). In his 1973 essay, G. W. Trompf argues that many historians in the 20th century were compelled to carry the conception of the Renaissance back to the Middle Ages (Tromf 1973: 7). To refute Enlightenment historians' claims that belittled the cultural revival as a "tea party" between monastic scholars, he cataloged Carolingian scholars in his appendix.

All in all, as new discoveries on the Early Medieval Era emerge, it becomes more difficult to ignore the significant cultural impact of the Carolingian Renaissance—to the point that some scholars argue its cultural impact was more significant than the Italian Renaissance (Tromf 1973: 24). However, by examining the historiography of the subject, it is clear that the artistic part of the movement was often overlooked.

### **Carolingian Contemplation on Art: *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum***

Integral to the Carolingian Renaissance was a long-standing debate regarding icons, a special class of sanctified images that served as a channel for prayer between the earthly and the divine. Icons could be made in various materials, whether paint, mosaic, stone sculpture, metal, or ivory, and could portray any religious theme from biblical stories to images of Christ or the Virgin Mary (Nees 1995: 816).

In the eighth century, the controversies surrounding icons evoked a virulent debate across Europe. In late 720s, the expanding importance of sanctified images and the mounting expenditure on icons led the Byzantine emperor Leo III to respond with iconoclasm, which rejects religious images as heretical (Nees 1995: 217). In 787, Empress Irene, the regent to her son Leo IV, restored icons to cement support for her fragile regime (Nees 1995: 72). She wrote a letter of support to Pope Hadrian and then held a council in Nicaea, which refuted the Hieresia decrees for departing from written and unwritten traditions of the church, false accusation of idolatry, and the Hieresia council participants' inaccurate and narrow interpretations of biblical statements on images—denying prevalent domestic iconophobic sentiments. In 788, when the poor Latin translations of the

Byzantium imperial letter and the Nicaea council's actions reached Charlemagne from Pope Hadrian, it created a crisis. The Frankish King immediately called upon his two most trustworthy court theologians—Alcuin of York and Theodulf of Orleans—to respond to the conference's results (Nees 1995: 163).

The response—the *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum*—was the first analysis of art and aesthetics in Western Europe since antiquity (Nees 1995: 180). The principal writer of the *Opus* Theodulf started to work on the volume in 790, dividing it into four books to correspond to the metaphors of four rivers of paradise, four Gospels, four virtues, and four kinds of wood stored in the Ark of Covenant—the gold-covered wooden chest constructed by Moses under God's instruction (Nees 1995: 183). In his work, Theodulf presents pages of theological arguments on images. However, his bitter tone and continuous insults of Greek idolatry makes historians question the book's propagandic purpose. Frankish King Charlemagne himself was also actively involved in the creation of the *Opus*. In fact, he required Theodulf to read the composition to him line by line for his approval (Fried and Lewis 2016: 388). The title of the final product—"the Work of King Charles against the Synod"—shows Charlemagne's intention of making the work a direct counter-reaction to the image crisis and heretic arguments that his Byzantine political enemy presented. In its creation process, the *Opus* already demonstrates two major characteristics of the Carolingian Renaissance: "correction" and the establishment of Frankish Kingdom as the true inheritor of Rome.

Throughout the *Opus*, though distressed by the Byzantine image crisis, Theodulf does not denounce the value of art. In chapter 23 of Book 3, he claims that the image is a common and neutral existence, and just like the arts of the carpenter, sculptor, and stone engraver, it can lead to both falsehood and truth (Noble 2013: 199). In the same section, to show the great extent of objects that an image can portray, Theodulf crafts a long poetic anaphora, reciting a list of mythical scenes and paintings. In a stream of questions starting with "*Nonne*" (don't they), Theodulf elucidates that painters can offer various artistic interpretations on one common idea expressed by the scripture—a freedom which usually breeds unorthodoxy (Bastgen 1973: 151).

Theodulf draws a fine line between the image and the icon in *Opus*. In the first chapter of Book 2, the Visigoth scholar summarizes the distinction: "an image represents a category, whereas an idol is a type, and that a type can be reduced to a category, but not vice versa. For despite the fact that almost every idol is also an image, conversely, it is not the case that every image is an idol. An image always signifies something other than itself, while an idol never denotes anything but itself" (Fried and Lewis 2016: 388). The court scholar's *Opus Caroli* expresses nothing against art but against the unguided materiality of Byzantine worship. To Theodulf, art is an instrument of conversion and a tool of spiritual elevation from the unknown to the known, as long as it is placed in a context that intently



encourages its audience to see, not through the corporeal eyes, but through the “eyes of mind.”<sup>2</sup>

Refuting the II Nicaea acta with stunning eloquence, *Opus Caroli* provides the most contemporary art talk of Charlemagne’s era. Though the Carolingians ultimately abandoned the *Opus* when they realized they had misunderstood the situation in Nicaea and the Pope due to the poor Latin translations, the *Opus*’ powerful rhetoric on art made the work an inspiration for future conversations on the subject. In the same year that the *Opus* was completed, Charlemagne held a long-planned council in Frankfurt. In the midst of the assembly, he gathered a meeting including some Frankish bishops and the papal legates in which the cult of images was rejected again. Twenty years later, in the age of Louis the Pious, a home-grown image crisis arose when Bishop Claudius of Turin began moving and destroying images. His iconoclastic actions were brought to Louis’ attention, provoking a theological discussion in the Frankish world. In *On Pictures and Images*, written in the 820s, Archbishop Agobard of Lyon reinforced that only living men could be adored and only God could be worshiped (Fried and Lewis 2016: 388). In the 830s, Einhard, the Frankish Scholar and dedicated servant to Charlemagne and Louis, defended the adoration of the holy cross in his letter with his distinguished friend Lupus of Ferrieres due to the controversial subject constantly wobbling in the air (Fried and Lewis 2016: 320). In the 840s, Jonas of Orleans, who coincidentally shared the same bishopric see with his predecessor Theodulf, completed *De cultu imaginum* (On the cult of images) at the request of Louis the Pious, in which he fiercely refuted the Iconoclastic claims laid by Claudius (Fried and Lewis 2016: 1).

Thus, the lively conversation carried out in Charlemagne’s age continued. In its complicated, rancorous, and lengthy assessment of visual art in Christian language, the *Opus Caroli*’s influence transcended the context of the II Nicaea council, testifying to the Frankish court’s undisputable focus on art even in its intellectual production.

## Reliquaries: Visual Evidence of the Carolingian Renaissance

In addition to *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, which records the authoritative Frankish voice on images, Theodulf of Orleans’ other literary works illustrated the profusion of antiquity art in Charlemagne’s court. In his poem

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2. Or “the mind’s eye.” Thomas Noble mentioned in page 224-226 of *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* that it is a term commonly used in Theodulf’s contemporaries’ writings when describing certain things can be only perceived by a spiritual vision that was based on neither material nor bodies.

*Contra iudices*, the Visigoth scholar depicts an antique silver vessel featuring the scene of the Greek hero Hercules fighting the monster Cacus (Fried and Lewis 2016: 318). The images on the vase exemplifies the classical spirit in royal commissions nurtured by the emperor and his artists and is a snapshot of the climax of Carolingian Renaissance of art after Charlemagne's coronation in 800, in the last 14 years of the emperor's reign.

In 801, Charlemagne began to enforce the decree by the Fifth Council of Carthage (401 CE) that all altars should contain relics for the entire Frankish realms (Fried and Lewis 2016: 320). The emperor also made efforts to imitate Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, who dedicated himself to the collection of relics against the church's control over the cults of saints. Charlemagne contributed to the first major era of relic collection by giving and receiving unprecedented amounts of relics partly through diplomatic exchange, and he firmly established the tradition for the manipulation of relics as the feature for Christian kingship (Hahn 2012: 51). Thus, since the relics were widely integrated into Carolingian worship, there was likely a similar surge in the quantity and craftsmanship of reliquaries in the same time period.

During this period of time, there were two vastly different trends within Carolingian Art. One bore witness to the revival of antiquity contributed by Einhard and a new generation of artists who sought inspiration from Italian Arts (Lasko 1994: 9). The other represented the continuity of the art from the earlier period. In the royal court, due to Charlemagne's political ambition, classical influence was overwhelming. Though the rivalry existed between Charlemagne and the Byzantines, the emperor did not reject eastern art and instead hired a team of Byzantine artists from the East to bring Greek traditions to works of the Palace School (Beckwith 1985: 39). For example, in the Coronation Gospel, one of the emblematic pieces of the Palace School, the illustrations of saints and landscapes in the manuscripts are drawn with dynamics and fluidity which greatly contrasts the dry linearism and schematic forms of Western European artists. In St. Mathew's portrait in particular, the drapery of his clothes catches against the thrust of knee and shin, tucked under his right thigh. His feet are firmly placed on the ground, while his hand is grasping the side of a page. The saint's natural posture, combined with the command over perspective and the soft colors evokes a Hellenic tradition exclusive to Constantinople, an artistic style unlikely for a Northern artist to replicate (Beckwith 1985: 42).

At the same time, in provincial centers away from the court, Carolingian work demonstrated a more complex cultural synthesis. At the beginning of the eighth century, the monasteries of the Hiberno-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria began to produce a fusion of art from three major cultural streams: Celtic tradition, Germanic style, and the Christian humanism of the Mediterranean (Lasko 1994: 1). This gave birth to Insular Art, which had a great impact on continental works (McKitterick 1994: 248).

In the midst of these developments, reliquaries, one of the most prominent metalwork art forms, appeared with emerging importance in Carolingian Art. As containers of relics—which could be bones, other body parts, or objects sanctified through contact with saints—the reliquaries not only transported the contained objects, but also played a central role in their veneration by acknowledging the relics’ authority (Hahn 2012: 9). Constructed in precious materials, the reliquaries refer directly to the City of God, which is constructed with gold like glass, and its inhabitants the saints, represented by various gems (Hahn 2012: 42). Giving off scintillating light, their beauty invites the faithful to gaze upon them and interpret the truth that the relics embody, elevating the veneration of the sacred remains altogether with the shrine, poems and prayers (Hahn 2012: 26). Besides their sheer beauty and symbolic importance, reliquaries mitigate the candid representation of relics—an ideology embedded in apostolical traditions. Contrary to the Byzantine tradition which encouraged people to kiss and touch relics, the Roman Catholic world considered it sacrilegious for devotees to touch the bodies of saints (Hahn 2012: 23). Reliquaries, by concealing the relics, are similar to the Ark of Covenant, which makes them inseparable from the relics and becomes an essential part of Roman liturgy revived in the Carolingian Renaissance.

