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Seneca's *Medea* and *Thyestes*: A Link in the Mythological Chain

Michal Loren

In his Epistle 84, Seneca harps on the beauties of building his work off of the work of storytellers and thinkers before him. He writes that reading allows him, “after [he has] learned what others have found out by their studies, to enable [him] to pass judgment on their discoveries” and compound them into new works.¹ In the *Medea* and the *Thyestes*, Seneca is aware that he is writing at the end of a long line of Greco-Roman (re)tellings of the myths of Medea and Atreus/Thyestes. The most prominent way that he situates himself in these mythical traditions is by characterizing his protagonists, Medea and Atreus, as seeking to outdo all of the horrible things they had done before the start of the play, and thus any of the horrible things they had done in previous iterations of their stories.

In the *Medea*, Seneca makes his desire for his Medea to be the most powerful Medea in her tradition clear from the start of the play. At the end of her opening speech, Medea says that everything she did before arriving in Corinth will pale in comparison to what she will do in her revenge on Jason:

MEDEA: ...Efferā ignota horrida
tremenda caelo pariter ac terris mala
mens intus agitat: vulnera et caedem et vagum
funus per artus—levia memoravi nimis:
haec virgo feci; gravior exurgat dolor:
maiora iam me scelera post partus decent.
accingere ira teque in exitium para
furore toto...

1. “...cum ab aliis quaesita cognovero, tum et de inventis iudicem...” I am using the translation from the Loeb Classical Library edition of Seneca's Epistles.

MEDEA: ...My mind urges
 wild, unknown, terrible evils equally
 onto lands and sky: wounds and slaughter and roving
 death through the limbs—I have remembered things too lightly:
 these things I did as a maiden; let heavier grief swell:
 Now greater crimes are fitting for me after giving birth.
 Guard yourself with anger and prepare for destruction
 in total frenzy... (*Medea*, 45-52)

Medea's horrific acts of murder and tearing her brother's body into pieces fade into the background as she claims that they were "too light" ("levia... nimis") (*Medea*, 48). She sets herself up to commit "greater crimes" ("maiora... scelera") now that she is a mother to two sons, foreshadowing their tragic end (*Medea*, 50). In making his Medea promise from the beginning that she will do something worse than what she has done in her past, Seneca acknowledges that he is not the first person to write a Medea play, and claims that his *Medea* will be the greatest *Medea* yet.

The Nurse knows that Medea is a greater danger to those around her than she has ever been. Seneca uses the Nurse to tell the audience that what they are watching Medea concoct is the worst thing he could imagine her doing:

NUTRIX: ...exundat furor.
 non facile secum uersat aut medium scelus;
 se uincet. irae nouimus ueteris notas.
 magnum aliquid instat, efferum immane impium.
 uultum Furoris cerno...
 NURSE: ...Her frenzy overflows.
 Within herself, she turns over not an easy or a middling crime;
 She will conquer herself. We knew the signs of her old anger.
 Something great threatens, wild, vast, wicked.
 I see the face of Fury... (*Medea*, 392-6)

Throughout the play, the Nurse represents a voice of reason among the disaster that Medea is creating. She also knows Medea better than any other character in the play does, essentially acting as her partner-in-crime. The Nurse is an authority on Medea's character; she knows what Medea looks like when she is about to do something evil, and now Medea has pushed past any boundary that may have been present before. So, when the Nurse says that Medea "will conquer herself"), the audience can trust that claim (*Medea*,

394). When she comes to tell the audience about Medea's witchcraft, she tells them that "Medea prepares a greater, greater monstrosity than this [her earlier crimes]" ("maius his, maius parat / Medea monstrum") (*Medea*, 674-5). Seneca uses the Nurse to establish an authoritative voice in the play as the audience watches Medea bring to fruition what she promised in her opening speech.

In Medea's angry response to Jason's marriage to Creusa, she similarly reiterates her desire to do something crueler than what she has done before, but she adds an element of self-fulfillment not present in her prologue. Now, she actively seeks out something that can satisfy her thirst for revenge:

...unde me ulcisci queam? utinam esset illi frater! est coniunx: in hanc
 ferrum exigatur. hoc meis satis est malis?
 si quod Pelasgae, si quod urbes barbarae
 novere facinus quod tuae ignorent manus,
 nunc est parandum. scelera te hortentur tua
 et cuncta redeant: ...
 ...funestum impie
 quam saepe fudi sanguinem—et nullum scelus
 irata feci: saevit infelix amor.
 ...from where can I be avenged?
 If only he [Jason] had a brother! There is a wife: she should
 be finished with a sword. Is this enough for my evils?
 If any Pelasgian, if any barbarian cities
 knew of any deed that your hands might not know,
 it should be prepared now. Let your crimes urge you on
 and let all of them return...
 ...how often
 I have spilled deadly blood wickedly—and I did no crime
 in anger: unhappy love rages. (*Medea*, 124-136)

In this passage, there is a sense of Medea looking around the stage and perhaps into the audience, seeing if anyone has any ideas about what could possibly be worse than what she did to Absyrtus and Pelias. Here Seneca threatens to overtake his predecessors by suggesting that his Medea's murder of Creusa, Creon, and her children will be so horrendous than anything seen in any city — Greek or foreign — before. Medea claims that she committed her previous crimes out of unrequited love, but now she is angry, "irata" (*Medea*, 136). The concept of *ira* runs through both the *Medea* and the *Thyestes*, acting as a central catalyst for Medea and

Atreus' desire to do the vilest possible things. Whereas in previous renditions of Medea's myth, she may have been an unhappy lover, Seneca claims that his Medea is more than that: she is angry in her own right.

Seneca's Medea is only fulfilled after she has done the worst thing she could possibly do. After killing Creusa and Creon, Medea fortifies her will — and convinces the audience of the ultimate horror of what she intends to do — by overcoming her earlier deeds in her mind:

MEDEA: ...incumbe in iras teque languentem excita
 penitusque veteres pectore ex imo impetus
 violentus hauri. quidquid admissum est adhuc,
 pietas vocetur. hoc age et faxo sciant
 quam levia fuerint quamque vulgaris notae
 quae commodavi scelera. prolusit dolor
 per ista noster: quid manus poterant rudes
 audere magnum? quid puellaris furor?
 Medea nunc sum; crevit ingenium malis.
 MEDEA: Lean into your angers and awaken your lethargic self
 and draw your old attacks out from deep within
 your heart, violent one. Whatever has been permitted until now,
 let it be called loyalty. Do this and I will make them know
 how light and how of the common mark the crimes were
 which I provided for Jason. Our grief rehearsed
 through these: what great things could my untrained
 hands have dared? What things could my girlish frenzy have done?
 Now I am Medea; my nature has grown through evils.
 (*Medea*, 902-910)

Once again, the idea that her previous crimes were “levia,” “light” and that they were things that any ordinary person could do because they were done out of love is central to why Medea is unfulfilled, and why she seeks to do more (*Medea*, 907). Only once she is working alone and in her own interests, only once she has executed enough egregious acts to be equipped to do the unspeakable, can she declare, “Now I am Medea” (“Medea nunc sum”) (*Medea*, 910). Only once Medea has exhausted all of the stories that she lived throughout the centuries between Seneca and Euripides can she be Seneca's Medea. His Medea is so powerful as to surpass all previous incarnations of her mythology. At the same

time, he needs her earlier mythology to bring her to such a powerful state.

In the *Thyestes*, Seneca does much the same thing around Atreus tricking Thyestes into eating his own children as he does to Medea murdering hers. Just as Medea explains early on how disappointed she is in her younger self's mediocre evil-doing and how she intends to do worse things now that she has children to hurt, Atreus berates himself in his first speech that he has let himself go unavenged thus far. Instructing his spirit much in the way Medea talks to herself, he says,

...Age, anime, fac quod nulla posteritas probet
 sed nulla taceat. aliquod audendum est nefas
 atrox cruentum, tale quod frater meus
 suum esse mallet. scelera non ulcisceris
 nisi vincis. et quid esse tam saeuum potest
 quod superet illum?
 ...Go, spirit, do what no future can approve of
 but cannot be silent about. Some unspeakable crime should be dared,
 cruel, bloody, such that my brother would
 prefer it to be his own. You do not avenge crimes
 unless you conquer them. And what could be so savage
 that it could surpass that man? (*Thyestes*, 192-7)

Echoing Medea's threat to make the day Creon granted her "do what no day could ever be silent about" ("hic faciet dies / quod nullus umquam taceat,"), Atreus is going to do something that future tragedians will have no choice but to include in their retellings of the Atreus and Thyestes myth (*Medea*, 423-4). Atreus knows that in order to outdo his brother (for his brother would do awful things as well if he had the chance), he needs to "conquer" Thyestes' evil deeds, much in the way Medea will conquer her own (*Thyestes*, 196). Similarly, Seneca knows that in order for his *Thyestes* to establish a stake in the mythological tradition, his Atreus must be more vengeful and violent than the Atreuses before him.

Atreus expresses a similar sentiment after his exchange with the Attendant in which he tells him that he plans to use Thyestes himself as the weapon in the crime he intends to commit. He knows that he is going to do something extraordinary:

ATREUS: Nescio quid animus maius et solito amplius
 supraque fines moris humani tumet
 instatque pigris manibus. haud quid sit scio
 sed grande quiddam est. ita sit. hoc, anime, occupa!
 dignum est Thyeste facinus et dignum Atreo—
 quod uterque faciat. uideat infandas domus
 Odrysia mensas—fateor, immane est scelus
 sed occupatum. maius hoc aliquid dolor
 inueniat.

ATREUS: My mind swells with something more, something greater
 than usual
 and beyond the limits of human custom
 and it threatens my idle hands. I do not know what it is
 but it is something big. Let it be thus. Seize it, spirit!
 The deed is worthy of Thyestes and worthy of Atreus—
 Which both might do. The Odrysian house saw
 unspeakable feasts—I confess, the crime is vast,
 but it has been seized. Let grief find something
 greater than this. (*Thyestes*, 267-75)

Again, Atreus believes that Thyestes has the potential to do something as horrible as he can, but he is going to do it first. It is beyond the bounds of “human custom”, so much so that Atreus does not yet have it cemented in his mind (*Thyestes*, 268). Whereas Medea had her revenge planned from the start, Atreus has yet to work out the details. Regardless, Seneca makes it clear that Atreus is going to outdo his earlier myths. Importantly, Seneca here not only positions his Atreus at the pinnacle of all of the Atreuses that came before him, but he also places Atreus as worse than Tereus of the Procne and Philomela myth, who ate his son Itys as served to him by his wife, Procne, in revenge for hurting Philomela. Seneca has Atreus acknowledge that “the Odrysian house” has already seen “unspeakable feasts” — fathers have already eaten their sons — but Thyestes will eat three children. Tereus only ate one (*Thyestes*, 272-273). Seneca situates himself as the receiver not just of all of the Atreus and Thyestes stories he uses, but also as the receiver of the Procne and Philomela stories to which he alludes, doubly emphasizing his work at the end of a mythological tradition.

While Seneca consciously iterates through his characters that he is writing at the end of a long mythological tradition, he also

creates opportunities for future writers to contribute their own retellings to Medea and Atreus/Thyestes. After spending the entirety of both plays building up to Medea and Atreus doing the worst things he can imagine them doing given their literary background, he makes both of them regret that they did not do something worse. After Medea has killed Creusa and Creon and has convinced herself to murder her children, she scolds herself:

MEDEA: ...stulta properavi nimis:
 ex paelice utinam liberos hostis meus
 aliquos haberet—quidquid ex illo tuum est,
 Creusa peperit. placuit hoc poenae genus,
 meritoque placuit: ultimum, agnosco, scelus
 animo parandum est—liberi quondam mei,
 vos pro paternis sceleribus poenas date.
 MEDEA: ...Foolish, I have rushed too much:
 If only my enemy could have other children
 From his mistress—whatever is yours from him,
 Creusa birthed it. This kind of punishment is pleasing
 And it pleases rightly: I recognize the ultimate crime
 Ought to be prepared in my mind—once my children,
 You give punishments for your father's crimes. (*Medea*, 919-924)

Medea had already promised the audience that the one day Creon gave her was more than enough time to do what she needed to do to get her revenge (“this day will do what no day could ever be silent about,” “hic faciet dies / quod nullus umquam taceat,”) (*Medea*, 423-4). She had already extended the day so much and messed with the natural rhythm of the earth, yet she remains unsatisfied with how she manipulated time. She regrets killing Creusa so quickly, before Creusa and Jason could have had children. All she has left to commit her ultimate act of vengeance is her own children. Here, Seneca creates the potential for a future dramatist to take the theme of time, so prominent in his *Medea*, and run with it in a new *Medea*.

Atreus, too, wishes that he had done more than what he ultimately did in the play. Where Medea longs for more time, Atreus longs for more violence:

ex vulnere ipso sanguinem calidum in tua
 defundere ora debui ut viventium

biberes cruorem. verba sunt irae data
 dum propero. ferro vulnera impresso dedi,
 cecidi ad aras, caede votiva focos
 placavi et artus corpora exanima amputans
 in parva carpsi frustra et haec ferventibus
 demersi aenis, illa lentis ignibus
 stillare iussi. membra nervosque abscidi
 viventibus gracilique traiectas veru
 mugire fibras vidi et aggressi manu
 mea ipse flammas. omnia haec melius pater
 fecisse potuit. cecidit in cassum dolor.
 scidit ore natos impio—sed nesciens sed nescientes.
 I ought to have poured hot blood out from the wound
 Into your mouth so that you would drink
 The blood of the living. Words were given to anger
 While I rushed. I gave wounds with pressing iron,
 I slaughtered them at the altars, I pleased hearths
 with votive slaughter and, cutting up dead bodies,
 I pulled limbs into small morsels and I submerged
 Them in boiling bronze pots, I ordered them to drip
 Over slow fires. I cut limbs and muscles
 From the living and I saw organs bellow with thin
 spits thrown across them and I heaped up flames
 myself with my hand. The father could have done all of these better.
 Grief fell in vain.
 He tore his sons in his wicked mouth—but he did not know, they did
 not know. (*Thyestes*, 1054-1067)

Medea merely mentions that she “rushed too much”, whereas when Atreus laments that he “rushed”, he also details the horrors he did to Thyestes and his children (*Medea*, 919; *Thyestes*, 1057). But, in his opinion, he did not use Thyestes as a weapon enough, despite his promise to do so. He could have made Thyestes kill his children himself. If only Thyestes knew what he was doing as he was eating his children, the scene would have been that much more upsetting. Just as Medea’s regrets focus on the theme of time, Atreus’ regrets focus on the utter gruesomeness that permeates the *Thyestes*. Seneca gives a blueprint to the person he hopes will write after him for how to make the *Thyestes* even more disturbing.

Turning from Atreus to Thyestes, an equally important character in the play, Seneca uses him to create opportunities for future mythweavers as well. When Thyestes finds out that he has eaten his own children and is horrified at that fact, he begs Atreus for a sword to cut them out of his stomach:

THYESTES: hoc est quod avidus capere non potuit pater.
 voluuntur intus viscera et clusum nefas
 sine exitu luctatur et quaerit fugam.
 da, frater, ensem (sanguinis multum mei
 habet ille); ferro liberis detur via.
 negatur ensis? pectora inliso sonent
 contusa planctu...
 THYESTES: This is what the greedy father could not take in.
 Their guts turn within and the enclosed crime
 struggles without an exit and it seeks flight.
 Give me a sword, brother (that one has much
 of my blood); let a path be given to the children with iron.
 Is the sword denied? Let my bruised chest
 resound with striking blows. (*Thyestes*, 1040-1046)

Seneca does not let his Atreus give Thyestes the means to gouge out his insides because doing so would kill him. Thyestes needs to live because the house of Pelops needs to see itself to the end of its myth. However, not killing Thyestes also creates space for more stories about Atreus and Thyestes to proliferate.

Seneca does nearly the same thing to Medea, but Medea does not need to live in order for her myth to be complete; technically, the murder of her children is the end of her story. She threatens, “If some pledge / lurks in the mother even now, I will search and / I will drag my guts out with an iron sword” (“in matre si / quod pignus etiamnunc latet, scrutabor ense / viscera et ferro extraham,”) (*Medea*, 1011-1013). However, she does not do so. Seneca could have altered the myth so that Medea is pregnant with another of Jason’s children and that, in her rage, she cuts the child out of her womb. But, just as with Thyestes, that would likely result in her own death. There is no reason that she needs to be alive at the end of the *Medea*. Unlike Euripides’ *Medea*, in which Medea makes a pact with Aegeus and rides her flaming chariot to Athens, Seneca’s Medea has no destination. She soars into the sky and the play ends. Like he did with Thyestes, Seneca creates space for future dramatists to write an even bigger *Medea*, providing a series of stepping stones for potential next retellings.

Seneca understands himself not as the last in a long line of mythographers but as the latest in a long line of mythographers. By making his protagonists in the *Medea* and the *Thyestes* the greatest

and most evil versions of themselves so far, he establishes his authority in an already-dense canon. By suggesting that they could be even worse, and by not truly putting an end to their stories, he frees room from within his expansive plays for the next writer to pick up the *Medea* or the *Thyestes* stories. He adds his plays as the newest links in the chain of mythological tradition, but he does not prevent new links from attaching themselves to his plays.

Linguistic Variation and Cultural Identity: How Differing Archaic Alphabets in Syracuse and Corinth May Reflect Differing Cultural Identities

Opal Lambert

Introduction

In understanding the debate surrounding the term “colony” to describe Greek settlements during the 8th to 6th century BCE, scholars rarely consider linguistic and epigraphic evidence. This paper argues that variation in alphabetical convention between Syracuse and its mother city, Corinth, lends credence to the argument that archaic Syracusan identity does not map onto “colonial” identity. It further aims to offer some potential reasons for variation in alphabetical convention by applying *Migrationslinguistik*: between a potentially more multicultural foundation and the interaction between the Phoenicians and native Sicilians, many possible explanations for differences between the Syracusan alphabet and the Corinthian arise.

The Debate Surrounding “Colony” and “Settlement”

Scholars and textbooks alike describe Greek settlements appearing in the Mediterranean between the 8th century to 6th century BCE as “colonization.” Yet as scholars begin to understand these settlements and their relationship with the cities from which the founders came, scholars have called these terms into questions due to the differences between archeological evidence and literary evidence.

While traditionally these Greek settlements across the Mediterranean have been called colonies, some scholars propose “settlement” because they argue the relationship between *apoikiai*—the primary Greek word for these settlements—and their mother cities does not map onto the relationship between colonies and their founders. Colonies typically are known as a territory controlled by a parent state. The word itself is derived from the Latin word *colonia*, which the Romans used to describe their settlements in conquered territory. Though Roman *coloniae* had slightly different roles over time—for example, citizenship laws often shifted—they were never an entirely independent entity as their mother city, Rome, retained control over them. Similarly, colonies in the 19th and 20th centuries CE maintained a similar relationship to their parent states: these colonies, such as the colonial Americas, did not have autonomy. That being said, Romans translated the Greek *apoikia* into Latin as *colonia*, perhaps indicating that they equated Roman *coloniae* with Greek *apoikiai* (Osborne 1998: 252). Still, the term colony has come under scrutiny: scholars do not agree if the English term ‘colony’ should apply to *apoikiai*. Due to the complex nature of this debate, the author will use the transliterated Greek word—*apoikia* in the singular and *apoikiai* in the plural.

The evidence, too, has come under scrutiny. Traditional text-based scholarship does not necessarily question the literary evidence, particularly regarding the names of founders and founding myths of *apoikiai* (Osborne 1998: 256). However, because many literary sources derive from a later time period, occasionally evidence suggests a manufactured narrative. For example, a *stèle* erected in Cyrene—an *apoikia* founded by settlers from Thera—supposedly from Cyrene’s founding claimed that Therans had access to unclaimed land in Cyrene, yet epigraphical analysis reveals the *stèle* was not written during Cyrene’s founding but rather when it was erected centuries later (Dobias-Lalou 2017). Thus, revisionist historians have turned to archeological evidence in order to verify literary evidence and draw new conclusions about the relationship between *apoikiai* and their mother cities (Donnellan and Nizzo 2016: 10-11). But because the archeological

evidence is scarce, traditional historians do not feel it is enough to reject “colony” altogether, especially when some literary evidence points to a potential relationship mirroring traditional colonies. Therefore, they reject “settlement” and other proposed terms, such as “migration,” as too unspecific (Malkin 2016: 31).

Yet no scholar seems to take into account variations in dialect between mother cities and *apoikiai*, which this paper argues should be included in aiming to understand their relationship. Just as differences in burial practices between mother cities and *apoikiai* complicate the expected relationship (Nizzo and Donnellan 2016: 10), alphabetic variations could contribute to other archeological findings of cultural differences even if evidence is sparse. The author aims to unite linguistic theory and epigraphy in the specific case of Syracuse¹ to discuss potential cultural differences between the *apoikia* and Corinth in the archaic period in order to evaluate one facet of their connection.

Linguistic Differences As Cultural Differences

This paper intends to evaluate Syracuse during the Archaic period utilizing linguistics of migration, known more formally *Migrationslinguistik*. *Migrationslinguistik* specifically aims to study the effect of migration on language (García and Zimmermann 2007: 10). For example, *Migrationslinguistik* points to Latin America and its development of dialects: apart from the influence of indigenous languages, there was first koineization of Spanish as colonizers who spoke different dialects of Spanish settled in the same place (García and Zimmermann 2007: 13). *Migrationslinguistik* also discusses how linguistic change can result in a generational change of cultural identity, as found by several different studies globally (García and Zimmermann 2007: 13-14). Linguistic change can refer to dialectic change, spelling

1. Syracuse from here on out will refer to Syracuse from its founding to the end of the Archaic period. If the author means to specify Syracuse outside of the Archaic period, she will do so.

convention, etc. Thus, a key part of *Migrationslinguistik* is recognizing that migration can have an effect on language, which in turn has an effect on culture, whether the linguistic change occurs due to interaction between the migrants' native language and indigenous language(s), between different dialects of migrants, or both at once. Though the field tends to focus on live languages rather than archeological evidence, the principles revealed by scholars of *Migrationslinguistik* can be applied to Syracuse.

Syracuse As A Multicultural—and Perhaps Multilingual—City

Founded in 734 BCE as a result of an expedition led by Archias of Corinth, Syracuse was not the first *apoikia* in Sicily. Yet it became an increasingly important city from its founding onwards. Traditionally scholars understand Syracuse as a colony of Corinth's—rather than a settlement—due to the fact Archias intentionally left Corinth to found Syracuse in Sicily. Yet Corinth at the time was fairly small: it did not have enough citizens to supply settlers for more than one foundation (Shepherd 2009: 20). Literary evidence does suggest that the foundation of Syracuse was more multicultural, solving the problem created by Corinth's size. For example, Strabo reports that Archias picked up some unspecified Dorians on the way to Syracuse (Shepherd 2009: 20). Thus, the concept of individuals coming from one singular “mother-city” does not necessarily apply to Syracuse, strengthening the possibility that different Greek dialects might have been spoken in Syracuse.

Syracuse was a unique *apoikia* because its hegemony was likely the primary cause for the destruction of indigenous independence in eastern Sicily (Tusa 2019: 47). This behavior towards the indigenous population did not mirror the behavior of the other *apoikiai* on the eastern coast; instead, archeological evidence suggests that before Syracuse's rise to prominence, Greek settlers and the indigenous peoples engaged in trade (Tusa 2019: 47). It is

possible that the first Corinthian colony in Sicily, Ortigia, also was hostile towards indigenous Sicilians, but the evidence is not conclusive (Tusa 2019: 47).

The exact details of how Syracuse treated native Sicilians are unclear. Because Syracuse had such a large body of slaves, known as *Killyrioi*, many scholars posit the likelihood that they were a slave class of Sikels—a certain group of native Sicilians—as it is otherwise unclear where so many slaves may have come from, though the *Killyrioi* are never identified as such by Greek sources and could have contained other or additional members (Shepherd 2009: 21). Furthermore, there is certainly a possibility of intermarriage between Greeks and native Sicilians, but scarce evidence has been found—especially native Sicilian burial practices in Syracuse, which appear to be few and far between (Shepherd 2009: 21-22). However, the existence of mixed names in Sicily indicates a likelihood they did occur (Hall 2019: 606). Furthermore, because burial practices in Sicily do not match practices in respective mother cities, some argue that perhaps there were cultural practices specific to the *apoikia* that both Greeks and indigenous Sicilians participated in (Shepherd 2009: 22).

Thus, it's very probable interactions between several languages were occurring. Regardless of whether indigenous Sicilians were an oppressed slave class in Syracuse, they were not systematically destroyed and killed even if Syracuse was a primary agent for the destruction of indigenous independence (Ruijgh, Lejeune, Newton, Brian, and Malikouti-Drachman 2018). Greek settlers, therefore, likely came into contact with native Sicilian language and vice versa, thus potentially causing linguistic changes as suggested by *Migrationslinguistik*. While less likely, is technically possible that native Sicilians primarily communicated with Greek settlers in Greek—as evidence indicates both trading with Greeks prior to any settlements (Tusa 2019: 43) and that native Sicilians had interactions with Greek alphabets (Tribulato 2017: 117-22). Furthermore, Sicily itself was split into three cultures during this colonization period; the western coast was primarily settled by Phoenicians, the eastern coast by Greeks, and the mid-western area by Elymians—a group originating from peninsular Italy who

settled Sicily in the eleventh century BCE (Tusa 2019: 51). In any case, one should consider *Migrationslinguistik* here because of the different dialects of Greek interacting in Syracuse even in the unlikely event where Greek settlers did not come into contact with indigenous Sicilian language.

In considering the potential of languages interacting and creating a new cultural identity, hybridity and go-betweenes must also be considered. Rather than the binaries at play in debates between “colony” and “settlement” where Greeks either are colonizing non-Greek barbarians or not, one must recognize hybridization not as simply two distinct cultures meeting, but a new culture entirely being formed from a mixture of similarities and differences (Crielaard 2018: 196-220). Furthermore, a broad range of Ancient Mediterranean texts—from the *Odyssey* to the Bible—certainly were comfortable with individuals spending some time being a part of another society before returning to their own communities (Crielaard 2018: 204). Thus, Syracusan culture could have been a mix of Corinthian and other cultures—but by being a mix, hybridization must have occurred, and a new culture has therefore emerged.

Archaic Alphabetical Variation

In order to understand the differences between the Syracusan alphabet and the Corinthian alphabet, first one must understand the development of the Greek alphabet itself. The exact timeframe regarding the development of the Greek alphabet is not certain, but certainly falls within the timeframe of Greeks founding *apoikiai*. The earliest inscriptions we have date to approximately 725 BCE, only nine years after Syracuse’s founding (Ruijgh et al. 2018). However, some scholars believe the alphabet developed prior to the inscriptions we have (Ruijgh et al. 2018). Regardless, the alphabet superseded a syllabary known as Linear B, which was mainly used to record inventories and lists in an early form of Greek (Ruijgh et al. 2018).

However, there was no standard “Greek alphabet” during the archaic period: during the 8th to 5th centuries BCE, letters and spelling varied based on geographical location, though it was not uncommon for *apoikiai* to have similar alphabets to their founders (Jeffery 1990: 264). While many theories exist on how exactly the Greek alphabet came to be, scholars are certain that it was developed from the Phoenician script in some way or another (Jeffery 1990: 1). Some credit a singular figure; others, bilingualism; others still, intermarriage (Jeffery 1990: 2). Regardless, differences in alphabet could be attributed to contact with other cultures as well as dialectical differences (Jeffery 1990: 4).

One important distinction between different alphabets is denoted as “red” and “blue.”² The “red” alphabets utilize X to denote /ks/ xi, as compared to the letter used in the Classical alphabet, Ξ = /ks/ xi. Furthermore, the “red” alphabet introduced aspirated letters Φ = /p^h/ phi and Ψ = /k^h/ chi, where in the Classical standardized alphabet X = /k^h/ chi and Ψ = /ps/ phi. Most parts of mainland Greece—such as Thessaly, Boetia, and much of the Peloponnese—as well as Euboea used “red” alphabets. Their *apoikiai* tended to follow suit (Woodard 2010: 24-46). The “blue” alphabets are further broken up into “light blue” and “dark blue.” “Light blue” alphabets also tend to lack Ξ = /ks/, but do utilize Φ = /p^h/ and X = /k^h/. For /ps/ and /ks/, these alphabets tend to use two letters—typically ΦΣ and XΣ, respectively. Athens before 403 BCE and several Aegean islands had “light blue” alphabets (Woodard 2010: 24-46). Meanwhile, the “dark blue” type tended to correspond to the Classical standardized alphabet; it shares the letters Φ = /p^h/ and X = /k^h/ of the “light blue” type but adds Ψ = /ps/ and Ξ = /ks/. Many Ionian cities, Knidos in Asia Minor, Corinth, and Argos all had “dark blue” alphabets (Woodard 2010: 24-46). Thus, an important distinction between “red” and “blue” alphabets is chi and xi; the “dark blue” xi more closely resembles

2. From this paragraph onwards, the International Phonetic Alphabet is used. For the unfamiliar reader, the author suggests referencing <https://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/ipa-sounds/ipa-chart-with-sounds/>.

its Phoenician precursor, *samek* (𐤎); meanwhile, the “red” xi looks like an X (Woodard 2014: 41). Furthermore, the “red” chi more closely resembles a Ψ, whereas the “blue” chi resembles the Classical Chi (Χ).

Corinth itself differed from other “dark blue” alphabets in its usage of san (Μ), qoppa (Q), and its uncommon system for [e]-sounds. Corinthian alphabets employed a B-shaped letter (Β) for /e/ (Classical ε) and /ε:/ (Classical η), while for /e:/ (Classical εἰ) E was used. Their beta was typically written as 𐀀, likely derived from an archaic form of pi (Π) (Jeffery 1990: 114). Furthermore, Corinthians utilized a crooked iota (ξ, ζ).

CORINTH

	α	β	γ	δ	ε	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	μ	ν	ξ	ο	π	Μ	Q	ρ	σ	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	ω	Ρ
1	A	𐀀	Γ	Δ	Β	Ɔ	⊖	⊕	ξ	κ	λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	ρ	σ	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	-	⋮
2	A	Π	ϸ	Β	Ɔ	⊖	⊕	⊖	⊕	κ	λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ				⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⋮
3	A	𐀀	ϸ	Β	Ɔ	⊖	⊕	⊖	⊕	κ	λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ				⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⋮
4				E																							⋮

FIG. 33. Corinth and Korkyra

THE DORIC COLONIES, SICILY

	α	β	γ	δ	ε	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	μ	ν	ξ	ο	π	Μ	Q	ρ	σ	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	ω	Ρ
1	A, B	Γ	Δ	Β	Ɔ	⊖	⊕	⊖	⊕	κ	λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	ρ	σ	τ	υ	ψ	⊖	-	⋮	
2	A	Β	Γ	Δ	Β	Ɔ	⊖	⊕	⊖	⊕	κ	λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	⊖			⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⋮
3	A	ϸ	C	Δ	E				⊖										⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⋮
4			ϸ	⊖	⊖														⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⋮
5				E																							⋮

FIG. 43. The Doric Colonies in Sicily
 +*Selinous xiCela?

alphabet and its variants as mapped out by epigrapher LH Jeffery in *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* on page 114 are shown below.

In the case of Sicily as a whole, some of the variation between alphabets of *apoikiai* and their mother cities likely came from the influence of Syracuse (Jeffery 1990: 265). Though many *apoikiai* derived alphabets or used the same alphabet as their mother city, the Syracusan alphabet was not Corinthian and several other *apoikiai* in Sicily adopted the Syracusan alphabet (Jeffery 1990: 264). We are certain that the Syracuse alphabet is not Corinthian in

part because of the fact the Syracusan epsilon does not match Corinth's freak epsilon and because sigma is used over san. We do not, however, know its origins: in fact, different inscriptions from Syracuse use both the "red" and "blue" xi, though Jeffery argues the alphabet is "blue" —similar to Corinth's. Furthermore, the Syracusan script contains other Ionic influences as well (Jeffery 1990: 267). The alphabets of the Doric *apoikiai*—including Syracuse—as mapped out by Jeffery on page 262 are above.

Because of Syracuse's peculiarity in not utilizing the alphabet of its mother city, some scholars suggest that the founders of Syracuse were not literate, and thus adopted a different alphabet; however, this does not account for the trend of *apoikiai* in the Mediterranean founded before Syracuse who do use the same alphabet as their mother city. Furthermore, a Protocorinthian inscription on a pyxis has been found in Syracuse. Thus, Syracuse either originally had a Corinthian alphabet and changed it, or the inscribed pyxis was inscribed in Corinth and then brought to Syracuse (Jeffery 1990: 264). The latter seems more likely. Either way, Corinthian script was certainly present in Syracuse; why it was not adopted then remains unclear.

The Potential Relevance of Alphabetical Variation to Syracusan Culture

There are many potential theories posited to explain the unusual occurrence of Syracuse differing from Corinth in writing convention. This paper aims to present a few that arise from applying *Migrationslinguistik*: a potential difference in dialect or accent, possible koineization, or the impact of Phoenician and native Sicilian culture. Regardless of these theories' accuracy, utilizing findings from *Migrationslinguistik* still implies a stark difference in Syracusan and Corinthian culture.

Though alphabet—especially an alphabet as puzzling as the Syracusan one—does not necessarily correspond to dialect, some variation of the letters in different local alphabets can be attributed

to dialect differences. Corinth, for example, contains several aspirated consonants that are not common elsewhere, which could be reflective of Corinthian dialect (Jeffery 1990: 116). Furthermore, Corinth utilized san (M) as /s/ instead of sigma; LH Jeffery posited that san was originally pronounced /z/, and that the Doric dialects (like Corinth) which retained san over sigma may have pronounced /s/ as [z] (Jeffery 1990: 33). However, scholar Woodard hypothesized san as pronounced [ts] (Woodard 2010: 33). Either way, both epigraphers point to a potential pronunciation difference. Thus, some of the differences between the Syracuse script and Corinthian script could reflect dialect or accent.

Even if the variation in alphabets does not reflect said differences, perhaps *Migrationslinguistik* can be applied in the context of koineization: the Syracuse script contains a mix of letters not only from Corinth but also from other parts of Greece. It then bears repeating that Greek literary sources identified that unspecified Dorians also helped found Syracuse. When many different speakers of the same language migrate to one place, it often results in a standardization of the language. It is possible the same concept could be applied to alphabetical convention. More research is needed in order to identify if this hypothesis is true, but koineization may explain why the nature of the Syracusan script continues to confound scholars.

Furthermore, the impact of native Sicilians as well as Phoenicians on the Syracusan script has not been identified, either. Scholars have compared the Syracusan script to the script of other Sicilian *apoikiai* as well as specifically Syracusan *apoikiai* but only in the context of either trying to understand more of the particulars of the Syracusan alphabet or trying to locate the origin of other Sicilian alphabets (Jeffery 1990: 265). Yet Syracuse certainly had major interactions with Phoenicians and native Sicilians; therefore, the likelihood of interaction between languages is high. Thus, the possibility of interactions between literate Syracusans, Phoenicians, and native Sicilians—all with potentially different alphabetical conventions—is very plausible. Perhaps, then, the impact of other cultures beyond Corinthian—whether Greek, Phoenician, or Sicilian—could explain why

Syracuse utilizes both “red” and “blue” aspects in its letters.

Even though much remains unclear, the simple fact that the Syracusan alphabet does not follow Corinthian conventions does complicate the expected relationship between *apoikiai* and their mother cities. The possibilities laid out to explain why the Syracusan alphabet is unique all point to a potential cultural difference: studies in *Migrationslinguistik* point to a trend between linguistic difference and cultural difference. Though alphabetical differences do not necessarily equate to dialectical differences, variations in alphabet do reflect a certain kind of linguistic difference. Furthermore, the Syracusan script appears to be a mix of many other scripts, which could indicate hybridization occurring—especially when considering the interaction of many different cultures in Sicily.

So: if literate Syracusan citizens *did* see themselves as Corinthian, why would they adopt a different alphabet? Whether the cultural difference stems from a dialectical difference, the influence of other Greek cultures, the influence of Phoenicians and native Sicilians, or something else entirely—the simple fact that Syracuse wrote differently than its mother city calls into question the idea that Syracuse saw itself as a Corinthian satellite. Furthermore, Syracuse greatly influenced many Sicilian *apoikiai* regardless of if they were founded by Corinthian settlers or not, upsetting the trend of *apoikiai* mirroring the alphabets of their mother city. Thus, how differently did these Sicilian *apoikiai* see each other? Was there a Greco-Sicilian identity that superseded their connection to their mother cities? If so, this identity would not map onto the modern and Roman understanding of a “colony.” Certainly, then, alphabetical variation does have a place—and an important place at that—in helping to illuminate the relationship between *apoikiai* and their mother cities.

Complications Surrounding the Evidence at Hand

However, the little evidence and a large timeframe does

complicate the question of Syracusan identity. While there are a fair amount of archaic Corinthian inscriptions, there are not very many Syracusan inscriptions. Several Syracusan inscriptions actually originate from Syracusan *apoikiai* or from mainland Greece but are hypothesized to be Syracusan. Furthermore, a large portion of Syracusan inscriptions date from the later archaic period; the earliest inscriptions are on coins from the second half of the sixth century. Thus, a large period of time remains unaccounted for. When considering cultural identity, one must acknowledge that identity can shift and that evidence suggesting a different cultural identity during one period of time does not imply the same thing for another period. The archaic period spans over centuries: cultural identity can certainly be in flux over centuries. Despite these complications, epigraphers tend to believe Syracuse never had a Corinthian alphabet; thus, alphabetical differences could certainly still reflect a unique Syracusan identity even with little information available. Furthermore, scholars traditionally use “colony” to describe Syracuse no matter the century in the Archaic period; if “colony” is not accurate for all of the Archaic period, should it be used generally in the first place?