Being immersed in the era of cultural exchange exemplified by the clash between the Palace School and the Insular style, reliquaries witnessed the artistic transformation brought by Carolingian Renaissance. Comparison of the Enger reliquary (to which I will refer as *Enger*), and the bursa-reliquary of St. Stephen (to which I will refer as *Stefansbursa*) reveal the different art styles during this period. Constructed in the form of a purse, both *Enger* and *Stefansbursa* are purse reliquaries, popular between the seventh and tenth centuries (Hahn 2012: 103). Just like other reliquaries, purse reliquaries are a mediator between the devotees and the relics, and they can “speak” through their unique forms. For *Enger* and *Stefansbursa*, their similar forms make them share identical messages with their audience. However, because one was produced at the beginning of the renaissance and the other later on, the two reliquaries offer distinct artistic interpretations of Scripture, and their stylistic differences delineate the fusion of classical style from the Palace school to provincial centers brought by the Carolingian Renaissance. Purse reliquaries are directly associated with a quote from the Book of Luke, in which the Scripture encourages the faithful to sell their possessions and give them to the poor: “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Hahn 2012: 105). Advising the devotees to turn away from earthly wealth because they are vulnerable to theft and destruction, purse reliquaries serve as a metaphor for treasure in heaven, announcing the relics that they contain as eternal treasures while denying the audiences from easily accessing the saintly remains (Hahn 2012: 105).

The Enger reliquary, constructed in the last quarter of the eighth century, exemplifies the continuity of insular tradition in early Carolingian work. The traditional narrative says that the work was given to Duke Widukind of Saxony on

the occasion of his baptism in 785 by Charlemagne. The form of the reliquary and its front make it an enriched version of reliquaries created prior to the Carolingian period (Lasko 1994: 6). On the front of the reliquary, a double cross is formed by precious and semiprecious stones, and the angels are abstractly assembled by cloisonné animals and surrounding rock crystals, some of which are clearly the remains of antiquity due to the classical imprints on them. On the reverse, on the embossed silver-gilt plaques, there are triple arcades with Christ between two angels above, as well as the Virgin and child, accompanied by two saintly figures, perhaps St. Peter and St. Paul, below (Lasko 1994: 6). The stiff, stylized forms of the relief reminds some historians of some insular examples, and the clasp of the reliquary, featuring two crouched lions with long tails supporting three more little sitting lions, recalls a ninth century reliquary in the Monza cathedral (Hubert 1970: 213).<sup>3</sup> The strong resemblance between the reliquaries and other Insular works indicates that it was produced in the Carolingian empire but away from the emperor's court (Lasko 1994: 8). *Enger* is a testament to the production styles of pre-800 Carolingian provincial centers, where Insular influence and technique remained in use.

The purse-reliquary of St Stephen constructed in the first quarter of the ninth century, on the other hand, demonstrates a clear classical influence that contrasts starkly with *Enger*. Though doubt exists as to whether the reliquary was created in the court, the fact that it was stored alongside the sword of Charlemagne and the Coronation Gospel in the Imperial Treasury at Aachen certainly connects the reliquary with Louis the Pious' reign, when Late Antique sources played a major role in art production (Lasko 1994: 33). After Charlemagne's death, Louis pressed on the reformation of Christian liturgics, and the emperor's erudition in antiquity texts made him support the imitation of classical forms (Lasko 1994: 33) which *Stefansbursa* clearly exhibits. On the front, compared to *Enger*, *Stefansbursa* shows a clearer rectilinear pattern giving off the impression of a cross. The wide range of gems—which have far more colors and varieties than those on *Enger*—applied on the reliquary not only brings a more impressive visual impact to its audience, but also evokes the metaphor of the City of God, which scintillates with the virtuous saints, in a clearer way. In addition to sending off a lucid message, *Stefansbursa* evidently aligns with the revival of antiquity advocated by the Carolingian Renaissance. On the side of the reliquary decorated with round medallions in gold foil, there are four figural scenes: “the goddess of revenge (*Malis Vindicta*), a fisherman, an equestrian figure with a falcon, and an archer aiming at a bird in a tree” (Lasko 1994: 33). The expression of *Malis Vindicta* connects directly to Nemesis in Greek and Roman mythology, and the other three hunting images likely refer to the Apostles' characterization as fishers of men and their mission of conversion (Hahn 2012: 106). The sides of *Stefansbursa* exhibit a style that well emulates classical sources, and the goddess of revenge image is

3. The reliquary mentioned here is St John the Baptist Reliquary made at the end of 800s.

beyond the style of Palace School, which points to a provincial production center (Lasko 1994: 33).

All in all, the purse-reliquary of St Stephen, through its complex metaphors and reference to antiquity and early Christianity, demonstrates a scholarly love unique to Louis' era. By comparing it with the Enger reliquaries, we can see the dispersion of the classical spirit nurtured by Carolingian Renaissance from the Palace School to provincial centers throughout the empire, as well as the powerful manifestation of the mottos of the cultural movement—the “correctness” of Christian liturgics and the revival of antiquity—through art.

## Conclusion

Because of Christian culture's emphasis on worlds and caution against images, the middle ages' artistic endeavor has often been overshadowed by the era's steadfast religiosity and great theological writings. This paper challenges such prejudices. Analysis of *Opus Caroli* reveals that the Carolingians' thoughtful debates on iconoclasm and iconophilia conveyed a pro-art message. Reliquaries, the major medieval art form, draw attention to the cultural movement dedicated to the revival of antiquity and the Christian reform.

This essay may be one step towards overturning ages of scholarly indifference to the Carolingian Renaissance's artistic discussion and production. However, there remain arguments that minimize the impact of the Carolingian Renaissance and deny its contribution to the artistic discussion and production of the whole Middle Ages. To thoroughly refute this misconception, further investigation on the development of image issues and Carolingian creation center after the Treaty of Verdun in 843—when the empire of Louis the Pious was divided among his sons—is needed. Through this paper, we know that the Carolingian authors insisted on their middle way, which addressed images' aesthetic worth and useful roles in teaching, and a plethora of artistic centers outside of the Palace School was developed under Louis the Pious' reign. It will be imperative to compare later arguments on art raised by prominent theologians with Frankish *via media* and trace the development of important artistic centers across the Carolingian territories, such as the School of Milan, so we can show the Renaissance's lasting influence and even create a connection between it and its 14th-century Italian counterpart.

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# Augustus and Astrology: The Stars as the Reification of Deification

*Edan Larkin*

In the Roman Empire, astronomy and astrology intertwined intimately with the divine, and enabled powerful men to supersede the status of humans and ascend to that of the gods. After succeeding the newly deified Julius Caesar, Augustus leaned into this belief of the people because celestial and material culture were effective propaganda and political legitimacy. Scholars such as Tamsyn Barton and Roger Beck argue the propagandistic intentions behind the public astronomy and astrology employed by Augustus—but few speak to how Augustus engaged with these practices beyond propaganda. Seemingly, Augustus almost exclusively referred to the stars when crafting his public persona, such as with coins, the publication of his horoscope, and building activities. But this did not necessarily extend to his decisions about his personal or state affairs. With Augustus, there appears to have existed a firm line between public and private astrology. This paper will argue that, although it is unclear and unlikely that astronomy and astrology heavily affected Augustus's private decision-making and how he ruled Rome, he did not refrain from using them publicly to his advantage as propaganda to spread his image and influence and further confirm that in which the Greco-Roman public already believed: the divine nature of the emperor.

Though Augustus invoked astronomy and astrology throughout his rule, these practices did not identifiably influence his state-making. One cannot completely rule out the possibility that Augustus applied astronomy and astrology in his management of the state and personal concerns, but, at the very least, that it is unclear due to its obscurity in the surviving sources (Steele 2021). This lack of evidence is notable, as many traces of public astronomy and astrology under Augustus survive, implying that he did not consult the stars as frequently regarding state or personal affairs. In 11 CE, Augustus prohibited astrologers from predicting a person's death and consulting in private (Ripat 2011: 119). Since Augustus actively sought to diminish the use of private astrology, this indicates that he intended it as a public affair, applying less to his state-making and more to his image.

While Augustus did not seem keen on promoting the private use of astronomy and astrology for himself or others, he did invoke its public elements to his advantage. Augustus chose to outwardly identify as a Capricorn, despite it not

being his actual zodiac, possibly because of the vivid “connection between Capricorn and the rebirth of the sun,” linking him to “the end of the dark days” (Barton 1995, 46). Considering that Augustus appeared unconcerned with the accuracy of his zodiac, the use of such a symbol reveals that he did not necessarily employ astrology in his personal life or governance, but to legitimize his power and image. Astrology could reasonably justify how he controlled the state by fostering a reverent image among the public without necessitating that he indulge the practice in private to ensure its effectiveness. Another likely reason that Augustus identified his rule with Capricorn is because, alongside ending the dark days, it signified a “‘golden era’ of peace and prosperity” (Bertarione and Magli 2015: 5). Augustus’s use of astronomy and astrology was primarily to improve his public image and political power and not, necessarily, the workings of his empire.

Thus, rather than incorporating his horoscope into his decision-making, Augustus featured it in visual propaganda to promote himself and his rule. He adorned his empire with Capricorn imagery, including “silver coin[s] stamped with the sign of the constellation Capricornus,” as recalled by Suetonius in *The Life of Augustus* (94.12). Decorating Roman currency with this image, which circulated far and wide, indicates how Augustus popularized this association with Capricorn, and utilized astrology to expand his influence and power. Suetonius similarly describes Augustus’s public portrayal of astrology, such as how he “had so much faith in his fate that he made public his own horoscope” (94.12). Publishing his horoscope, usually kept secret by rulers, exhibits how Augustus relied on the public elements of astrology, affirming belief in his power and confidence in his fate through astrological propaganda.

More grandly, *Augusta Praetoria Salassorum*, the modern town of Aosta originally founded around 25 BCE by Augustus, was “likely oriented in such a way as to pinpoint Augustus’ associations with... signs of renewal: the winter solstice and the Capricorn” (Bertarione and Magli 2015: 1). Pursuing such a project was already proof of his power. But in taking measures to imbue the town with cosmic significance, Augustus demonstrates just how heavily he leaned into the propagandistic aspects of public astronomy. Over a decade later, in 10 BCE, Augustus built an obelisk on Campo Marzio—and while scholars disagree as to whether this obelisk is a sundial or a line of meridian—the consensus is that it possessed astronomical qualities (Hiermanseder 2019: 615). By building tributes of celestial significance, Augustus wove astrology into the public perception of his rule to create a consistent and effective propagandistic campaign.

Ultimately, little evidence exists to support Augustus using astrology to inform his rule, but many sources demonstrate that it factored into the pre-existing Greco-Roman belief in the deification of emperors, which resultantly protected Augustus and his choices. In *The Expedition of Alexander*, Arrian writes how Alexander the Great, though not the first to do so, claimed shared ancestry with Heracles and Persues and visited the oracle of Ammon to trace his ancestry “back to Ammon, as legend traced that of [Heracles] and Persues back to Zeus” (3.3.2).