Conclusion

When considering “colony” as an appropriate term for *apoikiai*, scholars have brought culture and relation to mother cities into question. Archaeologists have pointed towards differing burial practices in places like Syracuse and Corinth. However, differing alphabets between Sicilian *apoikiai* and their mother cities—particularly Syracuse and Corinth—has never been applied to the debate, despite the fact that many linguistic studies globally have shown correlation between differing cultural identities and differing linguistic practices. Whether the Syracusan alphabet is a product of koineization or influence from other cultures residing in Sicily, it is likely the differing alphabetical conventions reveal less connection between Syracuse and Corinth than what is typical for a

colony and its parent state. Thus, the particular case study of Syracuse and Corinth reveal how useful—and necessary—alphabetical variation is in aiming to understand *apoikia*.

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The (Un)Reality of Dreams: Space and Language in *Cupid Crucified*

Madeleine McGrath

This paper will examine Ausonius' deft use of space in his poem *Cupid Crucified*. He situates the reader in multiple spaces throughout the poem, using language as a vehicle for this movement; as the poem begins in someone's dining room and moves into a painting, spatial and temporal landscapes are blurred and jumbled together, creating a greater space of unreality which the reader must interpret. Ausonius' use of language in conjuring such a space corresponds with one of the themes of this collection—specifically, the *Moselle*, *Bissula*, *Epigrams*, *Ephemeris*, and *Cupid Crucified*—as a whole in parodying Christianity. If God is indeed “the word” and the sole creator, Ausonius is challenging this idea through his use of language in *Cupid Crucified*. Through the various spatial movements of the poem, Ausonius illustrates to readers the power of verbal art in creating and disrupting land- and dreamscapes.

The preface to the poem situates the reader in a variety of spaces. Ausonius first places the reader in “Zoilus's dining room in Treves”: this is the physical, real space that contains “this painted picture” in which “lovesick women fix Cupid to a cross” (p. 88). The reader is with Ausonius as he remembers a painting he once saw and relays it in a letter to his “dear ‘son’” (p. 88). As Ausonius begins to describe the painting in more detail, he notes that the women crucifying Cupid are, “not women of our time” and moves the readers from the current and real world to a past space (p. 88). The women are mourning mythical lovers—“gazing Narcissus; Oebalus' Hyacinth; gold-haired Crocus”—and this grief roots them in an artificial past (line 10). Ausonius further reveals that the

women are of myth themselves, confirming to the reader that the space of *Cupid Crucified* is entirely removed from any real or current world; rather, it is doubly conjured by both the brushstrokes of the described painting and by Ausonius' language. A clear distinction has been marked between the present time of Ausonius and the time of the painting.

Referencing "our Virgil" and the "Fields of Mourning," Ausonius brings readers to the *Aeneid* and the Underworld, a literary and fictional space, but also stays rooted in history in naming the real Virgil (p. 88). Ausonius writes in the past tense, describing how he, "admired this painting" and "translated his dazzled admiration" (p. 88). This brings the reader out of Virgil's literary world and the painting's past, centering us in reality and in the context of reading a poem. The reader is now with Ausonius in his own space that is both temporal, as he reflects on the painting, and ekphrastic, as he uses his words as tools of creation in the poem that follows.

The poem's first lines transport us to the location pictured in the painting: "In heaven's fields, which Virgil's muse describes, / where a myrtle grove conceals distracted lovers" (lines 1–2). Ausonius appropriates the mythical, pagan space of Virgil's *Aeneid* to center the reader in the physical, canvas world of the painting and the more figurative world of epic tradition, one foot in the real and one foot in the unreal. Once again there is movement between space and time: in just two lines, Ausonius has both created a visual image of the painting in readers' minds and a space into which they can now enter. The ekphrasis of *Cupid Crucified* lies in opening imagery such as this, in which Ausonius sets the scene of the painting and, in doing so, sets the "scene" of the poem. The two media thus coexist in a joint space that the reader must interpret and locate themselves in order to make sense of the movement of the poem.

Ausonius brings the reader to the women of the myrtle grove, who "each....bore her mark of her long ago death" (lines 3–4). Wandering the Fields of Mourning, something has called these women "back again to their lost lives" (line 15). A narrative is bestowed upon the painting, transforming it from a static piece of

art to something more fluid. The reader can visualize the aimless wanderings of these tragic women around this grove, lost for eternity. These women are all mythical—until the appearance of “mannish Sappho” at line 23, the midpoint, of the poem. Until this moment, Ausonius has kept the reader in the mythical Underworld and the past moments of each woman’s “long ago death.” But when Sappho is introduced, readers are now grounded in the real, historical past of Sappho. As the only real woman referenced, she is the sole link to reality in the poem, and her appearance at its midpoint signifies her presence as pivotal—Ausonius urges the reader to recognize her as a link back to the real world.

Though the reader is of this real world and thus is grounded by the presence of Sappho, reading *Cupid Crucified* requires one to “exist” in multiple spaces at once, and to bring them together through acts of interpretation. Within the poem itself, the figure of Cupid literalizes this act of bringing together as his entrance unites the women under a common goal: “Between them reckless Cupid on rattling wings / has scattered the shadows of black fog. All of them / knew the boy, and memory returning, / saw their common offender...” (lines 45–48). As their “common offender,” Cupid is a uniting figure for both the women and the painting as a whole (one can imagine that if viewing the painting, Cupid would appear at the center)—and by virtue of this he is also a uniting figure for the poem itself. His presence melds the myth-women’s Underworld and Sappho’s real world, drawing all women, along with the reader, out of their distinct pasts and into a conjoined present.

Time in *Cupid Crucified* is compressed and fluid. Ausonius mixes past and present; he does not treat time as a linear sequence, and in doing so, wields significant creative power—his language is able to manipulate time and conjure worlds. These conjured spaces, like the poem’s temporality, are jumbled, and although Cupid’s appearance is a uniting factor, the reader still exists in a series of disrupted worlds rather than the expected, coherent surface of a painting. For at the end of the poem, it has all been a dream:

And then such visions in nocturnal shapes

upset his sleep, disturbed by empty terror,
 which Cupid, having suffered most of the night—
 the fog of sleep at last dispelled—flees, leaves,
 the ivory gate and flies up to the gods. (lines 100-105)

Cupid's torture was a nightmare; the women were never there and neither, it follows, was the Underworld and the myrtle grove. When the "fog of sleep [is] at last dispelled" readers follow Cupid out of what they now know is a dreamscape—but does Ausonius move readers back to reality? There is no return to the dining room of the preface; rather, the poem ends with Cupid's return to the gods (another unreal space) and the readers are stranded in a moment that no longer exists. The poem's movement has ceased and resulted in a cessation of reality.

This disruption of reality—both that of the reader and that which is contrived by Ausonius' pen—is continued by the "ivory gate" through which Cupid passes at the poem's end (line 104). This is a clear reference to the *Aeneid* as the gate of false dreams—a strong clue that the entirety of *Cupid Crucified*, including the preface, was a dream. The painting itself perhaps was never real; despite Sappho's presence and the physical "setting" of the dining room, readers were never in reality. Ausonius was moving between different levels and spaces of a fabricated dreamscape. This destruction of the poem's entire premise allows for an interpretation of Ausonius' larger objective. In demonstrating that the various spaces given weight and brought to life by his pen are just as easily dispelled, Ausonius highlights both the power and limitations of language.

Language is a tool for both creation and destruction—yet the fact that this creation (the painting, the poem) *is* destroyed implies that in giving verbal life to physical images, in performing acts of ekphrasis, the destructive power of language takes precedent. Like in the *Bissula*, by its conclusion *Cupid Crucified* becomes a statement on failed images. This is part of a larger commentary throughout Ausonius' works read in this class on the Christian tradition and conception of God as the ultimate creator. In using language to move his readers between various spatial and temporal moments in a single poem, Ausonius challenges this

conception, seeming to assert *himself* as the ultimate creator. Yet in dispelling and ejecting the reader from these spaces Ausonius in a way confirms God's power as the sole master of verbal creation. *Cupid Crucified* thus works as an experiment in spatial and temporal movement, all in service of a larger commentary not on where language succeeds—but where it fails.

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Olympian 11, Translation

David J. Sacks

For Hagesidamus the Western Locrian, Winner of the Boys' Boxing Contest

There's a time when mortals for winds have the greatest
Need, and there's another time for heavenly waters,
Raining children of clouds.
But if with hard work one fares well, honey-sung hymns
5 Are a source of future accounts
And a trust that's sworn for virtuous deeds.

And bountiful to the Olympian victors
This great praise is made. And my tongue
Wishes to craft these tales as a guide;
10 But, by Zeus's will, a man prospers just as well with a
learned mind.

Know that now, Arcestratus'
son, Hagesidamus, because of your boxing
Decoration for your golden olive crown
In sweetest songs I will sing,
15 Paying homage to the Western Locrian race,
Where the komos you may join – and this I'll pledge:
O Muses, they are not a guest-hating company
Nor unlearned in virtuous things,
But highly wise and skilled at the spear,
20 To whom you will come; and remember this – no fiery fox
Or loudly-roaring lions could change their firm and innate
ethic

Translator's Note:

Pindar's Olympian 11 contains a fascinating meter and word order; thus, the general goal of this translation is to capture some of the Greek's metrical features along with much of the word order.

Original Greek

ΑΓΗΣΙΔΑΜΩ. ΛΟΚΡΩ. ΕΠΙΖΕΦΥΡΙΩ. ΠΑΙΔΙ ΠΥΚΤΗ.

- ἔστιν ἀνθρώποις ἀνέμων ὅτε πλείστα
 χρῆσις, ἔστιν δ' οὐρανίων ὑδάτων,
 ὀμβρίων παίδων νεφέλας.
 εἰ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ τις εὖ πράσσοι, μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι
 5 ὑστέρων ἀρχὰ λόγων
 τέλλεται καὶ πιστὸν ὄρκιον μεγάλαις ἀρεταῖς.
 ἀφθόνητος δ' αἶνος Ὀλυμπιονίκαις
 οὗτος ἀγκείται. τὰ μὲν ἀμετέρα
 γλώσσα ποιμαίνειν ἐθέλει:
 10 ἐκ θεοῦ δ' ἀνήρ σοφαῖς ἀνθεῖ πραπίδεσσιν ὁμοίως.
 ἴσθι νῦν, Ἀρχεστράτου
 παῖ, τεᾶς, Ἀγησιδάμε, πυγμαχίας ἔνεκεν
 κόσμον ἐπὶ στεφάνῳ χρυσέας ἐλαίας
 ἀδυμελῆ κελαδήσω,
 15 Ζεφυρίων, Λοκρῶν γενεὰν ἀλέγων.
 ἔνθα συγκωμάξατ' ἔγγυάσομαι
 ὕμμιν, ὦ Μοῖσαι, φυγόμενον στρατὸν
 μὴδ' ἀπείρατον καλῶν,
 ἀκρόσοφον δὲ καὶ αἰχματὰν ἀφίξεσθαι. τὸ γὰρ
 20 ἐμφυῆς οὐτ' αἶθων ἀλώπηξ
 οὐτ' ἐρίβρομοι λέοντες διαλλάξαντο ἦθος

Propertius in the Pastoral Landscape: The Resonance of the *Eclogues* in Book One of Propertius' *Elegies*

Kate Van Riper

While Propertius juxtaposes his own elegies with epic poetry in poems such as 1.9, throughout the first book of his *Elegies* he aligns his poetic pursuits with the genre of pastoral poetry by sharing themes or phrases with Virgil's *Eclogues*. Propertius weaves pastoral concepts like the beauty of nature and the idyllic rural space into his own depictions of beauty and love. Propertius references the *Eclogues* subtly in poems 1.2 and 1.8, perhaps in order to scale down the pastoral ideal from glorifying a landscape to glorifying one person: Cynthia. Propertius' engagement with *Eclogue* 10 in 1.8 serves to reaffirm his position as an elegiac author. *Eclogue* 10 inserts the poet Gallus into Virgil's pastoral landscape, and Propertius echoes Gallus' speech from *Eclogue* 10 in his discussion of his own beloved. Thus, he reminds his reader that while he may borrow from the pastoral, he is an elegist in the tradition of Gallus rather than a rustic shepherd. Propertius echoes the *Eclogues* most explicitly in Poem 1.18, where he imagines himself finding an isolated spot to bemoan Cynthia's "fastus" or "disdain" (Prop. 1.18.5) for him. Like Gallus and Tityrus in the *Eclogues*, he tells his troubles to the trees, but instead of finding solace in nature, the landscape around him leaves Propertius feeling more hopeless than before.

Propertius' poem 1.8 alludes to the trope of a humble lover offering himself to his beloved despite his poverty, a theme also expressed in Virgil's Second *Eclogue*. In Lawrence Richardson's text of Propertius' *Elegies*, poem 1.8 is divided into two parts. In lines 1-26, Propertius casts himself as the devoted lover of

Cynthia, who has wandered away from him on a voyage to “gelida Illyria” (Prop. 1.8.2). In the second half of Propertius’ 1.8, lines 27-46, Propertius shifts into rejoicing that his beloved Cynthia has returned. Propertius also celebrates that Cynthia is willing to give up material wealth to be with him, and imagines that his love has appealed to her more than “dulcia regna” or “sweet kingdoms” (Prop. 1.2.32). In the Second Eclogue, a lovelorn shepherd, Corydon, expresses his hope that his beloved Alexis will enjoy the pleasures of a country life with him. Corydon’s love for the “formosum Alexim” or “the beautiful Alexis” (Verg. *Ecl.* 2.1) is unrequited. Corydon remains unsuccessful in his pursuit throughout *Eclogue 2*, unlike Propertius in 1.8. Corydon speaks to Alexis while he “ardebat” or “burns” (Verg. *Ecl.* 2.1) figuratively for his beloved. He begins by calling Alexis cruel, but eventually moves on to a proposal of the lifestyle he could offer him. Corydon wishes that Alexis would come live in the “base fields” with him:

O tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura
atque humilis habitare casas et figere cervos,
haedorumque gregem viridi compellere hibisco!

Oh, would that it was pleasing for you to live in the base fields and humble
huts with me and to pierce the deer,
And to drive the flock of goats with a green hibiscus stick! (Verg. *Ecl.* 2.28-
30)

Corydon recognizes the humility of his dwellings and invites Alexis to share in the pursuits of pastoral life with him. While Propertius does not invoke a pastoral setting in his presentation of the lifestyle he offers Cynthia, he rejoices in Cynthia’s ability to accept his “angusto lecto,” and paints himself as a impoverished lover perhaps akin to Corydon. Propertius writes the second half of 1.8 with a sense of wonder that Cynthia has chosen him:

Illi carus ego et per me carissima Roma
dicitur, et sine me dulcia regna negat.
Illa vel angusto mecum requiescere lecto
et quocumque modo maluit esse mea,
quam sibi dotatae regnum vetus Hippodamiae,
et quas Elis opes apta pararat equis.

I am dear to her and because of me, Rome is said to be most dear to her,

And without me, she would deny that kingdoms would be sweet.
 She preferred to lie with me even in a narrow bed
 And preferred to be mine in whatever way,
 Than to have obtained the ancient kingdom that was Hippodamia's
 dowry
 And the wealth which Elis, fit for horses, obtained... (Prop. 1.8.31-36)

In his commentary, Richardson posits that Propertius' "narrow bed" represents a simple way of life, since it is contrasted with kingdoms and the wealth of the sanctuary of Olympia (Richardson 2006: 169). Propertius is exuberant in his realization that Cynthia *has* chosen this less glamorous life with him and returned from her dalliances abroad. Propertius uses the trope of a humble lover to make Cynthia's return to him all the more gratifying; she has not only chosen him, but chosen him *over* potential wealth.

The danger of the outside world to a beloved also appears in the first half of 1.8, where Propertius explicitly references the *Eclogue* 10. *Eclogue* 10 is Virgil's last poem in the collection and is written about Gallus, whom Propertius also addresses throughout his *Elegies*. Virgil praises Gallus as the ultimate poet of unrequited love and writes a speech in Gallus' voice lamenting that his beloved, Lycoris, has gone astray. Though Apollo tells Gallus that Lycoris has betrayed him and "niues alium perque horrida castra secuta est" or "followed another through snow and rough camps" (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.23), lovestruck Gallus still wishes for her safety:

A, te ne frigora laedant!
 A, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

Ah, may the frosts not strike you!
 Ah, may the jagged ice not cut your tender heels! (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.48-49)

Propertius places himself in an almost identical situation in 1.8, with a similar concern for Cynthia's tender feet. He wonders if another man has driven Cynthia to go on this journey (Prop. 1.8.3) and calls Cynthia "demens" or out of her mind (Prop. 1.8.1) for leaving; yet he attempts to bring her home by expressing his concern for her delicate body amongst the cold:

Tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruinas,
 Tu potes insolitas, Cynthia, ferre nives?

Will you wade through the layered frost with [your] tender feet,
 Will you be able to bear, Cynthia, the unaccustomed snow? (Propertius
 1.8.7-8)

In this passage, Propertius seems to draw a parallel between himself and Gallus. Both lovers proclaim devotion to their absent beloved. Yet in *Eclogue* 10, Gallus (as written by Virgil) speaks of the “insanus amor duri...Martis” or “mad love of hard Mars” (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.44) that afflicts him, implying that Lycoris is not the only one who has been pulled away from their love. While Propertius will imagine himself journeying away from Cynthia in later poems, he is strictly the abandoned lover in 1.8, separate from affairs of warfare or politics. In 1.8, Cynthia alone is “demens” for leaving Propertius; Gallus characterizes himself as influenced by an “insanus” (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.44) passion for a military career, an occupation that runs counter to a lover’s pursuits in the genre of elegy. Despite this difference, the anguish that Gallus expresses in *Eclogue* 10 is much closer to Propertius’ concerns than the shepherd Corydon’s distress over his love Alexis; Gallus’ mention of foreign lands and his participation in the elegiac trope of a deserted lover allow Propertius to co-opt Gallus’ (as written by Virgil) language. Unlike Corydon, Gallus is not a fictional shepherd, but a real poet who Virgil chooses to insert into his pastoral world. Perhaps Propertius sees himself as another poet who might be inserted into the pastoral landscape, yet who will not completely blend in with its usual rustic inhabitants.

Even when Propertius inserts himself into a pastoral situation, he does not find the solace for his heartbreak in nature that the shepherds of the *Eclogues* often receive. In poem 1.18, Propertius places himself in a semi-pastoral, isolated landscape, a “vacuum nemus” or “empty grove” (Prop. 1.18.2). The space around him is no bountiful, gift-bearing land of *Eclogue* 4; instead, it is rocky, wild, and reminds him of his emotional turmoil. Propertius twists the trope of a pastoral lover telling his troubles to the trees; the natural setting around him does not support him in his moment of romantic pain; rather, it exacerbates the loneliness he feels. Conversely, in *Eclogue* 10, the trees are a sympathetic ear to the plight of the spurned lover Gallus: “Illum etiam lauri, etiam fleuere

myricae” (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.13), “about him even the laurels, even the tamarisks wept.” Propertius makes the trees “testes” or “witness” (Prop. 1.18.19) to his love for Cynthia by writing her name in their bark. Unlike Gallus, however, he receives no acknowledgement of his love *from* the landscape; he occupies a natural setting, but is not tied to the land in the way the shepherds of the *Eclogues* are bound to their farms and Arcadia as a whole.

Neither Propertius nor Gallus resolves his romantic problem, but while nature comes to Gallus’ aid, it almost mocks Propertius. Propertius sees the natural landscape he is faced with as a punishment for his mistakes in love, while Gallus envisions himself finding solace in “rupes...lucosque” (Verg. *Ecl.* 10.58), even when he is without Lycoris. Propertius writes that because he was too “timidus” (Prop. 1.18.25) with his lover, he is forced alone into this landscape: “pro quo continui montes et frigida rupes/et datur inculto tramite dura quies” or “on behalf [of this], I retain mountains and freezing rocks, and I am given troubled rest in this overgrown path” (Prop. 1.18.27-28). Propertius does not seem to view the “overgrown” path in the same light as the freely growing ivy from 1.2; rather, it adds to the hostility of his surroundings.

In *Eclogue* 1, the shepherd Tityrus makes the name of his beloved “resound” in the forest: “tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra/formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas” or “you, Tityrus, lazing in the shade, teach the woods to resound with beautiful Amaryllis [the name of Tityrus’ beloved]” (Verg. *Ecl.* 1.4-5). Propertius ends 1.18 with a similar gesture: “sed qualiscumque, resonent mihi ‘Cynthia’ silvae,/nec deserta tuo nomine saxa vacent” or “but of whatever kind you are, let the woods echo to me ‘Cynthia,’ and do not let the abandoned rocks be empty from your name” (Prop. 1.18.31-32). For Propertius, this act seems to be a continuation of his laments, and the word “deserta” makes the landscape feel empty rather than alive and responsive. Tityrus’ resounding calls to the trees in *Eclogue* 1 are a sign of placidity rather than pain; his love for Amaryllis is not troubled, and he exults in both the landscape and his romantic relationship.

In Poem 1.2, Propertius exhorts Cynthia to cast away “artificial” sources of beauty, comparing a woman’s natural form to freely

growing ivy or a freely flowing stream. His comparisons to the inherent splendor of nature recall some of the language in Virgil's *Eclogue 4*. *Eclogue 4* foretells of a "golden age" to come under the consulship of Gaius Asininus Pollio and a baby boy who will help usher in this golden age, likely the "the expected son of Antony and Octavia and heir to Antony's greatness" (Clausen 1994) who was indeed never born, since Octavia had a daughter instead. Virgil envisions a pastoral landscape free from the exile of the farmer Melibeus from his homeland in *Eclogue 1* or strife of any kind; humans will no longer need to labor for their food, and the riches of the earth will be naturally abundant. Virgil uses the word "munuscula" or "little gifts" (Verg. *Ecl.* 2.18) to describe the offerings of the earth to this baby boy, emphasizing the delights of natural features such as "hederas" or "ivy" (Verg. *Ecl.* 4.19) and a "blandos...cunabula flores" or "a cradle in charming flowers" (Verg. *Ecl.* 2.23). Propertius describes real beauty to Cynthia as untended and effortless:

Aspice quos summittat humus formosa colores,
 Ut veniant hederæ sponte sua melius,
 Surgat et in solis formosius arbutus antris,
 Et sciat indociles currere lympha vias.

See what colors the beautiful soil sends up,
 See how the the ivy might come better of its own accord,
 And how the arbutus tree¹ grows more beautifully in lonely caves,
 And how the river knows to run through untaught paths. (Prop. 1.2.9-13)

When Propertius advises Cynthia to emulate the pure beauty found in nature, he chooses forms of nature that are all untouched by human hands. Ivy grows at its own will, the strawberry tree sprouts up in a "lonely" cave far from any people, and the river flows through a path of its own choosing. Similarly, Virgil uses the phrase "sponte sua" to describe a state of ideal nature which needs no human interference:

Nec varios discet mentiri lana colores,
 ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti

1. *Arbutus unedo*, known as the "strawberry tree" because of its small red fruits, though unrelated to the common strawberry plant.

murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto,
sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.

No more will wool learn to imitate different colors,
but the ram himself in the meadows will change fleece,
now to sweet, rosy Tyrian purple, now to golden yellow,
and red dye will clothe the grazing lambs by its own will. (Verg. *Ecl.* 4.42-45)

This flock of sheep no longer needs humans to “teach” (i.e. dye) its wool different colors. The strange image of red dye changing the color of a sheep’s wool of its own accord makes the process of dyeing clothing once again free from human toil. In Propertius 1.2, the beauty of a woman is endangered by too much cultivation, and he warns his beloved against “naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu” (Prop. 1.2.5), “los[ing] the grace of [her] nature by finery that has been bought.” In using some of the imagery of *Eclogue* 4, Propertius may make an analogy between working on one’s own appearance and tilling the fields or dyeing wool. Propertius, like Virgil, suggests that an ideal world would require no human toil—but for Propertius, that toil is the primping of his mistress, rather than a simple farmer’s necessary labor. Indeed, Propertius’ ideal world, or “golden age,” would ultimately only be concerned with the love and beauty of Cynthia. As much as he may purport to live the life of a humble poet, the concerns of Propertius’ elegies are not, of course, practical; the pastoral shepherd’s concerns about farming, land ownership, and nature’s bounties are useful to Propertius only as literary vehicles for his praises, chidings, and laments about Cynthia.

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A Functionalist Approach to Vālmīki's and Candrāvati's *Rāmāyaṇas*

Catherine Nelli

Wolfgang Iser's Theory of Literature and the *Rāmāyaṇa*

In "The Reality of Fiction: A Functionalist Approach to Literature," Wolfgang Iser presents a literary theory that argues for looking at what literature does rather than what it means. He focuses on the pragmatic nature of literary texts and describes reading literature as a linguistic process of communication by which a reader participates in meaning production. Literature is a repertoire of social and historical norms, references to earlier texts, or the entire culture from which the text was created. It takes conventions of reality out of their social contexts and reorganizes them; the unexpected combinations of conventions offer reality up to the reader for scrutiny. Taking these conventions out of their original contexts is, paradoxically, what gives literary texts their pragmatic function because this "combination of different conventions enables us to see precisely what it is that guides us when we do act" (Iser 1975: 14). Through this function, Iser says, literature does one of two things: it either bolsters weaknesses to support a prevailing thought system—as I will argue Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* does—or exposes these weaknesses to challenge the system—as Candrāvati's *Rāmāyaṇa* does. In both cases, literature seeks to help us realize something about reality.

Iser asserts that literature is a repertoire of literary and societal allusions that seeks to communicate with the reader something about their reality by reorganizing social conventions. Through this frame, it becomes clear why a text would be told and retold in hundreds of ways across myriad languages, cultures, regions, religions, and epochs. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is an epic tale of good

triumphing over evil, duty and honor, and compassion and sorrow. “Over the past two-and-a-half millennia, [it] has established itself as a central document of most of the major Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist, and Islamic cultures of South and Southeast Asia” represented in forms including “oral, literary, and folk and artistic representations” (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 75). Furthermore, tellings have been created in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and many vernacular languages of South Asia so that various audiences could access this important text and which “adapted the epic story to the various and changing needs of all segments of the society” (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 90). There are hundreds of different tellings from Vālmīki’s Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*—said to be the first telling—to a women’s *Rāmāyaṇa*, which focuses not on Rāma’s heroism but his wife Sītā’s suffering.

When comparing tellings and their vast variations, “even the structure and sequence of events may be the same, but the style, details, tone, and texture—and therefore the import—may be vastly different” (Ramanujan 1991: 25). This structural and stylistic difference plays a role in the function of each telling. As a result, each telling communicates with its audience differently. As W. L. Smith notes, variations in the Rāma story result from “the addition and multiplication of details, the insertion of matter from other themes, the expansion of subordinate themes, [and] localization and reduplication” (Smith 1988: 73). The story of Rāma serves as a collection of literary and social conventions within the social consciousness which can be altered and reconfigured in different tellings to communicate new meaning to readers.

Tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been constructed by many societies throughout history. It does not belong to the intellectual history of one place, poet, or language. Rather, “it has its own history which lies embedded in the many versions which were woven around the theme at different times and places...each Ramayana text reflects the social location and ideology of those who appropriate it” (Richman 1991: 4). What may have begun as a Sanskrit epic has developed an intellectual history that spans languages and regions. As a result, the variations in these many

tellings change the meaning conveyed to those who learn it. Even within the Sanskrit corpus, the *Rāmkaṭha* (story of Rāma) has been adapted into new mediums. For example, the seventh-century playwright Bhavabhūti adapted Vālmīki’s telling into a play, *Uttararāmacarita*. Through his telling of the Rāma story, Bhavabhūti conveys new meaning surrounding emotion, fate, and the importance of language in both living and art (Tubb 2014: 395–413). *Uttararāmacarita* blurs the boundaries between reality and drama and makes use of dramatic devices that allow the viewer to reorganize the social conventions of their society and participate in constructing meaning. The story of Rāma has also been told in vernacular languages across South Asia. The Tamil telling *Ramavataram* composed by the poet Kamban in the twelfth century was one of the earliest major South Indian adaptations of Vālmīki’s telling. Kamban made changes from his source material and set the story in not in the Northern city of Ayodhya but in Tamil country (Richman 2008: 10).

These many tellings bear meaning not just for their contemporary readers, but for modern readers from different regions and cultures as well, and new tellings of the Rāma story continue to be composed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By examining “The Reality of Fiction: A Functionalist Approach to Literature,” one can see that new tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are produced and passed down because they seek to tell their readers something different about reality. Whether by strengthening existing systems or impairing them, each uses the same foundational story to communicate with the reader in a new way, thereby producing new meaning.

Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*

Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa* is believed to be the oldest surviving version of the story of Rāma. His telling is a roughly 25,000-verse Hindu text composed—first orally—in Sanskrit sometime between 500 BCE and 1 BCE. It contains seven *kāṇḍas* (cantos): Bala,

Ayodhya, Aranya, Kishkindha, Sundara, Yuddha, and Uttara (Sattar 2017: 1). Vālmīki is considered the first poet-sage, and his *Rāmāyaṇa* is considered the first poem (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 76-77). However, each subsequent telling has created a new story with a new context. Therefore, as Ramanujan states, Vālmīki's text is not the original, and other tellings are not retellings (Ramanujan 1991: 46). Though Vālmīki's is not always the narrative carried across languages and traditions (Ramanujan 1991: 25), it is still a large source of poetic inspiration for many tellings and has had a widespread influence across South Asia.

The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* establishes a basic plot of the Rāma story. Lord Viṣṇu manifests as a mortal, Prince Rāma, to kill the demon Rāvaṇa, king of Lanka. Rāvaṇa had obtained a boon preventing his death at the hands of all gods and creatures, save humans. King Daśaratha of Kosala, Rāma's father, puts Rāma's brother Bharata on the throne in lieu of Rāma because of a boon he owes Bharata's mother Kaikeyi. Rāma is exiled to the forest, and his wife Sītā and brother Lakṣmaṇa accompany him. In the forest, Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā and holds her captive in Lanka. Rāma enlists the help of an army of monkeys to build a bridge to Lanka and fight Rāvaṇa. Rāma kills Rāvaṇa and saves Sītā. Before they return to Kosala's capital city of Ayodhyā, Rāma questions Sītā's chastity after being kept in Rāvaṇa's palace for so long. Sītā undergoes a trial by fire. Rāma later banishes her from Ayodhyā. In exile, she births his two twin sons who return to Ayodhyā when they grow older. When Sītā briefly returns, she calls on the earth to swallow her during a second trial by fire and disappears into the ground. Rāma rules Ayodhyā justly for many years.

In the language of Iser's "The Reality of Fiction: A Functionalist Approach to Literature," Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is a text that supports prevailing systems. Iser notes that works that uphold prevailing systems "tend to be of a more trivial nature, as they affirm specific norms with a view to training the reader according to the moral or social code of the day" (Iser 1975: 28). One could argue that the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* falls into this category—that it only seeks to reinforce Hindu moral and social codes by teaching people to "behave like Rāma, never like

Rāvaṇa” (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 87). However, Iser argues that works that uphold prevailing systems are not always trivial, and a closer look at the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* confirms that it is indeed an exception.

The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* does uphold *dharma*¹ and other accepted conventions that uphold the prevailing system, but it presents these conventions in an unfamiliar light in which “adventures that take place are situations which are no longer covered by the social system” of the society (Iser 1975: 28). After an introduction to Vālmīki, the poem begins with an extended account of Rāma’s virtues. By using such descriptors as good, powerful, wise, righteous, and charitable, the text claims that the actions that Rāma undertakes throughout the story align with the meaning of these virtues (Vālmīki 2005: 29-31). In the same respect, when recounting that Queen Kaikeyi collected on her boon from King Daśaratha by requesting that Rāma be exiled, Vālmīki says that “keeping the promise, the hero entered the forest” (Vālmīki trans. Goldman 2005: 33). Throughout the telling, Vālmīki uses the language of heroism and virtue to describe and define Rāma. Yet Rāma also takes questionable actions: most drastically, killing the monkey-king Vālīn and abandoning and exiling Sītā, his pregnant wife.

In the fourth book of Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Kishkindhakāṇḍa*, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa meet Sugrīva, the monkey-king exiled by his elder brother Vālīn, who now sits on the throne. Vālīn had originally been king, but when Sugrīva thought his brother had been killed in battle by a demon he took both Vālīn’s wife and throne. Sugrīva recounts these events to Rāma and claims that he has been wrongfully ousted from his seat of power and his marriage. The two make a pact: if Rāma agrees to kill Vālīn and restore Sugrīva to the throne, Sugrīva will help Rāma save Sītā (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 81). When the monkey Hanumān recounts Rāma’s adventures to Bharata in *Yuddhakāṇḍa*,

1. *Dharma* refers to the individual’s essential nature and duty, and how they ought to live in accordance with the law of nature, which encompasses virtue, action, merit, the doctrines of faith, etc. (Paramahansa 2007: 1).

he includes this deal. Hanumān shares that “once he had slain the gigantic and immensely powerful Vālin... Rāma bestowed upon Sugrīva a kingship of his own. Once Sugrīva had been established in the kingship, he promised Rāma that, together with all the monkeys, he would search for the princess” (Vālmīki trans. Goldman et al. 2009: 481). Honoring this exchange is one of Rāma’s most ethically dubious decisions of the poem. He bargains for help on his mission, and in exchange, he kills a king he does not know in a dispute in which he had no part. To add to the moral ambiguity, one can question which monkey-king is in the right and to what degree. Sugrīva may not have had any claim to the throne, since Vālin did not actually die, and the decision to kill his brother—and his elder brother at that, who had a stronger claim to the throne—raises ethical concerns.

For these reasons, many have justifiably found fault in Rāma’s actions. However, from a functionalist standpoint, this morally ambiguous action has a productive meaning: “The reader’s communication with the text is a dynamic process of self-correction, as [they formulate] significations which [they] must then continually modify...so that meaning gathers meaning in a kind of snowballing process” (Iser 1975: 20). The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* claims at the beginning that Rāma is a hero in possession of myriad virtues, then presents an event that calls that claim into question by seemingly relaying contradictory significations. This forces the reader to consider the action of killing Vālin within the frame of Rāma’s status as a virtuous hero and to reassess the original meaning of these qualities. As Ramanujan notes, “In Vālmīki, Rāma’s character is that not of a god but of a god-man who has to live within the limits of a human form with all its vicissitudes” (Ramanujan 1991: 32). If Rāma is good, wise, and wholly committed to *dharma*, yet takes part in a morally questionable murder, then that could allow a reader to reformulate an understanding that 1) The moral gray space in which life takes place does not deny people the ability to be good or heroic, and 2) That one must still try to act following the principle of *dharma*, even and especially when making morally ambiguous decisions (as Rāma does to fulfill his duty to his wife and his kingdom to the

best of his ability). This is a case in which the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* presents familiar conventions in an unfamiliar light to build upon them, not just to trivially uphold prevailing systems. Rather than merely training readers to follow principles like *dharma*, the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* engages its readers in a productive process of communication by which the reader evaluates and reevaluates what societal conventions mean and how to act on them in real life.

Rāma's treatment of Sītā after he saves her from Rāvaṇa is another example of a morally questionable action that requires the reader to modify the meaning of the text's claims. When Rāma is reunited with Sītā, he rejects her until she proves her fidelity in a trial by fire. Then, when Rāma learns that Ayodhyā's citizens have been gossiping about the Queen's chastity during her captivity in Rāvaṇa's palace, he orders Lakṣmaṇa to abandon his pregnant wife in the forest. Rāma takes these measures not because he suspects his wife of infidelity—he claims after they are reunited by Vālmīki that she always had his full faith and trust—but because he cares about the public's response (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2004: 82-83). When Rāma gives Lakṣmaṇa the order to abandon Sītā, he acknowledges, “in my heart, I knew that illustrious Sita had conducted herself appropriately. So I accepted her and brought her back to Ayodhya. But the terrible things that people are saying break my heart” (Vālmīki, trans. Sattar 2017: 122). Later, Vālmīki returns with Sītā following her banishment and confronts Rāma about his brutality. Rāma counters, “I abandoned her, even though I knew she was innocent, because I feared a scandal. You must forgive me for that” (Vālmīki, trans. Sattar 2017: 183). This forces the reader to redefine the meaning of conventions like *dharma* by fitting Rāma's method of serving his kingdom and upholding their marital values in the face of novel circumstances within the framework of his heroism and virtue that the text maintains. Furthermore, Vālmīki does not regard Sītā's suffering as justifiable. One example of his criticism of Rāma's brutality arises in the sixth book, *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. During Sītā's fire ordeal following her rescue from Rāvaṇa, the gods descend to reveal to Rāma that he is the incarnation of Viṣṇu and to pull Sītā from the flames (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvātī 2013: 101).

They chastise Rāma for questioning Sītā's virtue, saying, "You are the creator of the worlds and the foremost of the wise! How could you let Sītā walk into the fire?" (Vālmīki, trans. Sattar 1996, 636). In Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, "Sītā's captivity, fire-ordeals and banishment, or Rāma's grief at having to abandon his wife, simply add up to the price a leader must pay and illustrate the way a stable monarchy works" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 29). In this way, the text communicates that Rāma is still a hero, "an example to all in his devotion to duty and righteousness, ready to suffer terrible personal loss" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 30). Upholding systems and societal principles like *dharma* through novel situations and morally ambiguous actions makes Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* a non-trivial piece of literature through Iser's functionalist theory of literature. However, it also presents an opportunity to use the same basic story of Rāma as a social convention in itself to criticize the weaknesses of the system it upholds and of which it has become a part. Candrāvati's *Rāmāyaṇa*, by focusing on Sītā's suffering, does just that.