Considering that tracing divine lineage had deep roots in Greco-Roman antiquity, a tradition to which Alexander the Great speaks and that astrology also enabled, Augustus' strategic use of astrology likely was a continuation of this tradition. Indeed, the Romans perceived and worshipped the emperor as a god beyond mortal fate (Beck 2007: 123). The significance of the divine to both astrology and Roman rule possibly explains why Augustus embraced his chosen zodiac so publicly; it legitimized his power not only through astrological phenomena but also by affirming the Greco-Roman cultural practices of his subjects.

Following this tradition, Augustus welcomed this popular perception of his divine lineage through astronomy, but he refused to accept divine honors (Burton 1912: 82). Augustus allowed people to assume what they would from public astronomy and astrology, presumably because it worked favorably for his rule; but considering that he still distanced himself from them, these fields likely did not factor much into his life beyond the public sphere. Pliny the Elder attributes the following description of Julius Caesar's divinity after spotting a comet following Caesar's death to Augustus: "The common people believed that this star signified that the soul of Caesar had been received among the spirits of the immortal gods" (*HN* 2.94). Regardless of the accuracy of this quote, mentioning Caesar's comet explicitly in the context of the "common people" depicts the lasting, deifying effects of this astronomical occurrence on the two Caesars, and underlines how Augustus involved the heavens to support pre-existing popular beliefs that upheld his rule without perceiving himself to be divine. Pliny then extends this godliness to Augustus, dubbing him "now deified" (*HN* 2.94). This connection between astronomy and the divine reified popular opinion and emboldened Augustus to practice public astronomy because it coincided with what Romans already believed and, thus, justified how he ruled. To the people, the emperor was divine; if the stars confirmed this, Augustus could profit from it without claiming divinity himself.

As previously mentioned, Augustus denied divine honors, but upon succeeding Caesar, he "promptly identified himself with the popular movement" of declaring the latter a god (Burton 1912: 82). While Augustus did not identify himself as a god, nor did he likely engage in astrology much beyond the public sphere, he did embrace public opinions regarding Caesar as astrologically divine since they supplemented Augustus's power by aligning with commonly held beliefs. Augustus actively encouraged cult worship and dedication of temples to him, so long as these practices also involved the Roman gods (Burton 1912: 82-83). Therefore, he supported depictions of himself as celestial and divine to a certain extent, mostly letting the public draw the comparison itself to benefit from the political capital it afforded him without applying astrology to his rule directly. The Senate even conferred the title of "the venerable" upon him, which Augustus adopted as a surname: a term deeming him someone to be revered, more god than man (Burton 1912: 82). He took the name but did not choose it himself, proving how he enabled rather than used astrology to confirm Greco-Roman beliefs. He

needed not to apply astronomy and astrology to his private life and decisions since it fit the pre-existing tradition of deifying emperors and, thus, Augustus.

Although it remains unclear and unlikely that astronomy and astrology factored directly into Augustus's domestic, foreign, and personal decision-making, he certainly leaned into these practices to propagandize his rule and reify that in which the Greco-Roman world already believed: the divinity of the emperor. Modern scholars can only see so far into the private affairs of the past. But in the case of Augustus, considering the abundant evidence for public astronomy and astrology that survives, they may not need to look much further. Little proof exists that Augustus used astrology when making decisions for himself and his state. However, he did strategically and effectively nurture the popular perception of it. For over a thousand years, Greco-Roman cultures celebrated rulers and conquerors as gods, meaning, possibly, his strictly public applications of astronomy and astrology were propagandistic. Augustus did not need the skies to guide him when the people already thought they did. Symbols such as Capricorn only reminded people of what they implicitly assumed: Augustus was the most powerful man alive. Separating the publicized and privatized spheres of politics and propaganda does not alone rule out the possibility of his personal use of it. But it indicates that, as long as the public believed, private practice did not necessarily affect Augustus or how he ran his empire.

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# TIMOKLEIA

*Zara Lei Norman*

TW: Rape, Violence

Like any of the old stories, she heard it distilled. A thousand mouths ago, she may have inherited the myth when details were not distractions, when stories were yet to be stripped down to their barest, purely pedagogical, elements. By the time Thebes' founding myth reached Timokleia's ears, learning her ancestry was simple enough. Athena, the virgin goddess of wisdom, had that *neanias* Kadmos sow teeth into the fertile soil that had settled in a Boeotian valley. She was told that the teeth, once implanted, germinated into people much like you and I. Cutting canines sprouted warriors, stately incisors became noblemen, molars grew into mothers. Mouth after mouth propagated that precious message, freely blending fact with fantasy. So, it was imprinted on her that Thebes was an ethnos borne from the bone up, those teeth brought the written script to Greece, plagiarised from Phoenicia. Those teeth delivered us Herakles and the Sphinx – terroriser of men – that same creature who leapt to her death from their acropolis. Now, she wondered whether everything that the teeth became existed to be pillaged, rooted through, and robbed.

What was her city to Alexander? Did his clouding of Thebes, jewel of the Balkans, ever gnaw at his conscience? Timokleia had watched his phalanx trickle in over those lofty Boeotian hills, plains that tower and splay like two legs parted. It occurred to her, seeing them run like water over clay, that she may not know of anything created that did not seem bent on being destroyed. She watched the men from the north uproot marbled memorials like onions. She watched them trample sweet-smelling crocuses. It really did feel like pulling teeth. Indeed, that old story, if nothing else, taught generations of Theban ears that their city was their body. It was to be treated and respected like a third limb or a wisdom tooth. *Polis*. Body of citizens, the citizens' body. What was Timokleia's body to Alexander, then? Did that thick-throated circle of men he commanded think of her figure or the foundation on which it stood as they jostled, teased, leered – as they raped?

They came for the city in the new season. Demeter had turned up ripe fruits and buzzing cicadas, while Zephyr kept the valley cool. It seemed too still in those final days; the city felt too certain of itself. Only half a century ago, war had ravaged the Peloponnese. It appeared that the Kadmeans were still basking in their victories over Sparta. They, the bone-borne bastards from the Balkans, who decisively beat out those bald-headed brutes from the Peloponnese. Perhaps Alexander had sensed their smugness from the far-north. Was that what the *polis* was to him? A threat? Do all contented things exist, even beg, to be spoiled? There was no time for any of the Thebans to think of ‘why’, for just as quickly as they had settled with the south, the north pounced on their satiety.

It was a day of clay homes, built with burnt-orange mud, razed— their rust-coloured remains scattered and sown. It was a day of weather-worn market stalls upturned, and panicked children chased from the streets. It was a day of scaling walls and seizing makeshift weapons; a day of attempted escape and of standing one’s ground; one of extremes, of opposites... of confusion and smoke.

Thebes heard the barbarians before ever laying eyes on them. The roaring of their battle-cry, thunder in an alien dialect, echoed for miles outside the looming city walls. It was a matter of minutes, then, before the thick smog of screams and flames began to rise, moving swiftly from the Kadmeia — their acropolis — through to the agora, and then into homesteads. Later, those who survived would learn that Thebes’ weakened forces had desperately flanked about the city’s roads, refusing to surrender. They would feel a pang more painful than prideful as they learned of the men who stood stalwart alongside the rushing Kephisos river, of those who scrambled to jam paths from neighbouring cities, of those who clambered to find higher ground along the base of Mount Thurion. No one could have known that Alexander, the thuggish Macedonian commander, was nothing like his father. This was not Chaeronea, where three winds ago, allies had staved off the northerners with their elite force of fighters— the Sacred Band. A corps of three hundred soldiers — lovers — whose deep adoration for one another made them an indestructible, undefeated force. Since, the Sacred Band’s sacred bonds had been unpicked, leaving the city with only its reputation to cower behind. Three years on, Alexander’s war was a different beast altogether. With Macedon *and* the Thracians by his side, he seemed to be as inevitable, as irrepressible, as the tide.

It was only fitting, really, that Alexander’s new-found allies hailed from Thrace. In many senses, Thrace was oppositional to Thebes— a vast land, ill-defined, without a border nor an end. Unsurprising, then, that its men should have no concept of boundaries. Being raised to believe that overreaching, overstepping, assuming that whatever you chance upon is yours for the taking... as with most things, it follows. It might have been entitlement, then, that led the Commander to remove his helmet, muss his hair, and reveal that smug grin beneath a layer of grime, dust, and blood stuck to him like a second skin. It may have been a

matter of sovereignty, when he shoved Timokleia to the ground, and distractedly tossed his shield to a side. They had certainly entered the house like it was their own. How nonchalantly they had rolled into her eating hall, how carelessly they had kicked amphorae to the side, ripped the tapestry that straddled the entryway, and walked to her like she knew them. Like they knew every woman like her: middling height, dark skin, a strong build— wide-eyed with terrible knowing.

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Trauma was a word as devastating as war to the Greeks. Psychological scars were similar to a fleet blown out of the water, to a cyclops devouring a sacred herd, to a warrior cut down in the heat of battle. A wound is a wound, and regardless of how it comes to be, the body bleeds. After it is inflicted, after the paralysis, the panic that sits on your chest like a boulder, the knotted breath that stays wedged in your throat... after trauma, time fractures and dissolves. Life separates itself into three distinct fragments: the Before, the During, the After. The Before: the rumbling outside the city walls, the tearing of the tapestry. The During: the language Timokleia could not hope to understand, the sharp pain, the mind drawing to a petrified blank. And then, the After— the only part of the wound you have some say in handling.

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They pulled the Thracian captain back up to his feet, leaving Timokleia frozen on the cobbled ground. The awful clanging of steel on steel rang about her ears, as they cheered and heckled and spat down at her. She barely had time to sit up, blinking to take in a home that suddenly felt strange and cold to her, before he was back in her face.

“And you’re hiding your money where?” He exhorted in his attempt at broken, Aeolic Greek. “Thebans have gold, hmm?” He badgered. Another foot-soldier, short and stocky, hollered something in response, in Thracian, that sounded garish. It was met with a roaring, throaty laugh from those gathered men. Timokleia’s cheeks burned. Humiliation on humiliation on humiliation, in a world where reputation was currency. To a woman named for honour and glory, for reputation and standards: *timē* and *kleos*. Robbery on robbery on robbery. The city, the body, the purse. Thebes asphyxiated, Thebes ravaged, Thebes fucked. She scanned the room, looking past the Captain’s hot breath to the platoon of what... ten? Fifteen of Alexander’s men? All of them entitled, bullish, and cocky. Hammer-hearted fools who would not know honour and glory if it hit them on the head.