Candrāvati's *Rāmāyaṇa*

Candrāvati was a Bengali woman poet born in Patuari in eastern Bengal at the end of the medieval period, in the late sixteenth century. Her poems were a part of the *pālā* literature that originated in eastern Bengal and focused on women's lifelong suffering. Social conditions during her time were poor due to power struggles and the weakening of the central government. The violation of women was commonplace, and "society's response was to impose strict rules of confinement upon women and inflexible rules for judging their chastity" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 8-9). In coastal areas, abduction by Burmese and Portuguese pirates was ordinary. Hindu women, in particular, suffered twice: first at the hands of their captors, and then by the ostracism of their own communities due to strict rules of caste purity (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013:

10). During this period, there was also a popular trend in eastern *Rāmāyaṇas*. Unlike prior tellings, which were dominated by celebratory tones that glorified Rāma, from the fifteenth century onward many eastern tellings possessed a critical tone—especially about gender issues—and looked at the story not from the viewpoint of the victor but of the victim (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 4).

Candrāvati was well-versed in both Bengali and Sanskrit and would have been familiar with Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as other tellings like that of Bengali poet Kṛttivāsa (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 4). The *Rāmāyaṇa* she chose to compose is not a story of Rāma; on the contrary, it “is entirely concerned with Sītā, [and with] the events surrounding her birth, marriage and exile” (Smith 1988: 42). Candrāvati, unlike Vālmīki, focuses on Sītā’s suffering rather than Rāma’s heroism. Iser notes in his theory that “the social norms and literary allusions that constitute the two basic elements of the repertoire are drawn from two quite different systems: the first from historical thought systems, and the second from past literary reactions to historical problems” (Iser 1975: 31). In Iser’s functionalist terms, Candrāvati uses the basic framework of the Rāma story and retells it in a way that exposes the deficiencies of both the narrative and the reality in which she lived.

Candrāvati’s source is largely the common story derived from Vālmīki, though two large events—Sītā’s birth and her banishment—diverge from Vālmīki’s plot (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 20-21). The story Candrāvati tells is one based on a widely known story but with a different purpose. The literary allusions inherent to a retelling function in the same way as the norms; therefore, “if the function of incorporated norms is to bring out the deficiencies of a prevailing system, the function of literary allusions is to assist in producing an answer to the problems set by these deficiencies” (Iser 1975: 30). The *Rāmāyaṇa*, and particularly Vālmīki’s telling, raised questions for many people about the ethical injustices Sītā endures. At the same time, it upheld and strengthened prevailing gender norms by depicting Sītā as the perfect wife in her complete devotion and

submission to Rāma. Candrāvati critiques the deficiencies of the system upheld in Vālmiki's telling by narrating the story from Sītā's perspective. From this lens, we hear Sītā mourn that she was "born a victim" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 68). Candrāvati laments that the year during which Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa live in the hermitage and Sītā is abducted, "Sītā's calendar is nothing but a tale of sorrow, a tale of twelve months of pain" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 74). Rather than solely lauding Rāma's valor and heroism, the reader comes to empathize with Sītā's plight and question the factors that caused it.

What Candrāvati chooses to omit from her telling is as important to its function as what she does include. Her omissions serve to further criticize the deficiencies of the system upheld in Vālmiki's telling. While the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* is 24,000 verses, Candrāvati's poem is fewer than 700 (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 2-3). She distills the story into a brief account of Sītā's life, omitting many components essential to the function of Vālmiki's telling. One of the most interesting omissions is of the list of Rāma's virtues with which Vālmiki begins. By excluding this, Candrāvati changes the frame through which the reader understands Rāma's actions. Rather than abandoning Sītā in the forest because of a duty to Ayodhyā and its values, Rāma is tricked by his sister Kukuyā (who is absent from the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*) and exiles Sītā in a fit of rage. Candrāvati portrays his mistake as foolish. After Sītā is swallowed by the earth during her fire ordeal to prove her chastity, Hanumān cries, "What calamity have you brought upon us, Rāma, Lord of Raghus, what have you done by listening to the gossip of evil folk! You have lost Sītā forever from your life" (Bose, Priyadarshini Bose, and Candrāvati 2013: 89). Because the text provides no original claim that Rāma is the possessor of endless virtues who is always wise and righteous, the reader undergoes no process of fitting Rāma's cruelty into this frame. Instead, Rāma's actions come across as harsh and perhaps not in accordance with *dharma*, as they are understood in Vālmiki's telling. Though the many miseries of the story are attributed to fate, the story "questions or recodes the signals of external reality in such a way that the reader [them]self

is to find the motives underlying the questions” (Iser 1975: 25). In this case, the focus on Sītā’s suffering, the omissions of Rāma’s endless virtues, and Rāma’s (and Ayodhyā’s) cruel treatment of Sītā allow the reader to realize and criticize how Sītā is treated by Rāma, her society, and the common *Rāmāyaṇa* story.

In addition to criticizing the prevailing *Rāmāyaṇa* narrative and its treatment of Sītā, Candrāvātī’s *Rāmāyaṇa* also serves to critique the prevailing systems of her own reality by rearranging the conventions present in her society. For contemporary readers who shared the same social background, her text detached prevailing norms from their functional context, allowing the readers (or listeners, since her text was often recounted orally) to observe those norms and their effects. They were “thus placed in a position from which [they could] take a fresh look at the forces which guide and orient [them], and which [they] may hitherto have accepted without question” (Iser 1975: 25). Seeing norms like the violation of women and their subsequent mistreatment by society due to strict chastity rules—such as was common in Candrāvātī’s society—detached from their normal context could enable the reader to recognize the limitations and deficiencies of these social conventions. Thus, Candrāvātī’s telling uses the blueprint of the Rāma story to critique prevailing systems in both the story and her society.

The Functionalist Value of Many Tellings

Both Vālmīki’s and Candrāvātī’s tellings reorganize prevailing conventions, though with different functions. Vālmīki upholds norms like *dharma* by presenting the conventions in an unfamiliar light; Candrāvātī critiques norms like the treatment of women by presenting the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in a new way that emphasizes Sita’s suffering. There are hundreds of tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and each uses the basic story of Rāma to communicate a new meaning to the reader. The depth of this meaning is enriched by the literary allusions that build upon each other as tellings

source material from one another and use the tale as a framework through which to build upon or critique norms of reality and previous tellings.

The functional value of these many tellings does not end with contemporary readers. The *Rāmāyaṇa* has permeated high and folk traditions in textual and other art forms for millennia, and it continues to have a profound impact on modern India by inspiring new adaptations and influencing popular culture (Goldman, et al. 2004: 91). Even reading the ancient and medieval tellings of the Rāma story has significant value for the modern reader. Iser writes that “the literary recodification of social and historical norms has a double function: it enables the participants—or contemporary readers—to see what they cannot normally see in the ordinary process of day-to-day living; and it enables the observers—the subsequent generations of readers—to grasp a reality that was never their own” (Iser 1975: 26). For the modern reader, the texts create a reality within themselves through which the reader can reassess the norms and problems with which the texts are concerned. The many tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, like Vālmīki’s and Candrāvati’s, allow contemporary readers to reevaluate the systems upheld both within their societies and by the Rāma story and modern readers to take part in a conversation written between tellings and across languages, religions, regions, and centuries.

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Things of Song: The Role of Women as Arbiters and Architects of *Kleos* in Homer's *Iliad*

Helen Zhou

In Homer's *Iliad*, the quest for *kleos*, the glory that lasts in the songs sung about a hero's great deeds after his death, is the force that spurs the marshaling of Greek fleets to sail to Troy; that influences Achilles to fight, and stand aside, and fight again; and that stays Hector in his final stand to protect his city—the force that drives the heroes to their destinies. But, in viewing *kleos* as something necessarily gained on the battlefield, the preservation of one's great deeds in the oral tradition becomes a privilege afforded only to the men. The influences motivating women's actions in the *Iliad* are less clear, and their plotlines seem to be dominated by passively monitoring the outcome of the fighting and stepping in only when it is time to give their customary lament in the event of a hero's death (3.191-244, 699-776). As is best exemplified through Briseis and Helen, Homeric women are most clearly relegated to a role of serving as an embodiment of *kleos* themselves, no different from any other spoil of war. However, this dichotomy of men as the subjects of *kleos* and women as objects of *kleos* is not entirely valid. Women take on an equally present position as the creators of heroes' *kleos*, through which all classes and groups of women may express their thoughts and exert some measure of control, if not over the events of the Trojan War, then over the narratives of history.

The primary means through which the women of the *Iliad* craft *kleos* are through the funeral laments they traditionally deliver at the graveside of a fallen hero. We see the first instance of such a lament when Briseis mourns Patroclus in book nineteen. In

opening with “Patroklos, far most pleasing to my heart in its sorrows,” Briseis communicates that Patroclus served as a comfort to Briseis after her capture, separate in her mind from Achilles and the Greeks who took her prisoner (19.287). She then goes on not to enumerate Patroclus’s achievements in war, as one would expect for a hero who killed Sarpedon and nearly stormed the walls of Troy, but, instead, to recount her own personal losses in the war. She then returns to the topic of Patroclus only when she discusses his plan to ensure her security after the war by marrying her to Achilles, a plan that can no longer come into fruition now that Patroclus is dead.

Therefore, although Briseis is genuinely mourning Patroclus, she simultaneously mourns her own future as well. Briseis concludes her lament with what is clearly the virtue of Patroclus’s that she finds most significant—that he was “kind always” (19.300). In a time when Briseis was treated as a commodity, a mere pawn in the power struggle between Agamemnon and Achilles, Patroclus gave Briseis the opportunity to regain her former status by becoming Achilles’s wife, not merely his prize. In Briseis’s eyes, this is what makes Patroclus worthy of *kleos*. Thus, in her emphasis of his kindness, a virtue rarely ascribed to any other hero, Briseis infuses Patroclus’s legacy with her own humane perception of him rather than the traditional militaristic view of heroism. Ultimately, she is successful—to readers and listeners of the *Iliad*, a form of *kleos* in and of itself, Patroclus’ compassion and regard for the lives of the less fortunate is arguably the trait we find most remarkable about him.

Alongside Briseis during her lament are seven women from Lesbos, given to Achilles by Agamemnon after the resolution of their quarrel. They are described following Briseis’s speech: “the women sorrowed around her / grieving openly for Patroklos, but for her own sorrows / each” (19.301-303). It is important to note that, unlike Briseis, these women were not captives initially apportioned to Achilles, but instead Agamemnon. Thus, their laments further emphasize the personal undertones present within female interpretations of *kleos*. Though the women have no personal connection with either Patroclus or Achilles, they

nevertheless are able to produce the customary lament by considering “[their] own sorrows” in the outward appearance of mourning for Patroclus. In this scene, Homer illustrates how the women make the most of their role in transmitting *kleos*—by using the death of Patroclus as a glorified excuse and mourning him “openly,” the women can include their own suppressed struggles in his *kleos* and therefore memorialize them in the oral tradition. The captive women we hear about in the *Iliad* are the ones who are treated with the greatest degree of objectification. They are useful to the heroes for transactional purposes only, and yet they are able to use the funeral laments as an opportunity to transcend this passive role and make their voices heard.

The concept of *kleos* as a means for female self-expression is not limited to the captive women—Achilles’s mother Thetis, a goddess, also takes on a similar role. Even though Thetis is immortal and therefore possesses far greater power than the women already discussed, she is nevertheless still a minor goddess largely controlled by more powerful male deities, chiefly Zeus. Thetis’s situation is first addressed during her lament over Patroclus’s body in book eighteen, accompanied by her fellow Nereids. She recognizes that Patroclus’s death and Achilles impending slaughter of Hector signal Achilles’s own death, consequently giving a prospective lament for Achilles’s *kleos*:

Ah me, my sorrow, the bitterness in this best of child-bearing,
 since I gave birth to a son who was without fault and powerful,
 conspicuous among heroes....
 I shall never again receive him
 won home again to his country and into the house of Peleus. (18.54-
 60)

Notably, Thetis makes no mention of Patroclus altogether, and it is clear Achilles’s imminent death weighs far more heavily on her mind than Patroclus’s current state. From Thetis’s point of view, Patroclus is only significant in that his death heralds Achilles’s death.

While the underlying personal significance of Thetis’s lament is not immediately apparent in its first iteration, delivered at Patroclus’s side, she uses much of the same language when

persuading Hephaestus to make armor for Achilles while revealing more of her personal troubles. She states:

Hephaistos, is there among all the goddesses on Olympos
 one who in her heart has endured so many grim sorrows
 as the griefs Zeus, son of Kronos, has given me beyond others?
 Of all the other sisters of the sea he gave me to a mortal,
 to Peleus, Aiakos' son, and I had to endure mortal marriage
 though much against my will. And now he, broken by mournful
 old age, lies away in his halls. Yet I have other troubles.
 For since he has given me a son to bear and to raise up
 conspicuous among heroes. (18.429-437)

The rest of Thetis's speech is nearly identical to the first version, demonstrating that although her personal "grim sorrows" and "griefs" initially went unsaid, they greatly influenced the content of both repetitions of her lament. As shown, Thetis bemoans Achilles's mortality, but also, by extension, her own frustration at being forced to carry a mortal man's child rather than to birth an immortal son by Zeus, a decision imposed upon her by Zeus himself. She enumerates further "griefs" caused by Zeus, explicitly lamenting the "mortal marriage" that she had to "endure... much against [her] will," rather than addressing the more relevant topic of Patroclus's death and Achilles's fate.

In a seemingly contradictory turn, Thetis seems to include Achilles among her "troubles," as the son that "he" gave her "to bear and to raise up conspicuous among heroes." Two things about this statement are not immediately clear, but ultimately indicate the influences behind Thetis's contribution to Achilles's *kleos*. First, the ambiguous "he" in this statement could refer to both Zeus and Peleus—Zeus being the reason why Thetis was forced to marry Peleus and bear a mortal child, and Peleus being the father of said mortal child. Homer's ambiguity here ultimately serves his larger purpose, and shows that even powerful, immortal Thetis has her agency taken away by men, mortal and immortal alike. Furthermore, Thetis bemoans the fact her son is "conspicuous among heroes," something that would be expected to warrant pride, not grief. However, this makes sense when considering that Zeus very nearly was the father of Thetis's son. Even though

Achilles has achieved distinction among the very best of mortal men, Achilles is still just a short-lived hero, when he could have been a god. The only consolation that Thetis has, given these circumstances, is that Achilles's *kleos* can live on while Achilles the mortal man cannot.

Thetis had previously stated in her initial lament that “though I go to [Achilles] I can do nothing to help him,” expressing her frustrating inability to prolong her son's life or ease his pain (18.62). However, it becomes apparent in her appeal to Hephaestus that she is in fact empowered to prolong her son's legacy, if not his life. With her premature lament for Achilles, Thetis takes on the feminine role as the composer of *kleos* to demonstrate to Hephaestus that Achilles is worthy of said *kleos*. Ultimately, this benefits both Achilles and Thetis herself, allowing her to incorporate her own emotions while acting as an advocate for her son's legacy. By emphasizing what Achilles means to her, Thetis crafts a more effective narrative that transcends the traditional martial connotation of glory and instead humanizes Achilles through a mother's perspective.

Interestingly, it is not just women that are able to transmit *kleos*; in fact, Homer shows men who temporarily adopt a more feminine role as being equally capable of doing so. For example, when Patroclus dons Achilles's armor to frighten off the Trojans, Achilles is left waiting for his companion at his tent, taking on the position of a wife powerlessly awaiting her husband's return from battle. When Patroclus fails to return alive, it is Achilles alone of the Greek men who performs the rituals associated with the death of a hero—Achilles and his captive handmaidens are all said to “beat their breasts with their hands” (18.31). Achilles later states to Patroclus's body that “beside you women of Troy and deep-girdled Dardanian women / shall sorrow for you night and day and shed tears for you” (18.339-341). Achilles only mentions the captive women, whose duty is to lament and weep over the corpse, yet Achilles too defiles himself as a mourning woman might and will “shed tears for [Patroclus]” in a similar fashion. Therefore, Achilles aligns himself with the women, and moreover affiliates

himself with the Trojan enemy, showing that Achilles thinks he is just as guilty as the Trojans in sending Patroclus to his death.

Achilles's sense of personal culpability for Patroclus's death is elucidated by his earlier speech to his mother:

I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion
when he was killed. And now, far away from the land of his fathers,
he has perished, and lacked my fighting strength to defend him.
Now, since I am not going back to the beloved land of my fathers,
since I was no light of safety to Patroklos, nor to my other
companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious
Hektor,
but sit here beside my ships, a useless weight on the good land.
(18.98-104)

Achilles seems to fixate on his failure to protect Patroclus in battle, mentioning that he did not “stand by [his] companion” and that he was “no light of safety to Patroklos” and “a useless weight.” Although Achilles is clearly beginning Patroclus's *kleos* by mentioning Patroclus's final fight against Hector, he does not present this encounter in terms of bravery or war, but, instead, through the lens of Achilles's own regret. Because Patroclus died masquerading as Achilles to protect Achilles's reputation, and by extension, his *kleos*, Achilles doubly laments his role as a bystander. Thus, we once again see the pattern of a character in a feminine role bemoaning their lack of agency in their lament for a fallen hero. However, by delivering such a lament, Achilles is able to contribute to Patroclus's eternal *kleos*, providing a final protection for his companion against the obscurity of time. By adopting a passive, “feminine” role in the events leading up to Patroclus's death, Achilles forsakes his role as Patroclus's protector in life, yet is able to use the uniquely feminine nature of lamentation to preserve Patroclus's legacy, protecting him in death.

This pattern of women as the creators of *kleos* is also applicable to the Trojans, as evidenced by the most complete and archetypal scene of ritual lamentation in the *Iliad*, that of the Trojan women during the burial of Hector in the final book. Three women act as the initiators of Hector's *kleos*—his widow, Andromache; his mother, Queen Hecuba; and Helen. Homer sets the scene by

describing that “[the Trojans] seated beside [Hector’s body] the singers / who were to lead the melody in the dirge, and the singers / chanted the song of sorrow, and the women were mourning beside them” (24.720-722). Because a hero’s *kleos* becomes the oral history passed on by bards, the introduction of the mourners as “singers,” makes it explicitly clear that the content of the women’s laments will ultimately form the content of Hector’s *kleos*—his “song of sorrow.”

Indeed, we see Andromache start the laments for Hector, saying, “my husband, you were lost young from life, and have left me / a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby / who was born to you and me, the unhappy” (24.725-727). Therefore, as is typical in the *Iliad*, Andromache uses her lament to describe what Hector meant to her personally, and to therefore mourn her losses alongside his. Andromache knows that after Troy falls, she must “go away in the hollow [Greek] ships” and Astyanax too will be forced into slavery, or worse, “some Achaian / will take [him] by hand and hurl [him] from the tower into horrible / death” (24.731, 734-736). In a similar sentiment as she had expressed earlier in book six, Andromache laments not only the loss of her husband, but also the resulting losses of her city, her son, and her freedom, portraying Hector in his *kleos* as the single bastion of all of Troy rather than a mere warrior (6.405-439). In nearly the same model as Andromache, Hecuba then mourns for Hector as a grieving mother, saying that he “of all my sons [was] the dearest by far to my spirit” (24.748). Homer thus establishes a pattern in which women, upon the death of men who served as their supporters, experience a loss of autonomy that is expressible only through their laments for the men.

Finally, it is Helen’s turn to “[lead] the song of sorrow” (24.761). In the final passage of extended dialogue in the *Iliad*, Helen comments on the virtues of Hector that are the most noteworthy to her and the most applicable to her relationship with Hector, not the ones traditionally associated with *kleos*. Like Andromache, Helen casts Hector as a defender of the weak, as he would “restrain [the Trojan nobles] / by [his] own gentleness of heart and [his] gentle words” when they insulted her (24.771-772).

She mentions Hector defending her with kind deeds, rather than in battle, presenting a nuanced twist on the traditional concept of *kleos*. Paralleling Briseis's lament for Patroclus, Helen says, "I mourn for you [Hector] in sorrow of heart and mourn myself also / and my ill luck. There was no other in all the wide Troad / who was kind to me, and my friend; all others shrank when they saw me" (24.773-775). Helen also describes Hector as having the rare quality of kindness, distinguishing him among the Trojans just as Patroclus's kindness did among the Greeks. Moreover, Helen mourns for herself alongside Hector, in that she has lost her friend—like Briseis upon Patroclus's death and Andromache upon Hector's death, Helen is left alone to face her uncertain future without Hector as her advocate.

Helen's case is unique in that, of all the women in the *Iliad*, she seems to be the most aware of the significance of the Trojan War and the part the characters play in it as part of the overarching *kleos*, the oral tradition. In her very first appearance in book three of the *Iliad*, her role as a creator of *kleos* is made apparent. Although she is not delivering a funeral lament, she is performing another typically feminine duty, weaving a "great web, / a red folding robe, and working into it the numerous struggles / of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armored Achaians, / struggles that they endured for her sake at the hands of the war god" (3.125-128). Here, Helen demonstrates remarkable self-awareness, ascribing the blame for the tragedies of the Trojan War onto herself, and alludes to her current situation. As a virtual prisoner within the walls of Troy, the most valuable object of *kleos* in Paris's possession, Helen cannot simply return to Menelaus and end the war. Instead, she is forced to watch as the armies slaughter each other, with her weaving and later lamenting as the only way through which she can take responsibility for her shame. Both of these avenues are acts of creation that enable Helen to translate the events and heroes of the Trojan War into a lasting form, one through a visual medium and one through an oral medium. Helen has already set the war into motion by eloping with Paris—this mistake she cannot change, but she is able to justify the war, in a

sense, by ensuring that the heroes will attain the *kleos* they deserve and be immortalized through the oral tradition.

Moreover, Helen is notably mindful of how *kleos* will influence the perception of the major players of the Trojan War, expressing this to none other than Hector:

Since it is on your heart beyond all that the hard work has fallen
for the sake of dishonored me and the blind act of Alexandros,
us two, on whom Zeus set a vile destiny, so that hereafter
we shall be made into things of song for the men of the future. (6.355-
358)

While Helen is convinced that she is destined to be remembered for her mistakes, sentencing her to a “vile destiny” alongside Paris, she believes that Hector will be immortalized as the defender of Troy, who shouldered the “hard work” of protecting his people. Helen’s prediction of their legacies turns out to be remarkably accurate, as a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy—because Helen takes on the role of arbiter of Hector’s *kleos*, she can ensure that Hector gets the legacy that she believes he deserves. This recontextualizes the scene of Helen weaving, paralleling her hand in creating *kleos* to that of the Fates, who are also able to determine and spin heroes’ destinies from thread. Helen’s depiction of Hector in her lament as a kindhearted protector is therefore deliberate—no matter what Helen says about Hector’s fighting ability, he will be remembered as the greatest among the Trojans, but in choosing to detail his empathy and gentleness, even toward those whom he had cause to hate, she ensures that these traits make their way into his *kleos* as well. By concluding with her remarks, the *Iliad* makes a final impression on its readers and listeners, conveying the timeless significance of *kleos* and the part that women play in it.

Homer portrays the women of the *Iliad* as overcoming the lack of power they experience in their lives by assuming the position of lamenter of heroes and creator of *kleos*. In doing so, women are able to achieve two things that they typically do not have the power to achieve: to lament their own hardships, particularly their lack of agency, alongside the fallen men, and to be the judges of legacies extending far beyond their lifetime. Although *kleos*, and

the *Iliad* itself, is at its surface an explicit representation of the legacy of its male heroes, it carries an implicit record of the female legacy as well, encompassing captive women and nobles, mortals and goddesses, and Greeks and Trojans.

All of these women convey the stories of the heroes in terms of their own relationships with them, which frequently are the ties of family but just as often are the connections between the powerless and their supporters. It is as if women reward the decency and humanity of those who speak for them in life by becoming their advocates in death, composing the stories that will be told about the heroes in perpetuity. Kindness, compassion, familial relationships, and love—these are the attributes that ultimately make their way into a hero's *kleos* alongside their duty, patriotism, and martial ability. Although a hero's quest for glory is reduced to the single-minded pursuit of success in war and honor in death, Homer reveals that this is not the only aspect of a hero's life that lasts in perpetuity. The *Iliad*, itself an expansive form of *kleos*, is ultimately an epic born from the actions of men and the words of women, leaving behind a profoundly human, three-dimensional portrait of its heroes for posterity.

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Geryon Variations

Amelia Anahid Wyckoff

The poet Stesichoros was from an island far from the mainland. He was born in the 7th century BCE, and spent much of his life in Himera on the northern coast of Sicily, earning him the nickname “the Himeræan.” His work made up 26 books, but we now know only 13 titles of his poetry. He wrote choral poetry, and it’s possible that he sang his songs, too. He often references Homer throughout his epic tales in lyric verse about the Trojan War, the Argonauts, and one called the *Geryoneis* about a monster in a little city on another small island. That monster was Geryon, a three-headed and three-bodied creature who tended red cattle in Erytheia in the Western Mediterranean. If you have heard of Geryon before reading this introduction, you have probably heard of his death at the hands (or club) of Herakles. Stesichoros tells a very different story, detailing Geryon’s deeply emotional interior self and the lives of his mother, his cowkeeper, Eurytion, and his double-headed dog, Orthus. Still, the largest fragment of text we have is about the battle between the monster and Herakles, and how Geryon’s dead body drooped *like a poppy*. He is a monster defined by his demise.

I became obsessed with Geryon’s story when I read Anne Carson’s novel *Autobiography of Red*. Inspired by Stesichoros, her poetry is deeply concerned with fragmentation and what it does to the relationship between words. I did not look back on the book until I began writing this introduction, and I discovered it was more of a translation than I first thought. She introduces, “Some of his principal fragments are below,” and when I compared the poems to the Greek, I realized it was the imagery of Stesichoros’s *Geryoneis*, but jumbled and twisted. Through its vivid imagery, it tells the same story as the original poem.

Anne Carson's introductory translation to her book is pushed together, saturated with the most poignant images of the Greek fragments. The words feel like they are stuck together by some force outside of the author, much like a fragment which has been composed by history. As I compare them now, I realize my translation is the opposite: it preserves, above all, distance. Distance between words, between characters, between the story and the reader. I chose to emphasize what has been lost instead of what has remained.

Although I augmented the text and reworked it in places, I left Stesichoros's fragments as untouched as possible. First, it seems necessary to explain why I am so attached to these fragments. I was first introduced to fragmented poetry through Sappho, who coincidentally lived synchronously with Stesichoros. Before I knew parts of the poetry had been lost, her words resonated together in a specific way filled with urgent emotion. Take, for example, Sappho's Fragment 31:

He seems equal to the gods
That man, who opposes you
Molds to you, angel
Singing, he obeys

Your lilting laughter, oh – it's true –
My heart throbs within,
As I look at you, there's no
Sound left in me

My own tongue shivers, licks
Of flame penetrate my layers,
At once, I am blind, buzz-
ing fills my ears

Sweat drips down me, tremors
Seize my whole, I'm pale as
Grass, inches closer to death
Than to myself.

But I'd do it all
Again, because...¹

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

The poem ends with that ambiguous “But I’d do it all/Again, because...” The ending is apt: Sappho describes such visceral pain that the reader wonders if being in love is worth the suffering. If the reader didn’t know the history behind the text, they might assume that Sappho didn’t know why she’d do it all again, that something about love was inexplicable. Maybe I’m a romantic, but fragments remind me of destiny; it feels as if this was what they were meant to say. What a text loses can add so much.

I found that was true in Stesichoros’s *Geryoneis*. There was a sense of possibility at play in the sparser fragments. The absence of a few words suggested an intangible presence. Words that weren’t supposed to be adjacent end up being read together, thoughts are cut off, two characters’ narratives run together. The words stick together in ways that they aren’t supposed to, and I wanted to let those resonances be.

I felt this possibility mirrored Geryon’s story. Herakles erased Geryon and his dog and stole his red cattle, which was the monster’s life’s work. In her paper, “Sympathizing with the Monster: Making Sense of Colonization in Stesichoros’s *Geryoneis*,” Christina Franzen argues that Herakles’ attack is an act of colonization that mirrors the colonization Stesichoros experienced in his own life. As a “Himeraean,” or modern-day Sicilian, Stesichoros lived in a Greek colony. Franzen writes, “Geryon, in the Herakles myth, represents a monster of ethnicity, a localization of the fears of the ‘other’ to Greek primacy... [in the *Geryoneis*] we hear Geryon speak, though usually, monsters lack a voice entirely” (Franzen 2009: 63). Both Stesichoros and Geryon’s voices have been lost to time. Emphasizing the fragmented nature of the text illuminates the violence of the colonizer at the heart of this poem.

The fragmentary nature of the text is visible on the pages of this translation. In the Loeb text, small lacunae within fragments are marked by ellipses. Brackets mar the text where words have been inferred from putting the fragments together like puzzle pieces. There are places where words have been added by scholars to attempt to insert some sense into the lost story; these are notated, and I did not translate them. I chose to represent the distance

between language by inserting blank space between the words. The Loeb text looks like a mathematical equation, and I wanted my translation to look like poetry. I translated ellipses into line breaks, and did my best to show the zig-zag pattern that appears when you stack all the lines on top of each other. When there are larger spaces between lines on the same papyrus (where text is indecipherable or there is a hole in the paper), I hit the enter key a few more times. For example, in “War” 4, which is the longest extant section of Stesichoros’s poetry, scholars have deduced that there is a gap of thirteen lines. I hit enter thirteen times.

I chose not to include brackets, ellipses, or dashes to mark the forgotten words and lines. These fragments are poems in their own right; they deserve to stand alone on a page. I wanted to translate a fragmentary text into a collection of complete poems, while still allowing the words to breathe like they have for the past few thousand years. So, I preserved the distance but erased the marks of the destruction that ravaged these papyri. I struggled to find that balance, but my hope is that these poems resonate, and are whole.

I have included other voices, some which quote Stesichoros and some which give their own account of the myth, for two reasons. First, I want you to know Geryon, his family, and his island. Herakles wants to kill Geryon for his cattle, the product of his fertile lands. Throughout the poem, Geryon also defines himself in relation to his cows and his land. His island is important to him, and Stesichoros, also an islander, emphasized this. In the first chapter, “Home,” you’ll read accounts from Hesiod, Strabo (who quotes Stesichoros), and Apollodorus, as well as the poet himself. To mark different authors’ voices, I have indented those segments, italicized them, and cited them. Any text that is flush against the left side of the page is from Stesichoros, even if he is being quoted by another author. Quotations are used to develop and augment a fragmented author’s body of work, so I have included them here as Stesichoros’s words. My hope is that you will learn to love the island and the characters through this amalgamation of writers. I ended the narrative section with “But This Amazed Me,” a quote from Pausanias describing the body of Geryon. This chapter tells how Geryon’s island, cattle, and body fared after the murder. In

most writings of the myth, Geryon's story ends when Herakles kills him, and he disappears from history. His famed cattle are gone, and with them, his island's notoriety. I used text from later authors to counteract his erasure by depicting him in the afterlife.

The second reason I have included other authors is to translate the way Geryon's story has been passed down through time into this translation. As I mentioned, we only know Geryon's story through other accounts. The *Geryoneis* is the only work that focuses on the monster, but it too has been partially lost. I want the reader to experience a story that is only told through a collection of voices, and to feel the difference between Stesichoros's lyric, intimate voice and the grander mythological and historical narratives of other authors. This contrast highlights the beauty of the *Geryoneis*, and mirrors my experience of reading the text. The Loeb text is a book of compiled fragments from Stesichoros, and I had to flip through and work out which parts belonged to whom and where they came from. This translation, then, reflects my own reading experience, and the contemporary reality of reading Stesichoros's work.

I have presented the fragments to you in the order they appear in the text, with a few exceptions. The largest disruptions to the original order (or, at least, what scholars believe the original order to be) are the excerpts from other works, which I have described above, and "Herakles Prepares." I chose to add "Herakles Prepares" in order to introduce the antagonist of the story before the pivotal battle. I reordered a few other fragments to accommodate this addition. "War 2" was originally after "Home 7," because it seemed more appropriate for Geryon's mother to plead him not to fight after we meet his adversary. "Herakles Prepares 2" is included after "War 7" in the Loeb text, but is from the second papyrus, *Scholars at Dinner*. Herakles returns from his fight with Geryon in the same way he first traveled there, so I chose to use this fragment describing his journey back to contextualize quest. There is only one other instance where I reordered the fragments: "War 1" was originally after "War 3." I moved the gods' discussion of Geryon's fate to the beginning of the chapter to foreshadow Geryon's death, making the events of

the battle clearer. Although I want to preserve the fragmentary nature of this text, I also want there to be a clear narrative.

While writing this introduction, I kept imagining what some classicists would think of this translation: how it isn't "faithful." I have spent the semester finding ways to articulate why I disagree with such patriarchal translation practices, and yet I find myself justifying and qualifying this work. My translation is small. It is located in the body, like Galvin describes, and perhaps only the body. These resonances are individual and particular, and they speak to the poetry I have found between Stesichoros's lines. Although I waver in my convictions, I do believe in the somatic, in intimacy and interiority as sources of creation. Small, individual, bodily things are just as worthy of creation as those which spark fame, carrying a text forward in its "messianic" growth towards "true language" (Benjamin 1927: 256-257). Such interior works have resonated with me: early in my study of Classics, I gravitated to Sappho and was repulsed by Plato. Emotion is the worthiest subject, and it is the truest source of this translation. Yes, I had a method, but I wanted to write the beautiful things I had read above all.

Perhaps my translation is nothing but tingles in my thighs and pangs in my heart, a small quotidian act of creation, like the creation we each enact whenever we speak. I have written tiny, breakable poems that speak of things I've done: fallen stupidly in love, adored my pets, rushed into something I was not prepared for. Like the fragments I have translated, they are only tenuously held together by strings of feeling. They may fall apart through time and begin to mean nothing. Maybe they already mean nothing to you. They are fragile, like little shards of glass. Please, step on them so they shatter, glue them back together, vacuum them away, place them on a shelf where they will collect dust. Write in the words that once were there or cross out ones you wish were not. Translate them into something of your own; that is why I made them.

I ended my translation with Homeric Hymn #30 that reminded me of Geryon and his cattle. I meant this to be a final song to

Geryon and Stesichoros and their beautiful islands, but I also chose this hymn for selfish reasons. The final lines feel apt. They read:

Rejoice, Mother of Gods, Wife of Sparkling Ouranos,
Willfully bestow a heartfelt life to this swelling song:
No matter what, I will be reminded of you, and
Another song.

The *Geryoneis* reminded me of many other songs. I hope this translation reminds you of songs of your own.

GERYONEIS

Narrative

Home

1.

*That maiden of the ocean,
named Callirrhoe,
mixed with strong willed Chrysoar
in the love of gold-rich Aphrodite.
She birthed a child,
mightier than all mortals,
Geryon.
Herakles crushed him with his fist
to get his shambling cattle
in Erytheia, surrounded by the sea. (Hesiod Theogony 979-
983)*

2.

*Those old writers called the Baetis Tartessus, and
also Gadeara, and the Islands near to it Erytheia.
Inferring from what he knew of Geryon's cattle-
leaders, Stesichoros said (Strabo Geography 3.2.11)*

that the monster was born almost on the other side of gleaming
Erytheia in

Tartessus

Beside the limitless root-silver of your river, flowing from deep
inside hidden
stones.

3.

For his tenth labor, Herakles was entrusted with acquiring Geryon's cattle from Erytheia, an island set near the ocean, now called Gadeira. Geryon, the son of Chrysoar and Callirrhoe (daughter of the Ocean), used to inhabit this same island. His natural body was made up of three men born in one, joined through his stomach, but cleaved into three from his sides and thighs. He had red cattle, of which Eurytion was the cowkeeper and Orthus, the dualheaded dog, was the guard. (Apollodorus of Athens Librar, 2.5.10)

4.

Through the waves
Of the deep salt sea
They arrived at the over-beautiful island
Of the gods,
There the Hesperides have homes, all gold

Any and
Of flower buds
Wide

5.

Head
A quiver

Oh, if ever

A man
Once.

6.
The heart
But – becoming

But

Oh friend – your mother Callirrhoe
Dear to Ares
And Chrysaor

7.

With his hands
Answering him, ever-the-despot son
Of Chrysaor and Callirrhoe,
Deathless
He said

“Do not bring up death, it chills me.
Don’t greet my manly heart with things you don’t care
about.

If I am born deathless and ageless
So that I may partake of life in Olympus,
Then it is better to endure these trials
And

It’s clear that my cattle were ravaged and drawn far from
our stalls,

Oh my friend, if it is necessary to reach loathed old age,
To live far off from the blessed gods among those
Who live but a day,
Now it is much nobler for me to suffer what is destined
Than to flee from death and shower my dear children

Herakles Prepares

1.

While journeying through Europe to get Geryon's cattle, Herakles killed many wild animals. He arrived in Libya, and kept going into Tartessus. There, he stood up two stelas on the border as signs of his quest, across from each other. He was warmed by the sun on this journey, and he stretched his ship's bow to Zeus, who admired his courage and gave him a golden cup, in which he crossed over the ocean. (Apollodorus of Athens, Library, 2.5.10)

2.

The Sun

entered down

Into the golden cup, might he, having driven right through the depths of the holy dark night to his father,

the bedfellow he wedded,

murky

the children dear to him.

He stepped with a foot to the grove
Shaded by laurels,

Son of Zeus.

3.

Zeus: might... honor... all he has achieved... all... unjust... Son of Chronus... King.

4. Herakles took the thrice filled cup and drank, holding it to his lips.

War

1.