She came into an idea then, or not too long after. The timing of events in the ancient world is notoriously elusive. All we know of Timokleia we know through the eyes of great men: through Plutarch, and Aristobulus (respectively: Alexander

the Great's biographer, and his personal historian). What was Timokleia to History, to those who record it? How have we chosen to remember her? She, who swallowed the searing pain between her legs to lead her rapist into her garden. She, now forever and always cast into 'the After', who promised the Captain that she had stores of gold secreted away in a well at the bottom of her yard. A feasible idea, given that Thebes was a notoriously lucrative trading post, with contacts scattered throughout the Aegean. Thebes was a city of grinding stones and terracotta looms— before they were caved in by the invaders. It was a city of weights and spools, of gleaming bronze, plump olives, and fluffy wool – before their stores were upended and emptied. It was a city of precious minerals, of gold, silver, and ivory – that was all the Thracians believed was precious to the city. Not its people, nor its walls. That was all that was worth preserving. It was this that may have turned over again and again in Timokleia's mind, that sharpened her focus... in any case, things came into focus very clearly once the Captain obligingly peered down into the well, his men looking on further afield. Timokleia's actions in 'the After' became glaringly obvious to her, once she took note of the scores of heavy, granite stones at her feet.

How sickly sweet must it have felt, then! Shoving the Captain into the well as if he were an amphora in her entry hall. To tip him over and hear his ailing shriek as his skull met the well's bottom with a profound, infinitely satisfying crack. Perhaps she had picked up a thing or two from the Thracians. She did not, and would not, know when to stop. Not with the first boulder she flung down after him, nor with the second, nor the third. Not even when he finally fell silent, when his screams dripped into whimpers. Only when she was tackled to the ground by his men did she stop. Suffocated by a tangle of thick, pressing limbs, she mused that the men from the land with no boundaries had finally learnt where to draw the line.

## A F T E R W O R D

Depending on how much literature, how many lectures, you have sat through on the ancient world, the following may or may not surprise you: this part of the After is not the fragment the historical record would like you to dwell on. The vigilantism, the heroism, the blind, blood-thirsty revenge centuries of scholars have lauded in Zeus, in Achilles, in Perseus (in men) is chastised in Timokleia. The power to humiliate, exact vengeance, and disgrace has long been gendered. And what will Plutarch, Aristobulus, and all the later artists depicting Timokleia through the Renaissance, have you turn your attention to instead? Alexander. What was her city to Alexander? Her body? Who was she to history, if not



through Alexander? ‘The Great’. Can we separate her story from his conquest, from the men he commanded, from the terror he arranged? Can we speak of Timokleia without dwelling on how Alexander, once she was arrested and forced to stand prostrate before him, pardoned her? Where was the brush that painted Alexander’s exonerating, outstretched hand, when the Thracians stormed Timokleia’s home? When the great Diodorus writes of victory in the Balkans, of the Kadmeia’s seizure, where was his pen as Timokleia lobbed stone upon stone after her torturer?

They say she comported herself with ‘great dignity’ in front of the boy-king, then eighteen years old, who lived in the celebrated shadow of his father. Like Philip, Alexander’s heart was set on dominating cities decisively, battle after battle, his only ambition to eat up as much land as his horse could carry him through. Unlike Philip, he was determined to be adored as well as feared. Alexander wanted cult and fame. He adopted the lineage of legends, claiming descendancy from Herakles, the very hero whose city he had just burned to the ground. Alexander was not Philip; how does history show it? His acquittal of the perfect victim, his embracing of honour and glory. It was Timokleia’s proximity to male heroism that changed Alexander’s heart, aside from his daddy issues. Her brother, Theagenes, had been a part of that fabled Sacred Band, cut down by Philip’s men at Chaeronea three years prior.

A wound is a wound, but is justice justice? Luckily for Timokleia, she had surrounded herself with enough of the right men in the Before to make the After a liveable experience, free from bondage. It was one of Alexander’s few acts of clemency. He spared those who impressed him, or those he could not mistreat under the watchful eye of the Gods—priests, leaders of the pro-Macedonian party, the descendants of Pindar... and her. The surviving remains of Thebes, those six thousand bodies that grew up from the land and were not destroyed with it, were sold into slavery.

Who was Timokleia to History, to those who record it?

How will we choose to remember her?

A steppingstone in the great Macedonian king’s conquests?

A token? A sister?

A footnote? An afterthought? An example?

A fable? A warning? A threat?

Was Timokleia a woman at all?

Honour and glory.

Perhaps she stood for thousands of women whose names were not carried forward

Perhaps she was the body of citizens and the citizens’ body

Wrapped up in a fantastical founding story

Borne from the teeth up.



# Barbarous Superstition: Roman Self-Definition and Justification of Conquest in Representations of Jews

*Anna Barnett*

In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said defines “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, *Orientalism*, 11). He describes how Western texts define themselves through depictions of the East, with binary oppositions: the West as rational, peaceful, dominant, and the East as irrational, base, and inferior (Said 57). While Said’s work dealt primarily with the modern English, French, and American empires, it is still instrumental in the application of postcolonial perspectives to other areas of study. In this paper, I apply Said’s approach to examine how Roman representations of Jews<sup>1</sup> reinforce and uphold structures of Roman power. I use texts recounting Pompey’s sack of Jerusalem in 63 BCE<sup>2</sup> as my focus, both because this event allows us to examine Republican Roman conquest from contemporary and Imperial sources, and since the Jewish historian Josephus’ works provide a rich counterpoint to Roman perspectives. I argue that the Roman sources contrast the Jewish religion with Roman custom and relate it to corrupt political governance, in order to justify the right of Roman conquest. Josephus, however, deconstructs this association and positively depicts Jewish religion while still conceding to Roman authority.

In 59 BCE, Cicero delivered the *Pro Flacco*, a speech for the defense of Lucius Valerius Flaccus, *praetor* in 63 and a *legatus* of Pompey with governorship of Asia in 62 (Badian, *Valerius Flaccus*, Oxford Classical Dictionary). One charge

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1. There is much debate on how to translate Ἰουδαῖος (or Iudaicus/Iudaeus in Latin); whether to use “Judaean/Judaeans,” implying a geographical grouping, or “Jewish/Jews,” implying a religious/ethnic grouping. I concur with the conclusion made by Michael Satlow (see Satlow, Michael L., *Jew or Judaeans?*, pp.174-5), in which he argues for flexibility of translation given a source’s context. I have kept the original translator’s words in all source translations, and because this paper focuses on Roman perspectives on Jewish religion and observance, I have tended towards using “Jewish/Jews” in my own words.

2. In 63 BCE, after defeating King Mithridates VI of Pontus, Pompey captured Jerusalem and the Jewish temple, placing Judaea under Roman control, and ending the rule of the Hasmonean dynasty (see Rajak, Tessa. “Hasmoneans.” *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 30 July 2015).

Cicero defends is that Flaccus wronged the Jews in his province by passing an edict which prevented them from sending their customary tribute tax to the temple in Jerusalem. Cicero claims Flaccus acted according to Roman tradition—that the senate itself (with Cicero himself as consul) had made a similar resolution, and the edict was “passed in due form” (Cicero, *For Flaccus*, ch 67-8). He then introduces a potential counter argument about Pompey, who left all the gold in the temple untouched. However, he quickly dismisses the notion that Pompey was moved by respect for the Jews or their religion; rather, he acted out of modesty. This defense perhaps was a clever way of avoiding accusations of Flaccus’ wrongdoing, ostensibly the same accusations which led to Flaccus standing trial (67-8). By making the basis of his argument the importance of Roman institutions, Cicero paints both Pompey and Flaccus as honorable despite their different courses of action, thereby enabling him to introduce the Jews as the true wrong-doers, and the antithesis to Roman tradition.

Cicero’s argument relies on painting the Jews as a foreign enemy. The *Pro Flacco* provides evidence of a politically active Jewish community in Late Republican Rome; he claims the crowd of Jews “at times was most unruly in the assemblies in defense of the interests of the Republic” (Cicero 67) Nevertheless, Cicero others the entire Jewish people and distances them from Rome and its institutions. He refers to the Jews as *hostium*, “[our] enemies” and *illa gens*, “that nation” (68-9). He calls the tribute tax “barbarous superstition,” says the Jews’ customs stand at odds with the glory and traditions of Rome, criticizes the Jews for rebelling against Roman supremacy, and even declares that it pleases the gods for Rome to control the Jewish people and collect their money (67-9). With this argument, Cicero introduces what Said called “binary oppositions”: while the Roman senate and its resolutions are orderly, the Jews’ presence within those institutions is unruly; where Pompey acted modestly, the Jews’ tribute tax is an act of barbarity; the Jews are barbarians acting above their station, and therefore Roman control over them is divinely ordained. While he initially defends Flaccus for acting through proper channels, by juxtaposing the Jews and Rome in such a way, Cicero argues that Flaccus acted properly—not because his actions themselves were lawful, or because a Roman governor has the right to pass any such edict—but because the Jews deserved it. Some scholars have labeled Cicero an antisemite, due to this disparaging portrayal of the Jews and their religion (Marshall, *Flaccus and the Jews of Asia*, 141). However, one cannot assume that what Cicero argues in a defense speech represents his personal attitudes. Still, that Cicero builds his case around othering the Jews and their religion can reveal the ways in which the Romans justified their foreign conquest. In a trial which seems to have been held to check a legate’s unlawful use of power over conquered people, Cicero argues that the Jews’ depravity dictates the lawfulness of conquest, and he won the case.

The other extant Roman sources on Pompey’s sack of Jerusalem are imperial; thus, most of the authors approach the raid teleologically, as they

anticipate Emperor Titus' destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Tacitus, writing in approximately 100 CE, prefaces Book 5 of his *Histories*: "As I am about to describe the last days of a famous city, it seems proper for me to give some account of its origin" (Tacitus, *Histories V*, ch 2). Tacitus argues that because the Jews were unable to self-govern, Pompey's sack of Jerusalem—and indeed the one in 70—was somehow inevitable. Tacitus also decries the foreignness of Jewish religion: "The Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we abhor" (V.4). He claims their rest on the Sabbath is not observed out of piety but "the charms of indolence," calls their customs "base and abominable," and writes that they "owe their persistence to their depravity." He takes care to emphasize the ways in which Jewish religion differs from Roman custom; the Jews are monotheistic, as opposed to the Romans' own polytheism, and they disdain iconography. For that reason, they neither raise statues of their own kings, nor the Caesars (V.4-5). During the imperial period, in which Tacitus was writing, worship of the gods and of the emperors were closely linked; the imperial cult became an important element of religious life, especially towards posthumously deified emperors. (Várhelyi, *Imperial cult, roman*, Oxford Reference). Tacitus' brief comment about statues of the Caesars punctuates his longer description of the foreignness of Jewish customs, implying that by its refusal to participate in the imperial cult, Jewish religion not only differs from, but actively undermines, Roman custom.

Tacitus then links the Jews' religious failings to failing political leadership. He prefaces this depiction of the Jewish religion by claiming: "To establish his influence over this people for all time, Moses introduced new religious practices, quite opposed to those of all other religions" (V.4). Tacitus thus implies that from its beginnings, the Jewish religion differed from others, not because of genuine religiosity, but because their king wanted power. His reader might thus believe that not only is Jewish religion immoral, but the Jewish people have a history of corrupt kings. Moreover, he claims in the years before 63 BCE, when the Jewish people chose their own kings, they sowed civil discord, destroyed towns, took power by violence, and murdered citizens. The key line comes at the end of this disturbing report: "But they fostered national superstition, for they had assumed the priesthood to support their civil authority" (V.8). This statement explicitly links the violence supposedly executed by the Jewish kings with religious practice; just like Moses, Tacitus portrays these kings as using religion as a tool of suppression and expanding power.

Tacitus then contrasts Jewish leadership with both Romans and Greeks, claiming that King Antiochus IV attempted to "[improve] this basest of peoples" (Tacitus V.8). Though a Selucid king, Antiochus was Hellenized: he forbade Jewish religion in Jerusalem, and was known for his promotion of Greek culture and cult (Griffith et al., *Antiochus IV*, Oxford Classical Dictionary). Antiochus was not Roman, but since Tacitus contrasted the Jews' monotheism with polytheism, both a Greek and Roman custom, it is clear that he viewed Roman and Greek authority

as civilizing. In claiming that the remedy for the Jews' "national superstition" (read: religion) was Greek civilization and a Hellenized king, he again equates Jewish religion with an inferior form of governance, while establishing how Greek rule—linked to Roman rule by their shared non-Jewishness—will stabilize them. Tacitus underscores that the violent Jewish kings gained sovereignty "since the power of Macedon had waned...and the Romans were far away" (V.8). In Tacitus, too, one can see these binary oppositions lurking in the subtext: Jewish religious leadership is corrupt, and therefore Romans (and Greeks) ought to hold the highest authority. Consequently, when Tacitus writes that Pompey took the temple "by right of conquest," (V.9), the reader might believe that Roman rule over the Jews was inevitable.

In his *Roman History*, Cassius Dio explains Pompey's sack of Jerusalem and its lead up in further detail. Dio introduces by name two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, who were contending for the kingship of Judaea, the reason Pompey came to Jerusalem in the first place. Like Tacitus, Dio takes care to mention that in Judaea, kingship and priesthood were one and the same, and he, too, disparages the Jews' monotheism: "the priesthood... of their god, whoever he is" (Cassius Dio, *Roman History XXXVII*, ch 15). In Dio's version, it is not only that the Jewish religion justifies Roman conquest, but also physically allows Pompey's forces to defeat the Jews. As Dio explains, Pompey faced difficulty capturing the temple because it was on high ground and heavily fortified; seeing that the Jews were required to rest on the Sabbath, they attacked when the Jews could not defend the temple—this is why Pompey succeeded (XXXVII.16).

Indeed, Dio's portrayal of the Jews is overwhelmingly passive. The quarreling brothers present no active threat to Pompey; he imprisoned Aristobulus when he refused Pompey's terms, while Hyrcanus "had no force worthy of note" (XXXVII.15). In Dio's narrative, the Jews passively participate in their own defeat, thanks to their religion. Thus, he writes that "the defenders were captured...without making any defense" (XXXVII.16). Dio, therefore, portrays the Jews as passive—and Pompey as a man of swift action—to suggest they were unable to self-govern. If Jewish priesthood and kingship are the same, and their religion prevents them from even defending themselves, Pompey's success is an inevitability.

The extant sources on Pompey's raid, however, are not solely Roman. Writing in the first century CE, the Jewish historian Josephus provides an invaluable contrast to the Roman perspectives. He chronicles Pompey's sack of Jerusalem in two works, *The Jewish War and Jewish Antiquities*. As explained in the prefaces of both these histories, he was compelled to write to correct the untruths which other (Roman and Greek) writers recorded (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Preface). He argues that the non-Jewish sources excessively praise the Romans and diminish the Jews and their accomplishments, suggesting that as a Jewish writer, Josephus was aware of the Roman historical tradition and how those writers extolled their own power at the Jews' expense (Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Preface ch 4). When

Josephus writes about the Jewish war, he also refers to Emperor Titus' destruction of the temple. Nevertheless, this professed historical purpose also informs the way he writes about 63 BCE. As much as he wants to correct misinformation, he says that he will not vilify the Romans. In fact, he does not even blame the Romans for the fall of the temple. Instead, he claims it was the Jews' own fault; the destruction of the temple in 70 CE occurred because of "a seditious temper of our own...and that there were the tyrants among the Jews who brought the Roman power upon us," a conclusion he draws about Pompey's sack as well (*JW* Preface ch 4). Josephus purports not to favor one side or the other in his writing. However, he also separates history from the historian, admitting that his own biases and emotions about the fall of the Jews might seep through the objective history: "let [the reader] attribute the facts themselves to the historical part, and the lamentations to the writer himself only" (*JW* Preface ch 4).

Unsurprisingly, the most significant difference in Josephus' narrative is his description of Jewish religion and Roman reaction to it. In direct contrast to Cicero's claims in his *Pro Flacco*, Josephus writes that Pompey admired the Jews and left the treasure in the temple untouched because of his respect for their religion, and that he later returned the office of priesthood to Hyrcanus (*JW* I.148-50, cf. *JA* XIV.4). Indeed, Josephus gives much more narrative attention to the diplomacy between Pompey and the brothers than the Roman sources; Cassius Dio, for example, only tells us that Pompey easily defeated both brothers without violence, while Josephus explains in detail that Aristobulus had broken an agreement to pay Pompey in return for peace, which led to Pompey imprisoning him. Subsequently, Jerusalem broke into two factions: the party of Aristobulus which wanted to defend the city, and the other party, aided by Hyrcanus, which wanted to welcome Pompey (*JA* XIV.1-2). Thus, Josephus provides a much deeper picture of the interactions between Roman and Jewish leadership and the leadup to violence. Although his portrayal of Aristobulus as a political leader is unflattering, he calls Hyrcanus a "good general" (*JA* XIV.1), an assessment which stands out given that the Roman sources have nothing positive to say about Jewish kings. Josephus also includes a detail about the Sabbath which Cassius Dio omits: Jewish law allows the Jews to defend the temple against a direct attack, and the Sabbath merely prevents the Jews from fighting back against anything else. Therefore, he explains, the Romans never launched direct attacks, but prepared themselves in other ways against which the Jews could not retaliate (*JA*, XIV.2-3). Dio writes that the Romans attacked on the Sabbath because the Jews could not defend themselves, but Josephus notably corrects this version in which the Jews were passive in their own defeat. By emphasizing that their religion does allow defense against attacks, he portrays the Jews as a much more active enemy. Moreover, he creates a positive spin on the narrative: by emphasizing that even when the temple was besieged, the priests never abandoned their sacrifices and duties, Josephus affirms the Jews' admirable piety (*JA* XIV.3).

Of course, Josephus' portrayal of the Jews is not completely positive, as he does ultimately blame them for their own downfall. Just as he writes about 70 CE in his prefaces, he argues that it was the two brothers, sowing sedition and creating factions among the people of Jerusalem, who caused the Jews to become subjugated under Roman rule (*JA* XIV.5). This section is clearly one of the "laments" he asks the reader to indulge him; while as an "objective historian" he understands it was not the Romans' fault, he still mourns the Jews' loss of freedom. One must take into consideration that Josephus himself was a Roman subject, and therefore direct slander of Rome would have been dangerous. Perhaps this is why the only hints of anti-Roman sentiment appear in these "lamentations," and why Josephus portrays Pompey with such admiration and respect. However, the fact that he was a Roman subject might not be the only reason; despite his commitment to the Jewish religion, Josephus was quite close with Roman rulers. He was friendly with Emperor Titus, the very same destroyer of the temple, and in the war of 70 CE, he acted as an intermediary for the Roman army and the Judeans, urging the rebels to surrender to Roman rule. After the destruction of the temple, he was given Roman citizenship and land in Judaea (Smallwood and Rajak, *Josephus*, Oxford Classical Dictionary). As much as he wants to portray Jewish religion in a positive light, and as much as he laments the loss of Jewish lives and freedom, perhaps he does not truly believe that Roman governance is a bad thing. After all, Roman rule worked out in his own personal favor.

Josephus does not completely reverse the binary oppositions made in the Roman sources: that Jews are base and deserving of subjugation, while Romans are superior and natural leaders. Yet Josephus does deconstruct the association between Jews' religion and their failure to effectively self-govern. To Josephus, the Jews' piety and strict observance is a source of pride, and by portraying Pompey as respectful towards Jewish religion, he dismantles the idea that their religious inferiority justifies Roman conquest or makes it inevitable.

By applying Edward Said's *Orientalism* to texts which deal with Pompey's sack of Jerusalem, I have argued that the Roman sources cast Jewish religion as base, and associate religious failings with political failings, in order to justify Roman rule over the Jews as necessary. This rationalization reveals much more about the ways Romans justified and upheld their own culture of conquest than it can tell us about the Jews themselves. Josephus does not completely reverse these political depictions but corrects the Roman denigration of Jewish religion and deconstructs Roman justification for conquest.



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# The Roman Army and the Sullan Revolution

Leo McMahan

Roman politics changed forever in 88 B.C., when L. Cornelius Sulla seized Rome with an army and usurped command of an expedition to Asia designated to his rival, G. Marius. This coup was possible only because of the reforms Marius himself had instituted twenty years earlier, by which he transformed the Roman army from a levied citizen militia into a semi-professional volunteer army. The Marian-style army was vastly more effective than its nonprofessional predecessor, but the division of the soldiers from the citizenry at large unbalanced Roman politics by placing overwhelming power into the hands of soldiers who for the first time developed a political identity *as soldiers*. The result was a militarization of Roman politics in two ways: both the increased concessions veterans extracted from the state and the necessity of professional violence to win political disputes. Even when the armies stayed loyal or neutral, their mere presence required an escalation of violence. The Republic faced a dilemma – professional armies were too successful on the battlefield to disband, but their existence threatened the stability of the Republic – which it failed to resolve.

Before the adoption of the Marian reforms and their subsequent institutionalization, it is inconceivable that the Roman army was an independent political force because its membership was not distinct from the Roman electorate. Until 107 B.C., the Roman army consisted of levies of citizens raised for temporary service from the top five property classes of the census.<sup>1</sup> Only in emergencies would the poor be called up and provided arms at state expense (Polyb. 6.19). Initially service required 11,000 sesterces of property, but as the number of men meeting this qualification decreased over the course of the Republic, the requirement fell to 4000 sesterces by the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. and, by the census of 125 B.C., to a mere 1500 (Livy 1.43; Polyb. 6.19; census of 125 via Gabba 1976: 5). By Marius' period, the army had already ceased to be the domain of middle-class farmers and had begun its process of proletarianization.