And not a single person waited beside Zeus, king over all
But eventually bright-eyed Athena spoke wisely to her strong
willed
Uncle, who rode horses:
“Join us, keep remembering what

You don't want

Geryon from death

2.

Guarded
He left, and she said
“Power wins
Hate white
LISTEN CHILD, be safe
By these

My son

He sets great
Not
Death

But by

Against

I'm sick

My hand

3.

“I am a wretched woman
Full of wrath in my childbearing
Unceasing in the suffering
 Which infects me
But I beg you, on my knees
Geryon
 If ever I held one of my breasts to you
 Raw, beside your dear mother
feast.”

She opened her sweet-smelling robe

She fled

 Wailing

4.

Two

In Geryon’s mind he deciphered:
It showed to be much more profitable to fight
Hidden against the ruling man,
Lying prone, he sprung upon him

Bitter-married in his destruction

And he held his shield over his sternum
But Herakles struck his temple
 With a stone
At once with a
 Great shrilling
His helmet with horsehair
Fell from his head
It stayed on the ground,

An offering.

Bringing an end of hateful death
Holding his fate on its head,
Put to flight
 Blood and
 Bile-ful

Death leapt up
With the great pain of slick-necked Hydra
 Who fells men
In silence Herakles thrust into Geryon's brow,
Like Zeus,
Through his flesh and bones it cut,
 Ordained,
The arrow stood erect on the wall of his skull,
It defiled his breastplate and gore-matted limbs
With heaving, pulsating blood
And twisted
 Geryon's neck
 At an angle,

Drooping like a poppy
 Which sheds its petals

Dishonoring its delicate body

5.

The dog saw Herakles and rushed at him; the hero stopped him with his club, and he killed the cowkeeper, who came to help the dog. But the man who tended Hades' cattle saw him and told Geryon what had happened. And Geryon met Herakles beside the river, and as the hero took his cattle, Geryon rushed to unite in battle, and Herakles killed him. (Apollodorus of Athens, Library, 2.5.10)

6.

The second one

His mountain bled.

7.

Unjust

He gave
From whence
The wine
With sharp

8.

Stream
Rushing
Having

He cowered on the land
Whose head

9.

Speakable and not speakable
Untoiling and un
The troublesome din of battle

Murders of men

Piercing
Of horses

But This Amazed Me:

1.

Herakles put the cattle into his golden cup, sailed to Tartessus, and returned the goblet to the Sun again. (Apollodorus of Athens Library 2.5.10)

2.

*“Law is the
king
of all gods and men:
It leads with a supreme hand
To justify the greatest violence
I infer the labors of Herakles
since – unpurchased (Pindar Fragment 169)–“*

3.

Pindar says that Herakles took Geryon’s cattle neither as a purchase nor as a gift received. He assumed this was his natural right, that cattle (and all other belongings) are all for those better and stronger than the worse off and weaker. (Plato Gorgias 484b)

4.

There is a city of upper Lydia (it isn’t big) known as the gates of Temenos. There, a hill crest crumbled down in a storm. A skeletal form appeared: At first, it seemed clear it was human, but because of its size it

couldn't be what it first seemed. Immediately a rumor spread that it was the corpse of Geryon, son of Chrysoar, and that the throne was his also. For in fact there was a man's throne engraved on the stony ledge of the hill. In the swollen winter's stream (the river named Ocean) people were already plowing, and they came upon the cattle. It's said that Geryon cherished his excellent cows. (Pausanias Description of Greece 1.35.7)

5.

Stesichoros says
he had six hands and six feet and wings.

6.

In the middle of the road to the underworld, an elm tree spread its aged branches, shading a 3 bodied ghost. (Virgil The Aeneid 6.282)

Geryon.

Fragment Variations

There are some fragments which are only one word or a short phrase. I didn't want to number and translate individual words on the page. Making a list would be inadequate in showcasing the vivid and visceral images these fragments contain. I turned to translators and theorists who have conceptualized translations as works of creation to devise my method. In her essay "Emit," Erin Moure writes,

Translation is a differential reading practice, a singular reading transcribed, and as such, it's authorial. The reader in the new language of translation receives an authored work, that of the first author resonated through the body of the second, as through a screen or scrim. There is transmission, yes, from that first author, yet where this is transmission, there is always noise – the noise of culture, of upbringing, of ideology, or of traffic, as Bergvall calls it. (Moire 2017: 164)

"Fragment Variations, a Narrative" is what appeared on the other end of the scrim. The prose poems are how those short fragments resonated through me and are deeply informed by the "noise" of my own identity and culture. They are kept in all lowercase type because I wrote them on my phone; I wanted to preserve the way they were originally written down. Rachel Galvin, translator, author, and a member of the Outranspo, writes in her essay "Form Has Its Reasons: Translation and *Copia*,"

Translation has long been figured as a somatic process, and primarily gendered as feminine, secondary, and reproductive... envisaging translation as an act that occurs through or to the body, not so different from persistent somatic tropes for 'original' literary production... Ultimately, writing and translating may not be easily distinguishable activities. (Galvin 2016: 861-862)

Translation is a bodily process, and my trans body has a long, complicated history. The story I felt while I read Stesichoros's *Geryoneis* is informed by my identities, especially because I have written a love story. It is a queer love story, one where neither of them knows how or what love and sex are supposed to feel and look like. It is violent and strange and intimate in a complicated

way. “Being torn,” “flowing out,” and “in the dust, dead,” might resonate differently for another reader; I encourage that reader to write their own story. These prose poems represent another translation of Geryon’s myth, and I hope to transmit some of Stesichoros’s meaning through my own writing.

That story ran its course, but I still had words that needed homes. This is where “Fragment Variations in Found Verse” comes in. Much like bringing in other ancient authors, I wanted to read Geryon’s story in other words. I was researching the word “slaughtering,” and I came across “Every Day You Play” by Pablo Neruda. I read an English translation of the poem by Robert Hass and discovered quite a few of my translated words in it. The italicized words in each poem are my translations of Stesichoros’s Greek. There is a long history of literary allusions in Classics: poets will use words characteristic of authors in the past to invoke specific contexts and connotations. “Fragment Variations in Found Verse” are not allusions in the same way. I cannot say whether any of these poets read Stesichoros, and the phrases italicized are my translations of Stesichoros’s words, not the Greek itself.

Regardless of my earlier conceptions of what allusions can and should be, I found placing these entirely disparate poems next to each other interesting. Fragments are, in many ways, unintentional. Words are forced to resonate together by history. “Fragment Variations in Found Verse” makes tenuous connections between poems that have nothing to do with each other (except for a few words). These are more circuitous and less scholarly (if at all scholarly) than the allusions I have studied in Classics, but they are valuable: they add layers and connotations, giving the reader more opportunity for resonance.

Fragment Variations in Narrative

1. i thought i saw you in september. you were walking to school - the falling leaves kept getting caught up *with the lovely tresses* of golden hair that framed your faces. we talked over the wooden fence between our houses in october. your finger traced a knot in the post and i imaged the knot was my body, your calloused hands tracing my stomach, electric, new, unafraid.
2. you were so alone, you and your cows. i'd watch you watch them and sometimes you'd touch the top of my hand with your pinky finger and i'd feel a river course through me. you didn't look at me till november and when you did i knew you were mine, i felt you need me and i knew i was the *wielder of the thunderbolt*, a hot wire shot up with the spark that passed between our open mouths. you'd tilt your face up and away from me so i could kiss your neck and feel your pulse under my teeth.
3. we passed the winter in a tangle of limbs, icicles melting from our nipples, hair matted and brittle with frost. we *warmed* each other. well, i was warmer. the sunlight streamed in through sheer linen and spun off the gold in my face. i remembered the first time we touched, smooth and liquid in your parents' sheets, my hair tangled in its old knots. the clean linen of childhood homes replaced by sweat saturated blood-stained sheets *being torn* smelling of sex and cut peonies and burnt scrambled eggs. our house burned down in march, when the snow melted.
4. the *red* seeped out of your eyes when you cried, it stained my pillow. it mixed with the dirt under my nails and i kept scrubbing it and it wouldn't come out, it flaked onto my desk and stained the edges of my homework. my mom dragged me to church and for once i *prayed*. i heard the teapot whistle from

your mother's kitchen. i looked through your window and wondered when you bought those *horses*.

5. we snapped each other's limbs like twigs and sucked the marrow *flowing* from our broken bones. i drowned the wildflowers you left on the table in pickle juice. when i moved out, they built a guest house over your grave.
6. you haunt me. you're *in the dust, dead*. i think the land remembers you, your yard smells like the ocean. i wonder where you've gone, if they have cows in *hell*. or heaven. you weren't *unkind*. just mortal.

Fragment Variations in Found Verse

1. Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is *gold*,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to *grief*,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing *gold* can stay.

2. Every Day You Play by Pablo Neruda

Every day you play with the light of the universe.
Subtle visitor, you *arrive* in the flower and the water.
You are more than this white head that I hold tightly
as a cluster of fruit, every day, between my *hands*.

You are like nobody since I love you.
Let me spread you out among yellow *garlands*.
Who writes your name in letters of smoke among the stars of the
south?
Oh let me remember you as you were before you existed.

Suddenly the wind *howls* and bangs at my shut window.
The sky is a net crammed with shadowy fish.
Here all the winds let go sooner or later, all of them.
The rain takes off her clothes.

The birds go by, *fleeing*.
The wind. The wind.
I can contend only against the power of men.
The storm whirls dark leaves
and turns loose all the boats that were moored last night to the sky.

You are here. Oh, you do not run away.
 You will *answer* me to the last *cry*.
 Cling to me as though you were frightened.
 Even so, at one time a strange shadow ran through your eyes.

Now, now too, little one, you bring me honeysuckle,
 And even your breasts smell of it.
 While the sad wind goes *slaughtering* butterflies,
 I love you, and my happiness bites the plum of your mouth.
 How you must have suffered getting accustomed to me,
 My savage, solitary soul, my name that sends them all running.
 So many times we have seen the morning star burn, kissing our
 eyes,
 And over our *heads* the grey light unwinds in turning fans.

My words rained over you, stroking you.
 A long time I have loved the sunned mother-of-pearl of your body.
 Until I even believe that you own the universe.
 I will bring you happy flowers from the mountains, bluebells, dark
 hazels,
 and rustic baskets of kisses.
 I want to do with you what spring does with the cherry trees.

3. The Battle fought between the Soul by Emily Dickinson

The Battle fought between the Soul
 And No Man – is the One
 Of all the Battles prevalent –
 By far the *Greater One* –

No News of it is had abroad –
 Its Bodiless Campaign
 Establishes, and terminates –
 Invisible – Unknown –

Nor History – record it –

As Legions of a Night –
The Sunrise *scatters* – These endure –
Enact – and terminate –

4. Immortality by Matthew Arnold

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, *outworn*,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, Patience! in another life, we say
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who fail'd under the *heat* of this life's day,
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn?

No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly *strife*,

From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his *battles* won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to *eternal life*.

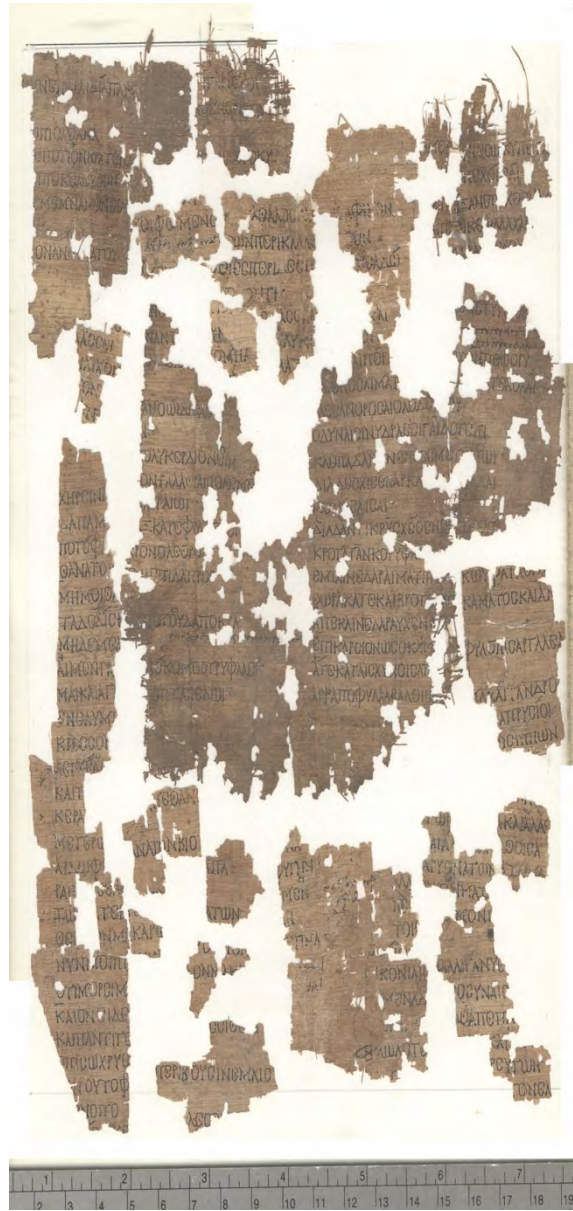
A Homeric Hymn for His Island

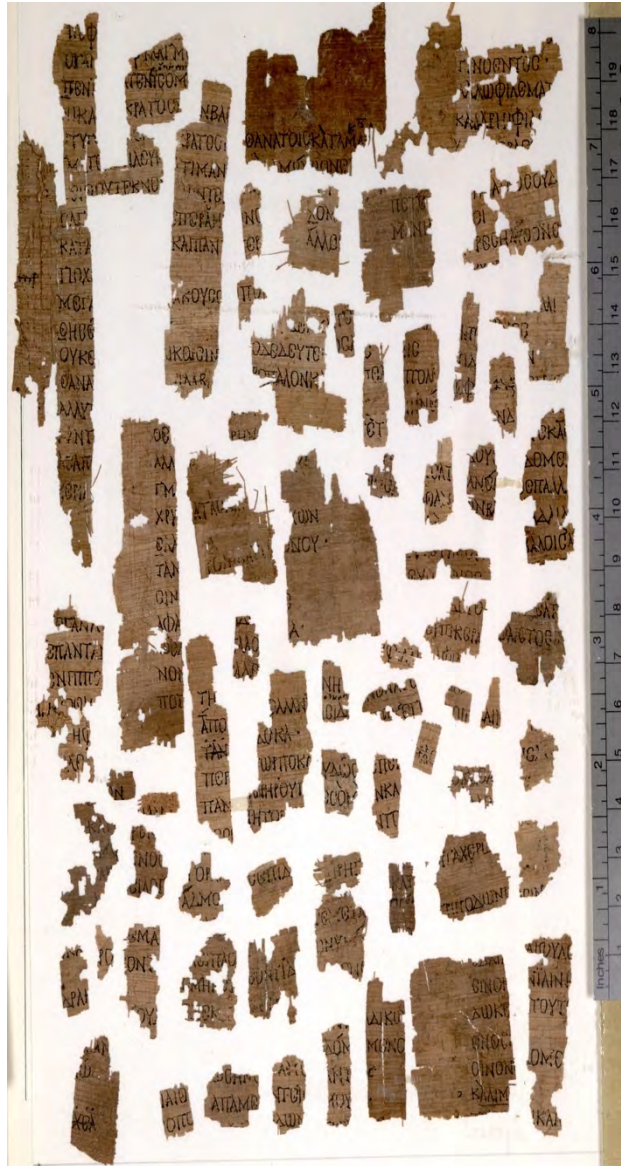
To Earth, Mother of All

I will sing of Earth, mother of all, Grounded,
Most Revered, who feeds as many as everyone on her land,
Those who travel the land, those of the sea, those who fly
Through the heavens,
Those are the ones who feed from her happiness.
From you, all become blessed with children, all
Are fruitful.
Our Queen, you have the power to give life and
Take it away from mortals:
Whoever you decide to honor with your spirit is happy,
All things are his, he is without envy,
His grounds are life-bearing, laden, and
Herds of cattle thrive in his fields,
His house is filling up with goodness:
These men are rulers in their city
With good order and
Beautiful women, much happiness and wealth accompany them,
Their children are proud with freshly-bloomed bliss.
Their maidens are playing and dancing in
Flowering happy choruses
Over soft budding grass,
You honor these men, August Goddess, Envy-less Deity.

Rejoice, Mother of Gods, Wife of Sparkling Ouranos,
Willfully bestow a heartfelt life to this swelling song:
No matter what, I will be reminded of you, and
Another song. (*Homeric Hymns* 30)

PAPYRUS OXYRHYNCHUS XXXII 2617





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No Charms Can Safely Be Trusted: Adornment and Witchcraft in Latin Love Elegy

Anna Barnett

The elegies of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid explore common themes, including the destruction of natural beauty through adornment and the contrivance of love by witchcraft. Whereas the former two tend to compose with a rather serious tone, Ovid writes in a much more lighthearted manner, often expanding upon and parodying the works of other poets. Propertius and Tibullus tie together decorating oneself and practicing magic through shared associations with the East and the corruption of nature, ultimately casting each as a tricky debasement of pure elegiac love. Ovid also draws on these themes but deconstructs and reframes them in order to satirize the gravity with which his fellow elegists write.

In Propertius and Tibullus both adornment and witchcraft corrupt nature. Adornment ruins one's natural beauty and witchcraft upsets the natural elements, e.g., the paths of rivers, the seasons and weather, etc. In 1.2, a poem which disparages a maiden's use of finery and ornamentation, Propertius compares his lover Cynthia's unadorned beauty to the colors of the earth, ivy, the strawberry-tree, and other natural phenomena in order to convince her not to cover it up with unnecessary decoration (Propertius 1.2). Witchcraft also physically alters natural phenomena. The sorceresses of elegy have a consistent set of spells, most of which involve natural elements. Tibullus' witch exhibits several: she can change the path of stars and rivers (cf. Propertius 1.1.23-4), split the earth, raise ghosts, and alter the seasons (Tibullus 1.2).

The two elegists connect adornment and witchcraft further by a shared association with the East. Many of the fineries Propertius so

disdains are imports from the East: his mistress wears a dress from Cos, a Greek island in the Southeastern Aegean, and perfume from the Orontes, a river in Asia Minor (Propertius 1.2), and she decorates herself with *Eois lapillis*, “Eastern stones” (Propertius 1.15.7). Although elegy often associates witchcraft with the region of Thessaly (Propertius 1.5.6, cf. Ovid 1.14.40), one of mythology’s most famous witches, Medea, came from Colchis in Asia Minor. She and her Eastern city appear alongside witches in the poems; Propertius alludes to Cytaea, a city in ancient Colchis (Propertius 1.1.24), and Tibullus’ witch holds the “wicked herbs of Medea” (Tibullus 1.2.53). In addition to their corruption of nature, Propertius and Tibullus thematically link the practices of adornment and magic by associating both with foreign regions, particularly towards the East.