Despite the change in class composition, however, the army was not yet a distinct social force. Military service still conformed to many of the citizen militia premises of the early Republic. The terms of service seem to have been irregular in this early period. Appian's *Iberian Book* lists soldiers returning home after

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1. There are exceptions, such as Scipio's 134 B.C. recruitment of 500 clients for service in Spain, but these were rare, on a small scale, and not institutionalized. Appian, *Iberian Book* 84.

six years' service (App. *Hisp.* 78). His text is corrupted, but Polybius names either six or sixteen years as the requirement for infantry service.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this service could be completed in intervals or perhaps a single term of enlistment was required, but if the latter, such a rule was not followed strictly even in the Marian era. By Polybius' time soldiers received a salary, which was probably necessary in an army increasingly consisting of the poor, but there is little evidence of other professionalization (Polyb. 6.39).

By 107 B.C. the Roman army had been proletarianized (though many more affluent farmers continued to serve), but not professionalized. Importantly, since the process of proletarianization occurred through the reduction of property requirements, the *comitia centuriata*, whose membership consisted of the five military census classes, became proletarianized as well. The officer class too was integrated within the Roman elite. Senators composed these ranks, all magistrates were supposed to have completed a decade's military service, and elites frequently shifted between military and political occupations.<sup>3</sup> Had any army attempted to force political changes, it would therefore have done so *as the people* from which the soldiery was indistinguishable rather than *as the army* with its own political interests. In fact, the people never saw occasion to put even vehemently contested political questions to the test of arms, which indicates the irrelevance of the military as a political actor in Roman domestic politics.<sup>4</sup>

Marius' important innovation was not changing the class composition of the army but rather transforming enlistment into a system of voluntary professional service. Sallust treats Marius' 107 B.C. enlistment and arming of the *capite censi* (those with even less property than the proletarians) as his most momentous reform, but this decision was only an extension of a process which had already proletarianized the army to a large degree. It is not unimportant that Marius' army was mainly composed of the poorest classes, but his successful use of financial incentives to raise a volunteer army not representative of the Roman citizenry marks the real turning point in the Roman army's political role (Sall. *Iug.* 84-86).

Marius was not the first general to raise troops in nontraditional ways, but this time the change stuck. Perhaps what made his innovation successful was not the recruitment mechanism *per se* but the improved training only possible with long

2. Given the corroborating evidence in Appian and the economic hardship universal service by middle-class farmers would have caused Rome, six years seems the more likely length. Perhaps editors are swayed by the Augustan (professional military) requirement of sixteen years' service. Polybius 6.19.

3. Even in the Marian era, we will see the fluidity with which elites moved between military and civilian life. Polybius 6.19.

4. One interesting political dispute between soldiers and the state occurred in 167 B.C. when L. Aemilius Paulus' soldiers tried to have his triumph revoked in revenge for his harsh discipline. Notably, the resolution of the quarrel occurred in the assembly, and the version Livy gives frames the political divide as between private soldiers and officers (in a 'struggle of the orders'); in other words, between the rich and the poor, rather than between the state and the army. Livy 45.36.

enlistment terms. Plutarch emphasizes the superior physical condition Marius put his soldiers in and his soldiers' ability to carry their own supplies on their backs (Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 13). While some of his soldiers may have left the colors in 103 B.C., others served continuously until 100 B.C., when Marius passed an agrarian law which gave each of his veterans fourteen acres of conquered land (App. *B Civ.* 1.29; Plut *Vit. Crass.* 2). The needs of overseas service and the advantages of extended training and combat experience proved the worth of a professional army.

Despite his doctrinal innovation, the full political potential of the Marian system remained dormant until Sulla realized the unstoppable political power of an army willing to use force against their fellow Romans. Marius encouraged a degree of political violence in his final consulship, but he did not employ his army to defeat his political opponents in battle (Livy *Per.* 69.1-5).<sup>5</sup> Such open civil war broke out only in 88 B.C., when the tribune of the plebs P. Sulpicius Rufus attempted to reassign Sulla's pending command against Mithridates to Marius. Although the reassignment was perfectly legal, if irregular, Sulla refused to accept it and attempted to march on Rome and win a command against Mithridates by force. All his senior officers but his quaestor L. Licinius Lucullus deserted him. Their behavior is to be expected because they could count on ruining their political careers if they collaborated in an unprecedented act of rebellion against the Republic. In contrast, Appian writes that Sulla's 35,000 men who marched against Rome "feared that Marius would enlist other soldiers instead of themselves" (App. *B Civ.* 1.56-57).<sup>6</sup>

Whether this fear was justified or magnified by Sulla, their reaction was of a new sort. First, now that they were mainly poor volunteers, the soldiers depended for their livelihoods on their salaries and whatever plunder they could obtain.<sup>7</sup> Second, the soldiers saw their fate as linked to that of their commander. By this point, Sulla had led them with great success for three years in the Social War, which evidently garnered him loyalty. In addition, the army existed as a medium-term institution. Rather than a group of soldiers mustered to fight the rebel Italians, Sulla's army lasted beyond the immediate defensive needs of Rome to

5. For the importance of the *Periochae*, I am in debt to E. Badian, "Waiting for Sulla," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52, no. 1-2 (1962), 47-61.

6. The accounts of Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 8-9; *Life of Marius* 35; and Livy's *Periochae* from Book 77 support Appian's version. Probably Plutarch and Appian used Livy as a source. Livy seems to have relied on Sulla's *Commentarii* and L. Cornelius Sisenna's *Ab urbe condita* for this period, perhaps along with other sources. Badian, "Waiting for Sulla."

7. This is not a question of wealth, as Sallust argued. Regardless of pre-enlistment status, these soldiers fought continuously from 91-82 B.C. Poor farmers in an earlier period, who served for a couple years (and increasingly more, a tension which argued strongly for a volunteer army), had their economic prospects tied up in their land. These volunteers who sought to serve for protracted terms of enlistment were no longer farmers, artisans, or whatever their civilian occupation had been.

keep veterans fit for a future war. No army had marched on Rome before because earlier armies were not organized in a way that enabled generals to lead violent attacks on the state.

The immediate effect of Sulla's armed rebellion was a complete victory for Sulla and especially for Sulla's soldiers. Marius and Sulpicius attempted to levy troops, arm the citizenry, and free any slaves who would defend Rome, but Sulla's advance had caught them almost completely unawares. With insufficient time to prepare a real army, Marius had to make do with what was essentially a small militia: men who joined up in order to fight an enemy political faction, but who lacked the extensive training and combat experience of the Marian-style professional armies. After a small battle in the streets in which many of Marius' forces were so poorly armed that their only weapons were the tiles they tore from their own roofs, Sulla stormed Rome and exiled his enemies (App. *B Civ.* 1.57-58; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9; Livy *Per.* 77). Notably, instead of taking supreme power in Rome, Sulla departed to Asia the next year. It seems likely that, given his lack of domestic support, Sulla needed to maintain the loyalty of his troops, who were interested in Pontic booty rather than avenging Sulla's personal grievances. Although its political interests were still narrow, the army achieved its goals completely in 88 B.C.

Upon Sulla's departure from Rome, civil war resumed in the vacuum that ensued. This time the fighting did not involve a professional army, just hastily levied militias of political loyalists adapting to the new imperative of organized political violence. Despite heavy fighting between Sulla's and Marius' supporters, Sulla did not return to the capital. His army wanted to fight Mithridates, and Sulla fought Mithridates. With the support of the Senate, Octavius expelled his co-consul Cinna from Rome through paramilitary violence in 87 B.C. Cinna visited regions which had recently received Roman citizenship (a policy supported by Marius and Sulpicius) to raise troops and to win the loyalty of an army stationed at Capua. The motivations of this army are unclear. Appian attributed their support for Cinna to anger at a Senate which was encroaching on the authority of the assemblies, but he also states that the officers went over to Cinna before their men did (App. *B Civ.* 1.65-66). Livy, on the other hand, suggests that Cinna engaged in the bribery of opposing armies.<sup>8</sup> Did this professionalized army fight on behalf of poor Romans against the senatorial class? On behalf of the rule of law? Or were they unideological mercenaries who sold their killing power to the highest bidder? Unfortunately, despite the importance of this question, the historical record does not clarify the motivations of these professional soldiers. Regardless, Cinna and Marius besieged Rome. Octavius' forces, concerned about betrayal and their opponents' larger numbers, surrendered (App. *B Civ.* 1.70; Livy *Per.* 79.1).

The bulk of the forces Cinna and Octavius commanded were not professional armies on the Marian model but, for the most part, emergency levies of politically

8. Strangely, Appian places the commander allegedly bribed (Appius Claudius) in the Janiculum rather than Capua. Livy, *Periochae* 79.1.

sympathetic men. Cinna recruited soldiers and money to pay salaries from allied Italian cities and fugitives from Rome. Octavius raised troops from “the towns that were still faithful and also... Nearer Gaul.”<sup>9</sup> When Marius landed in Etruria to join Cinna, he recruited 6000 Etruscans on the promise that he would defend their right to vote. In addition, the Samnites, who were still at war with Rome, joined the forces of Marius and Cinna (App. *B Civ.* 1.67-68; Livy *Per.* 80.2). Each side probably had some number of professional soldiers, but the sources are clear that this conflict divided along regional and possibly class lines. Like the Marian professional army, this model of army possessed a new character, but in terms of training it probably hewed closer to a pre-Marian Roman army. While these fighters wore the uniforms of soldiers, they were not politicized *as* soldiers. Their prospective generals did not promise farms on retirement but freedom to the enslaved or the vote to the disenfranchised. In addition to economic concessions to the professional soldiery, the Sullan politico-military revolution in 88 B.C. caused the escalation of political violence by non-soldiers. The civil war of 87 B.C. was fought over similar issues and between similar factions as the paramilitary violence of the last couple decades, but the method was different. After Sulla let the genie of civil war out of the proverbial bottle, knife fights in the Forum no longer sufficed. As a result, even when the interests of veterans were not under dispute, any faction that wanted to win had to be able to match the military power of the professional army.

Although the militia system worked well enough for Cinna and Marius to overthrow Octavius, the weakness of that system in comparison to experienced professional armies became evident when Sulla returned from Asia. Even before Sulla made landfall, the difficulty of finding a solution to his rebellious professional army was apparent. Cinna and Gn. Papirius Carbo (Marius had died in the meantime) began war preparations as early as 85 B.C., but to no avail. Cinna’s own recruits, many of whom were Italians fighting to defend their franchise, killed him when he tried to sail against Sulla. This was only the first in a string of disasters for the Marian faction. When Sulla landed in Brundisium in 83 B.C. with 40,000 soldiers, he expected them to return home. But either the polarizing effect of Marius the Younger’s immediate attack, the desire for retirement packages, or some other reason induced Sulla’s veterans to fight. While the ensuing civil war was often brutal, since it was fought “with the fury of private enemies,” many Marian soldiers deserted rather than fight an army with a decade of combat experience (App. *B Civ.* 76-84; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 27-29; Livy *Per.* 83-85). The Sullan Civil Wars initiated a half-century of rebellions and internal conflicts conducted using various military systems, but the Republic was never able to find a solution to the problem Sulla posed in 88 B.C.

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9. Perhaps Nearer Gaul resented Marius’ military activities there. Or perhaps some other political imperative motivated the Gauls to support Octavius. Appian, *The Civil Wars* 1.65-66.

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# The Dynamic State: Changes to the *Polis* During the Augustan Age and the Foundation of Nicopolis

Colin Olson

Despite the attractiveness and utility of periodization, the Greek world did not lose in its entirety its “Hellenic” identity with the burgeoning hegemony of the Macedonian kingdom. Far from it, Greek identity became a valuable export, influencing the actions of prominent figures such as Alexander the Great and causing the Roman poet Horace to suggest that, from the perspective of the then-dominant Romans, “*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio...*” as the arts as well as the political philosophy of the archipelago continued to have sway in the Mediterranean basin (Horace 2.1.156-157).

Thus, as Roman hegemony spread eastward via the Macedonian Wars and later under the auspices of triumvirate men such as Pompey and Octavian, large amounts of reverence and attention were paid to Rome’s eastern neighbors both in efforts of rehabilitation and as a political foreground on which to project imperial messaging. This attention to the Greek world, in particular, is perhaps best illustrated via the actions of a touring Nero, who, overwhelmed by his countless artistic and athletic victories, freed from tax and oversight “[a]ll Hellenes who inhabit Achaëa and the land until now called the Peloponnesus” along with wishing that he was “making this gift while Hellas was still at its height, so that more people might enjoy this boon” (IG, vol. VII, no. 2,713).

These attempts at revitalizing the Greek world raise a number of questions and provide invaluable insights into considerations of demography, economy, mobility, and, ultimately, the development of the *polis* over the *longue durée*. To approach these questions, I propose to use the Augustan synoecism of the city of Nicopolis as a case study. By looking at the first *princeps*’ largely symbolic settlement—commemorating his victory at Actium—I will speak generally to the plagued history of the Epirotic region of Greece, to Augustus’ use of forced population movement, and, finally, to the ways in which Augustus perpetuated and undermined a vision of the traditional *polis*. Naturally, given the variability and development of the many *poleis* in Greece proper, the Aegean, and Asia Minor, to define what exactly a *polis* was at any given time (not to speak of its ability to retain “traditional” elements of governance and infrastructure), is

a near-impossible endeavor. Nevertheless, such reckoning is necessitated by an exploration of the Roman interaction with and within the Greek political landscape, and thus I propose to use the generalizing theses provided by the Copenhagen Polis Center under the auspices of Mogens Herman Hansen (Hansen 2003).

The decline of the population within the Greek world is well-attested by the primary source material, and, to speak generally, proceeds through the fourth century BCE and into the period of the Late Republic. In particular, Strabo, along with Polybius and Pausanias, provides useful snapshots into the dwindling manpower across the Greek world. To focus on the region at hand, namely Roman Epirus as the region encompassing Nicopolis, Strabo notes how “the whole of Epirus and Illyria were well peopled... At present the greater part is uninhabited, and the inhabited parts are left in the state of villages, or in ruins” (Strabo 7.7.9). This decline, however, was presumably not a product of natural causes (the moral issues that Polybius espouses, for instance), but rather due in large part to the ravages of prior Roman conquest. Ignoring for a moment the brutal actions of Aemilius Paulus on which I will speak shortly, Strabo, as a contemporary of Augustus, no doubt took into consideration the civil wars between Octavian and Antony, specifically the battle of Actium. Andrew Erskine, in speaking to the interaction between Augustus and the Greek East, relates the relatively pedantic point that Roman civil war in Greece, while it “may have been convenient for the Romans... clearly caused much suffering for the Greeks” (Erskine 1991: 271). Doubtless more consequential for Epirus, however, were the aforementioned actions of Aemilius Paulus during the Third Macedonian War. Polybius, in chronicling the year 167 BCE, notes how, at the behest of the Romans, “Aemilius Paulus took seventy cities in Epirus after the conquest of the Macedonians and Perseus... and enslaved one hundred and fifty thousand men” (Polybius 30.16). This figure of one hundred and fifty thousand men, regardless of whether it is exaggerated, signifies utter destruction for the region. This conception of ruin is only reinforced and augmented by the claims Polybius makes regarding the dwindling population of Greece as a whole. Corroborating this account are the words of Plutarch in his “Life of Aemilius Paulus”: not only does the biographer reiterate the figure of one hundred and fifty thousand (perhaps merely following his predecessor), but he also notes how the cities were first “overrun and pillage[d]” and then promptly “sacked” (Plutarch 29.3). Thus, the devastation of Epirus both demographically and institutionally seems to be bolstered by the accounts of, on the one hand, Polybius and Plutarch detailing the advances of Aemilius Paulus, and, on the other, the words of Strabo in addressing the state of the region during his contemporary period.

Worth noting, however, is the “barbaric” nature of Strabo’s Epirus. The geographer, with the devastation of the region in mind, speaks to those residing in its territory: “...the country above Acarnania and Aetolia...[is inhabited] by Thesproti, Cassopaei, Amphilochi, Molotti, and Athamanes, Epirotic tribes”

(Strabo 7.7.1). This consideration not only speaks further to the decentralized, noninstitutionalized style of governmental oversight in Epirus but also preempts the drastic *synoikismos* ultimately undertaken by Augustus following his naval victory off the coast of the region. Presumably, from the Roman perspective, these tribes represented a divergence from prior Greek settlement and the creation of a *polis* would further both the “Romanizing” and the “Hellenizing” of the region as a whole.

With Epirus only a shadow of its former self—as it had once benefited from the presence and popularity of such figures as the oracle at Dodona—Augustus exercised a great deal of influence and force in creating a *polis* to commemorate his victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Strabo, functioning as, at least to some extent, a mouthpiece of imperial propaganda, speaks to the actions of his contemporary Augustus in rather diminished tones. Augustus’ creation of Nicopolis is almost framed as an act of charity: the Emperor’s primary motivation for the synoecism is on account of the fact that, in Epirus, “the cities had utterly failed” (Strabo 7.7.9).

In this way, Nicopolis presents an opportunity to explore the ways in which Greek mobility was impacted by the Roman presence and imperial intention to rectify the “failure” of the Greek world and its inability to cope with warfare and destruction. Furthermore, as Augustus himself was presented with an opportunity to use the province of Epirus as a blank political canvas of sorts, his interaction with the tradition of a Greek *polis*, intersecting with his emphasis on “Romanizing” an East which only recently was a stronghold of Antony and Cleopatra, allows for an in-depth conversation regarding the ways in which the Greek political landscape was forcibly altered.

Speaking to the synoecism of Nicopolis, Pausanias, in particular, offers a more brutal account than that of Strabo. Writing in the Hadrianic period, it would be fair to assume that Pausanias had less political pressure coercing him to compose an altogether positive narrative. In fact, as Hadrian took particular interest in Athens and would found cities in the Greek East himself (such as a Hadrianopolis in Epirus), perhaps Pausanias felt pressure to, in large part, degrade the foundation of Nicopolis to stand in contrast with the advances of his patron. Regardless, Pausanias gestures to a largely unsuccessful forced movement of people as he claims that “when the Roman Emperor drove the Aetolians from their homes in order to found the new city of Nicopolis, the greater part of the people went away to Amphissa” (Pausanias 10.38.4). Here, Pausanias informs an understanding of mobility: the synoecism of Nicopolis was a product of forced movement and unwanted migration. People appear to have lacked agency in their trek to the coast, yet, ultimately, were able to escape from their mandated living space.

Obviously, this passage, in conjunction with the more positive account of Strabo, sheds light on the manufactured revitalization of the Greek world. The *polis* in the age of Augustus not only requires re-building but also an active hand

in the process of urbanization and thus “Romanization.” A close consideration of the institutions and infrastructure in the city proper will augment this realization and help to explain, at least to a certain extent, the motivations behind a recreation of the *polis* and to what degree Nicopolis can even be described as a *polis*—does the exorbitant effort to violently overturn the “failure” of Epirus signify a definitive end to a *polis*-centric government in that region?

Before undertaking a broad discussion in an attempt to outline the *polis*-like, Hellenic elements of Nicopolis as compared to its more Roman elements, it is worth discussing, in general, the role Nicopolis played in adjusting the allocation of Epirotic peoples. As mentioned above, this allocation was an expression of Augustus’ *auctoritas* as opposed to Greek volition. Ligia Ruscu, a Romanian scholar, speaks to the material footprint of the settlement as well as the ways in which it affected rural groups: “...Augustus emptied the war-torn Acarnania and Aetolia of much of their population in order to establish...a new city of huge size, with 130ha within the walls, an equally large extramural habitation and a vast territory of ca. 4000km<sup>2</sup>” (Ruscu 2006: 248). This description leads to a number of inferences. First and foremost, Nicopolis was to be the major political player in the region, much in the same way Megalopolis, upon its creation, served as the political hotspot for the Arcadians. Secondly, despite Nicopolis’ “vast territory,” it appears as though even foci of rural production were shifted towards the nominal territory of the settlement as the surrounding broader regions were “drained.” Much like the enforced movement of people, these are actions indicative of intense imperial oversight. Ultimately, the foundation of Nicopolis must be viewed as extremely inorganic; whereas the settlement retained aspects and semblances of Greek *polis*-oriented life, the city’s origins were markedly different from the vast majority of Archaic and Classical cities. Even considering other artificially constructed communities pre-dating Nicopolis, the fact that an altogether foreign power, namely Augustus, controlled the foundation of the settlement gestures towards its unique political position. Overall, Nicopolis’ foundation diverges from the expected avenue of the establishment and growth of a *polis*. Yet, while this is undoubtedly important to consider when assessing the ways in which *poleis* changed under Roman oversight, this does not negate or greatly undermine the importance of Greek institutions and practices in the city: Nicopolis may have been a *polis* yet.

Lastly, before moving on to a more formal discussion regarding the prevalence of *polis*-like elements in Nicopolis, the unique status of Epirus comes into question. In interrogating the ethnic and cultural identity of the Macedonian Kingdom—largely with an eye to Philip of Macedon and with particular attention to Demosthenes—Johannes Engels draws interesting parallels between the civic structures of Macedonia and those of Epirus. Engels, painting in broad strokes, claims that “Epirotans like Macedonians in [C]lassical times still lived in an archaic way...with crude customs...there were only a few urban settlements of the *polis* type” (Engles 2010: 84). In this way, using the north-western region of Epirus as

a heuristic device for the assessment of the changes in Greek *polis* structure over time becomes problematic: culturally, it appears as though Epirus was, at least to an extent, divergent from the paradigm of Classical Greece associated with southern Greek regions and the Peloponnesus. This is worth keeping in mind in the incumbent assessment of Nicopolis' political nature.

In determining the extent to which Nicopolis might be characterized as a *polis*, problems arise relating to the ambiguity of the Greek word. Given that very different settlements—areas as disparate as Miletus and Mytilene and Sparta—could be characterized as a *polis*, a retroactive attempt to determine whether one community participated in this socio-political tradition faces a great deal of challenges. Such challenges have prompted figures such as Mogens Herman Hansen and institutions such as the Copenhagen Polis Center (CPC) to attempt to approach an understanding of the conceptual constraints for what form a *polis* could take. More than anything, the Copenhagen Polis Center's focus is to determine what a *polis* was to the Greeks at contemporary periods; how the word is used in the primary source material in describing different communities and settlements, therefore, has purchase on this working definition of what a *polis* is. Addressing the unique nature of Epirus and considerations of its demography, the thirty-ninth thesis of the Copenhagen Polis Center's ninety-five theses published in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* is of the utmost importance. Casting Aristotle as a divergent, the CPC offers that “[t]he *polis* was not believed to be a specifically Hellenic institution... we hear about hundreds of barbarian *poleis*” (Hansen 2003: 268). Thus, in assessing the “Romanizing” elements of Nicopolis, questions of population and demography have very little bearing on the ultimate question of the city's *polis*-like nature.

Furthermore, thesis forty-six is invaluable because, whereas Roman oversight might confer a strange origin upon the settlement of Nicopolis, it does not, however, rule out the community from being a *polis*. Hansen notes, no doubt in a more pointed reference to Athenian and Spartan hegemony, that “[d]ependent *poleis* existed in many different shapes and sizes” before listing fifteen different ways in which a *polis* might be a “dependent” community (Hansen 1003: 170). Thus, the issue of Nicopolis' political standing cannot simply be written off on account of its subservience to Rome and to Augustus, in particular.

Ultimately, a few key realizations arise from a reading of Hansen. Speaking approximately, the first half of Hansen's framework deals with social and political considerations; the term *polis* could be used interchangeably with other Greek nouns denoting a settlement and could even refer to the body politic in general. Naturally, this is unsatisfactory from the perspective of the current inquiry into Nicopolis, especially given that its very name utilizes the requisite terminology. However, Hansen's analysis becomes all the more pertinent when his theses speak to civic and urban infrastructure. On the one hand, Hansen notes how “only thirteen *poleis*... [had a territory of] over 1000km<sup>2</sup>” (Hansen 2003: 277). This would place Nicopolis well above the territorial threshold of being

a *polis* and would make it one of the more territorially dominant *poleis* in all of Greece. At other points, such as when discussing walls, theaters, and the lack of monumental governmental structures, Hansen allows for a consideration of the material footprint of Nicopolis. Furthermore, in speaking to cultural and religious proclivities, we might focus on the unique way in which Augustus' perceived divinity played out in Nicopolis.

Here, there is a need to evaluate the markedly Hellenic aspects of Nicopolis in an effort to chart the development of *polis*-based life. Building on the analysis of Hansen as described above, methodologically speaking, an invitation is presented to consider both material and literary sources to map ways in which Nicopolis mirrored or diverged from the religious and institutional landscapes of other *poleis*.

Despite his vehement insistence on his role as *princeps*, the first citizen among equals, Augustus enjoyed divine status in much of the Greek East. Having to make various concessions—such as allowing for temples to be consecrated in worship of him as long as they were also worshipping *Roma*—Augustus, as noted by Erskine, was termed a θεός in places as far-flung as “Pergamum, Cyme, and Priene” (Erskine 1991: 272). This trend was further promulgated in Nicopolis, a notable development insofar as its foundation was so closely linked to the emperor and Rome itself. While Greek founders, οἰκισταί, were often the subject of worship (c.f. Brasidas in Amphipolis), for a city presumably seen as representative of Augustus to, at least to some degree, undermine his position only as a *princeps* is notable. No doubt speaking to the Actian games instituted under Augustus to be held quinquennially at Nicopolis, Erskine notes how “[t]he Rhodian dispatch of *theoroi* to games that had been developed or established by Augustus provides an interesting glimpse of the way in which Rome and Augustus became incorporated into the [H]ellenistic context” (Erskine 1991: 273). In speaking to the “[H]ellenistic context,” Erskine here is alluding to the phenomena of kings, in particular, being worshiped as divine, a function at least partially due to the “Medizing” of Alexander. Thus, Nicopolis notably blends into its Greek religious surroundings and appears to stand apart from the carefully curated religious framework present at Rome.

Also of note are the Actian games themselves. Suetonius comments on this athletic festival over the course of his biographical account of Augustus and ascribes to the emperor the establishment of “games to be celebrated there every five years... enlarging likewise an old temple of Apollo” (Suetonius 18). Thus, Augustus consciously established a Panhellenic event to participate in the religious-athletic landscape of Greece. While this certainly advocates for a promulgation of Greek social and religious *mores*, it is worth noting that, in reference to these same games, Strabo claims that they are “superintended by the Lacedaemonians” (Strabo 7.7.6). Overall, however, it appears as though Augustus and Nicopolis paid close attention to the cultural and religious practices associated with Classical and Hellenistic Greece in an effort to replicate them.

Likewise, from the perspective of material infrastructure, the remains of markedly Greek constructions from the Augustan period or subsequent periods remain visible today. In describing the layout of the archaeological site, the UNESCO World Heritage Center offers the following: “The southern quarters of the city were mainly composed of residential houses but also included the Odeion, while the northern section saw the construction of the Monument of Augustus, the Theatre, the Gymnasium and the Stadium” (UNESCO). While the Monument of Augustus no doubt must be seen as derivative of the Roman presence in Epirus, the Odeion, Theatre, Gymnasium, and Stadium all represent integral structures to prominent *poleis* and again attest to the importance of the Actian games and similar manifestations of Hellenisms, so to speak. Thus, religiously, culturally, and materially, Nicopolis retained elements in touch with its Greek surroundings. While, as discussed above, the term “*polis*” can signify a group of people, a location, or have interchangeable uses, these three aspects of Nicopolis undermine the interpretation of Nicopolis as a Roman satellite state built and operated in the fashion of the parent Italian *urbs*.

Despite these notable Hellenisms, other aspects of Augustan Nicopolis belie Roman practices and institutions. Strabo problematizes the Actian games further; not only are the Lacedaemonians the overseers of these games, but Augustus actively intervenes in them. Strabo comments how, whereas Actian victors would previously receive an honorific wreath, “at present time they have been set in greater honor by Caesar” (Strabo 7.7.6). While this action might appear a natural result of Augustus’ newly-placed importance on the Actian games, it is nevertheless likely that this honorific intervention would have acted as indirect imperial messaging: Augustus, in all of his power and domination over Epirus and Greece, is able to disrupt the canonical tetrad of Panhellenic games.

Materially, strong elements of Roman urban administration and architecture are still visible at Nicopolis. Most notably, the presence of aqueducts and nymphaea to furnish Nicopolis with freshwater signifies “Romanized” civic infrastructure (Zachos and Leontaris 2018). While an aqueduct deviates from the expected architectural program of a *polis* as defined by Hansen, however, its utility and relative novelty may be more at play here than a desire to “Romanize.” Nevertheless, it is possible to see this architectural imposition as an Augustan attempt to correct the “failure” of depopulation rampant in Epirus. In trying to urbanize the region (another distinctly Roman priority), it seems as though the first *princeps* viewed Roman buildings as integral to the longevity of his new city, undermining at least theoretically the confidence in Nicopolis being a *polis* markedly Greek.

Furthermore, Augustus’ consistent attention paid to Nicopolis might undermine a conception of the city as typical with respect to Greece at large. In his *Chronica*, the relatively minor author Cassiodorus places the foundation of Nicopolis among Augustus’ and Rome’s fundamental achievements (Cassiodorus 2.557). Discussing the relationships that various Roman emperors maintained with

Athens, James Oliver further notes how “Athens, which Antony as the husband of Octavia had made his capital, never had the trust and affection Augustus gave to Nicopolis” (Oliver 1981: 414). Thus, while Nicopolis may not have had the trappings of a Roman satellite, it was nevertheless seen as an important political stronghold of Rome in Greece. It was also, via Cassiodorus, framed as having intrinsic import for the newly-born principate and Rome itself.

Thus, Nicopolis’ political and social nature is obscure: while the city retained elements of Greek constructions, while it participated in Panhellenic activities, and while it conformed religiously to the practices of the region, nevertheless, the mobilization required to populate Nicopolis was forced and perhaps unsuccessful, Augustus imposed Roman civic “safety nets” to buttress the Greek settlement (aqueducts), and the Emperor seems to have exercised notable oversight on Nicopolis.

Scholars have attempted to negotiate these discrepancies, sometimes in extreme ways. Ligia Ruscu, for instance, proposes a dual conception of Nicopolis, an almost cohabitation of separate Roman and Greek entities. She acknowledges that Nicopolis was undoubtedly a “Greek city of privileged status” as either a “*civitas libera*,” or a federate city. However, to solve the issue that only Pliny the Elder and Tacitus label the city as a *colonia*, she suggests the possibility of a “dual” settlement: “a Greek city created through a huge synoikismos, alongside a colony for Augustus’ veterans of the Civil War, just as Pliny described them” (Ruscu 2006: 249). But this interpretation comes with its own slew of problems, even from a purely theoretical perspective. To an extent, this flies in the face of Hansen’s work in the sense that for Hansen, where a *polis* is fluid, abstract, and oftentimes a matter of popular conception, it seems difficult from the perspective of nomenclature to suggest two distinct cities in one Nicopolis. Furthermore, Ruscu’s supposition invites its own questions: Why would Augustus violently birth a city only to have its inhabitants internally partitioned? How could the veterans fulfill their purpose of further “Romanizing” Nicopolis and acting as a political stronghold if the city were deeply fractured? What might the idea of two cities even imply? Two sets of infrastructure? Two languages? Two conceptions of shared history?

More productive, it seems, is to recognize the ways in which the Greek world was changing at the hands of Augustus. The Emperor, with a unique opportunity to start a foreign settlement basically from scratch, seems to have utilized various civic aspects associated with the Greek world. Cultural concessions were made, Greek structures constructed, and Greek people even forcibly moved. However, the conception of what a *polis* should be was undoubtedly changing: innovations were to be implemented, oversight imposed, and the fortunes of Rome were now bound up in those of Augustus’ creation. While Nicopolis camouflaged into the Greek landscape, the Greek world, under the oversight of an increasingly territorial empire, was starting to be cast in a mold not fashioned by its inhabitants.



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