Both of these “exotic” practices represent a kind of false love. The elegists suggest that lovers use both adornment and witchcraft as a deceitful way of attracting others. Propertius uses the examples of several mythological women who attracted lovers not with *cultu*, “finery” or *falso candore*, “a false face” (Propertius 1.2.16, 19), but with their own modest beauty. In doing so Propertius implies that his lover’s hope that she might entice men by dressing herself up is misguided. He revisits this again in 1.15:

*et potes hesternos manibus componere crines
 et longa faciem quaerere desidia,
 nec minus Eois pectus uariare lapillis
 ut formosa nouo quae parat ire uiro.*

And you are able to compose yesterday’s hair with your hands and examine your face with long leisure, and not less to adorn your chest with Eastern stones, like a beautiful girl who is preparing to go to a new man. (Propertius 1.15.5-8)¹

It seems that by this poem Cynthia has not yet heeded the lesson of 1.2, for she is still adorning herself for the purpose of attracting a new lover.

1. All translations are my own.

Tibullus 1.8 provides a clear example of the association between adornment and magic as equally fruitless ways of enhancing beauty and attracting lovers. This poem expands upon the themes of Propertius 1.2, emphasizing natural beauty over ornamentation while also bringing up witchcraft and the impermanence of youthful allure. In this poem it is not the maiden Pholoe who decorates herself, but Marathus, the poem's initial addressee. He arranges his hair, wears makeup, and changes his clothes often. Tibullus indeed wonders why Pholoe pleases Marathus even though she comes unadorned, and that perhaps he has been cursed by a witch. He raises the possibility only to immediately reject it, as a means of underscoring that *forma nihil magicis utitur auxiliis*, "beauty uses no help from magic" (Tibullus 1.8.24). Tibullus also highlights in this poem that both witchcraft and efforts to youthen one's appearance run counter to nature; the witch as usual alters crops and the course of the moon while the old man or woman dyes their white hair to conceal their age. While one may have possessed modest beauty in youth, the elder manipulates nature (by using the hull of a nut as hair dye) in order to create unnatural beauty. To Tibullus, true beauty needs no support from such artifice.

Significantly, just as adornment is a false means of attracting a lover, Propertius and Tibullus both express doubts that the witches' magic is even legitimate. Although Propertius calls on sorceresses for help in 1.1, he requires proof of their magical capabilities.

*at uos, deductae quibus est fallacia lunae
 et labor in magicis sacra piare focus
 en agedum dominae mentem conuertite nostrae
 et facite illa meo palleat ore magis:
 tunc ego crediderim uobis et sidera et amnes
 posse Cytaeines ducere carminibus.*

And you, who have the trick of leading down the moon and appeasing sacred work in magic hearths, come, change my mistress' mind and make her much paler than my face: then I would believe that you can command the stars and rivers with the songs of Cytaean women. (Propertius 1.1.19-24)

Here, he implies that if the witches cannot make his mistress reciprocate his love, then their magic is fraudulent. Tibullus

similarly calls upon a witch for help meeting his lover without her husband catching on, but hesitates to believe that her spell will truly work, since that very same sorceress had once claimed that she could “loosen his loves” (Tibullus 1.2.61-2). Whether Tibullus means she could release him from his passion or release his mistress from inside her house, apparently neither came to pass.

Notably, in Propertius 1.15, as the poet-lover laments that Cynthia seems to be disloyal (because she is adorning herself), he himself, in an impassioned plea, invokes language that recalls a witch’s spells:

*nulla prius uasto labentur flumina ponto,
annus et inversas duxerit ante vices,
quam tua sub nostro mutetur pectore cura:
sis quodcumque uoles, non aliena tamen.*

First no rivers will flow into the vast sea, and the year will lead out inverted seasons, before your love is changed beneath my heart: be whatever you wish, but don’t be another’s. (Propertius 1.15.29-32)

There is no witch present in this poem, and yet Propertius’ claim of his everlasting love for Cynthia once again casts doubt that their magic is legitimate. If witches could just as easily change the paths of rivers and reverse the seasons, as they are wont to do in elegy, then this sweeping romantic declaration completely loses its force. In this poem, Propertius essentially casts a spell of his own, in an attempt to keep Cynthia faithful, but one that inverts the common practices of magic-doers. Rather than alter the elements for his spell, he calls upon their inflexibility. In doing so he implies that witches and spells provide a false service for lovers, for true love is as unchangeable as nature. Propertius and Tibullus thematically link adornment and witchcraft as two dangerous foreign-identified practices that corrupt nature and conjure up false love, whereas true love needs no frills.

Ovid’s elegies often expand upon and satirize the themes of Propertius and Tibullus, and the elegiac witch is no exception. Ovid introduces a witch for the first time in the *Amores* in 1.8. His portrayal of the woman, Dipsas, is clearly modeled from the witches of Propertius and Tibullus.

*illa magas artes Aeaque carmina nouit
 inque caput liquidas arte recuruat aquas;
 [...] cum uoluit, toto glomerantur nubila caelo;
 cum uoluit, puro fulget in orbe dies.
 [...] euocat antiquis proauos atausque sepulcris
 et solidam longo carmine findit humum.*

She knows the magic arts and the Aeaean songs and she bends back running waters to their source with her skill; [...] When she wants, clouds are gathered in the whole sky; when she wants, the day shines in the clear world. [...] She summons ancestors and forefathers from their ancient tombs and cleaves the solid ground with a long song. (Ovid 1.8.5-6, 9-10, 17-18, cf. Propertius 1.1.23, Tibullus 1.2.46-48, 51-2)

Not only does Dipsas cast the same spells such as turning back rivers and changing the weather, but Ovid's use of language and sentence structure also recalls passages from Tibullus. The anaphora of *cum uoluit*, "when she wants" in lines 9-10 closely resembles Tibullus' similar use of *cum libet*, "when she pleases" in 1.2.51-2, and both couplets describe a weather spell. Also, in line 18 Ovid uses the same verb, *findo*, "cleave" that Tibullus uses in 1.2.47, both depicting the witch summoning ghosts from *sepulcris*, "tombs" (Ovid 1.8.17, cf. Tibullus 1.2.47).

Whereas the other two elegists call upon witches for help, Dipsas acts completely against Ovid's interests as the poet-lover. In fact, her speech, which makes up the majority of poem 1.8, manages to touch on nearly every issue that commonly plagues the elegiac lover. She discourages chastity:

*ludunt formosae: casta est quam nemo rogauit;
 [...] aera nitent usu, uestis bona quaerit haberi,
 canescunt turpi tecta relicta situ:
 forma, nisi admittas, nullo excertente senescit;
 nec satis effectus unus et alter habent.*

Beautiful girls play around. She is chaste, [she] for whom no one asks; [...] Bronze shines with use, a good dress seeks to be worn, houses abandoned to foul disuse gray with age: beauty, unless you admit love, declines with no practice; And neither one [lover] nor the other has enough effect. (Ovid 1.8.43, 51-4)

Ovid plays with the idea of ornamentation here, since Dipsas compares the girl's beauty with bronze and a fine dress, both of which might be used as adornment. The witch also disparages gifts of poetry and encourages her to be deceitful in order to procure more expensive gifts:

*qui dabit, ille tibi magno sit maior Homero;
crede mihi, res est ingeniosa dare.*

[...]
*nec nocuit simulatus amor: sine credat amari
et caue, ne gratis hic tibi constet amor.*

He who gives, he should be greater for you than great Homer; believe me, it is the clever thing to give. [...] Pretended love does no harm: let him think he is loved but be careful, lest this love remains without payment for you. (Ovid 1.8.61-2, 71-2)

Ovid even draws on the theme of the *exclusus amator*, the “excluded lover,” as Dipsas instructs the girl to keep her door shut to lovers with fewer gifts.

*surda sit oranti tua ianua, laxa ferenti;
audiat exclusi uerba receptus amans.*

Let your door be deaf to the one begging, and open to the one bearing gifts;
Let the accepted lover hear the words of the excluded one. (Ovid 1.8.77-8)

Like Propertius and Tibullus, Ovid does not present Dipsas' magic as definite truth. He interrupts his description of her spells with *si qua fides*, “if there is any faith” (Ovid 1.8.11) and mentions that some of it is *fama*, “rumor” (Ovid 1.8.15). However he also modifies the theme, because it is not Dipsas' chants and spells which make her so dangerous, but her words. There is no doubt that her powers of persuasion are true and potent, since the problems she causes are extremely common to the elegiac lover.

Ovid also plays with the concept of adornment in 1.14, in which he exaggerates the maiden's penchant for debasing her natural beauty. Ovid's lover has quite literally ruined her natural appearance, because she has dyed her hair so much that it has all fallen out. Interestingly, Ovid inverts the association made in

Propertius and Tibullus between adornments and Eastern goods; instead he compares her natural hair with the East:

*quid, quod erant tenues et quos ornare timeres,
uela colorati qualia Seres habent?*

[...]
*nec tamen ater erat neque erat tamen aureus ille
sed, quamuis neuter, mixtus uterque color,
qualem cliuosae madidis in uallibus Idae
ardua derepto cortice cedrus habet.*

What about the fact that [your hairs] were fine and the kind which you would be afraid to adorn, just like the silk the colored Chinese have? [...] However it was neither black nor gold, but although neither, each color was mixed, the kind which the tall cedar has in the wet valleys of hilly Ida with the bark taken away. (Ovid 1.14.5-6, 9-12)

As Ryan and Perkins note in their commentary, the hair dye his mistress used would have come from Gaul and Germany (Ryan and Perkins 2011: 132). In this poem her fineries are imports from the West, and Ovid associates her natural beauty with the East, specifically China and Mount Ida in Anatolia. Moreover, the unnatural cure for her predicament is also Western: a wig from Germany. Even the girl herself knows the beauty it provides is not truly her own.

*nunc tibi captiuos mittet Germania crines;
tuta triumphae munere gentis eris.*

[...]
et dices "empta nunc ego merce probor.
nescioquam pro me laudat nunc iste Sygambram;
fama tamen memini cum fuit ista mea."

Now Germany will send you captured hairs; you will be safe because of the gift of a conquered people. [...] And you will say "Now I am esteemed because of a bought good. That one praises a Sygambrian woman whom I don't know instead of me; Yet I remember when that reputation was mine. (Ovid 1.14.45-6, 48-50)

By emphasizing that her wig comes from a subjugated people, Ovid inverts the idea that traded fineries present some kind of foreign threat. This wig is no mystical Eastern good, but literally the hair stolen from the head of a subjugated German woman.

Ovid also includes witches in satirizing elegists' anxiety about adornment, and again downplays their perceived danger, when he admonishes that his mistress' predicament is no one's fault but her own:

*non te cantatae laeserunt paelicis herbae,
non anus Haemonia perfida lauit aqua.*

The bewitched herbs of a mistress have not injured you, nor did a Haemonian witch bathe you in treacherous water. (Ovid 1.14.39-40)

Even though Ovid's Dipsas in 1.8 clearly presented a great danger to the poet-lover through her powers of persuasion over the girl, he indicates that in the end perhaps the witch was not so powerful. He also deconstructs his predecessors' implicit association between adornment and witchcraft by explicitly drawing a line between the two. In doing so, and by exaggerating the insidiousness of the witch in 1.8 only to downplay her influence over the girl in 1.14, Ovid makes a parody of the gravity with which Propertius and Tibullus treat the dangers of adornment and witchcraft. Propertius and Tibullus regard fineries and magic with the same kind of anxiety; both are foreign means of contriving dishonest love. In the *Amores*, however, Ovid plays with these concepts and ultimately undermines their destructive power over the elegiac poet-lover. Indeed, Ovid concludes poem 14 with a concession: *reparabile damnum est*, "the damage is repairable" (Ovid 1.14.55). After all, hair grows back, perfumes wash out, and ornaments can be removed.

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Menas Flasks: Material, Pilgrimage, and Christianity's Effect on the Non-Elite of Late Antique Egypt

Colin Olson

Introduction

While the experiences of Church fathers might surface via their own writings, and while powerful clergymen and patrons certainly influenced the course and policy of the early Church in ways detectable even today, a methodological framework for the uncovering of the popular experience of early Christianity, the interaction between the vast majority of Christians, the non-elite, and their own conception of spirituality, has yet to be fully explored. Remaining satisfied with a top-down recounting of the religious shifts across Late Antiquity denies the fundamental role that congregations, communities, and devout individuals played in the dissemination, internalization, and evolution of Christianity; such an approach also artificially limits a retrospective understanding of the many ways in which this relatively young religious framework was consumed. How, then, might the experience of the disenfranchised, the relatively uneducated, and the near voiceless mass of early Christians be discerned? What methodology might allow for a systematic examination of the popular religious interface at a given space and time?

While such a statement—namely, that a post-hoc assessment of religious dissemination and its effects must take account of a broad spiritual landscape that cuts across various demographics—might appear relatively pedantic, influential studies dealing with Late Antiquity and the spread of Christianity still fall prey to an overwhelming bias towards elite activity, particularly focusing on the writings and philosophical dispositions of various church

fathers. Thus, Cain and Lenski's recent Routledge companion to *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* falls short of the mark, with 28 papers-turned-chapters focused almost exclusively upon Church fathers, bishops, or the Imperial apparatus (Cain and Lenski 2009). Perhaps of greater consequence, Everett Ferguson's influential account regarding *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, originally published in 1987, deals only with the non-elite tangentially, instead focusing primarily on Classical reverberations across the burgeoning faith as a means of exploring its contextualized emergence (Everett 2003). Worthy of particular scrutiny are accounts of Malherbe's ilk which use the writings of Church fathers or Scripture itself to make sweeping inferential claims about the sociological makeup of the early Christian body politic (Malherbe 2003). While relatively recent treatment might discuss the active participatory role of the non-elite in early Christianity, too often textual sources are left unproblematized, composed by the educated few and, in some ways, recreating the self same "top-down" approach critiqued above.¹ However, within the past year questions of materiality have been fronted as a means for exploring the life and sensate experience of the non-elite religious world, an approach which, with careful consideration, allows for an unadulterated glimpse into the surroundings, visual language, and sensory perception of spirituality (Kotrosits 2020).

It is in this vein that I propose using a case study of sorts—namely, the martyr shrine at Abu Mina in Egypt and associated material culture such as the widespread "Menas flask"—to outline this methodology in use, focusing on *how* non-elite spirituality might be approached as opposed to an overgeneralizing claim as to *what* it looked like. Therefore, the aims of this paper are limited necessarily as I seek to recreate the sensory experience of pilgrimage—what Abu Mina felt like, smelled like, looked like and

1. Such issues occur, for instance in the third, thematic section of Wiley Blackwell's *A Companion to Religion in Late Antiquity* specifically in Lucy Grig's chapter: Grig, Lucy. "Life and Death in Late Antiquity: Religious Rituals and Popular Culture." Essay. In *A Companion to Religion in Late Antiquity*, edited by Josef Lössl and Nicholas J. Baker-Brian, 1st ed., 453–73. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2018.

what it meant to carry a flask as you processed through the space—instead of purporting to analyze any unified conception of Mediterranean early Christianity. Doing so requires a careful examination of the space and object itself, and, to some extent, informed conjecture as to how people interfaced with this material. In this way, the material remains themselves, how they have been damaged, used, and to where they have been brought all must be used to tell a story. What emerges is that materiality and space must be incorporated into any discussion regarding spirituality, religious development, and the power of belief in the ancient world in order to augment the acknowledged role that non-elite actors played.

I begin with a brief conceptual overview of pilgrimage, explaining why such an institution offers unique value in a discussion of non-elite spirituality. I will then move to a rapid overview of the space, texts, and flasks associated with my study before delving into a recreation of their uses. Beyond illustrating the influence of Abu Mina and its visitors on the local spiritual landscape, this analysis will also lend itself well to comparative claims—about how the Christian use of the site offered change and continuity for the locality—before allowing for a brief discussion on the issues with Osborne’s framework of assemblage-based archaeological practice.

Pilgrimage as a Popular Interface of Religion

Necessarily, the exclusive councils of Augustine, the financially onerous task of freeing people, the familiarity with rhetorical education, and the platform with which to preach were available to a select few, often members of the church hierarchy, and, more often than not, from a place of relative wealth and social standing (Augustine’s father was of decurion status). Thus, while the textual tradition of various Church fathers might illuminate the fractures of the early church and its emerging priorities as an institution, at best they speak to the question of popular piety from a disengaged,

foreign viewpoint. This is not to argue that the elite and non-elite experiences of Christianity's rise throughout Late Antiquity were wholly separate, embracing fundamentally different concerns, but merely to suggest that, when investigating the ways in which "average" people interacted with spirituality and spiritual power, a wholly text-based approach does not suffice.

How then might the practice of pilgrimage shed light on such a question? For one, pilgrimage, particularly the visiting of local martyr cults (as opposed to making the perhaps arduous journey to Jerusalem), seems to have the boon of a diverse demography; for Susanne Bangert, addressing the importance of, what she calls, the "Archaeology of Pilgrimage," it is crucial to the import of various sacred sites that "the social context of these pilgrim gatherings comprised many poor and humble people" (Bangert 2010: 297) and thus that "Christian pilgrimage offers a unique insight into popular piety in Late Antiquity" (Bangert 2010: 293). Often with public feast days, available lodgings, and infrastructure ranging from baths to markets, the local centers of martyr cult offer a glimpse into the experiential aspects of non-elite spirituality and early Christian worship during the Late Antique period—a view largely unavailable from a purely textual vantagepoint (Bangert 2010: 295).

With that being said, it is important to keep in mind that such a nucleated approach—namely using sites of martyr cult to discuss the experience of "the people"—comes with its own set of disadvantages as it gives precedence to various material assemblages, focuses in on particular places to the neglect of others, and, ultimately, may have had varied effects on those living in the area and those experiencing the cult of a particular martyr from abroad. This paper, in speaking to the cult of St. Menas and the major pilgrimage site of Abu Mina in the desert outside of Alexandria as a window into popular piety, will both seek to acknowledge the limited scope of its purchase and will ultimately strive to mitigate such issues via a careful examination of the

source material, asking what different objects and spaces meant to different people.²

Methods of Interrogation: The Material Aspect of the Martyr Cult

While pilgrimage and the engagement with martyr cult might inform a conception of non-elite religious practice and participation, the question remains of how best to approach such an amorphous idea of “pilgrimage,” how best to understand and recreate the fundamentally experiential aspects of martyr cult. As alluded to above, material in the form of votive offerings, architectural remains, and souvenirs offers a first-person glimpse into the practice of pilgrimage and thus is an appropriate tool. While the structure of an object, its composition, and points of archaeological data are necessary for a framing of an object's importance, an examination oriented towards the sensate must bring these characteristics into conversation with one another, emerging as a holistic conception of place and object, to inform how such objects and places were treated and used, ultimately reflecting the actions and, rather indirectly, the thoughts of the actors themselves.

In many ways, the objects and sites associated with martyr cult demand unique consideration; their deposition, find spots, material makeup, and iconography all must be taken into account to accurately visualize what a sixth century Christian pilgrimage in the desert might have looked like, for instance. In this vein, Julian Droogan seeks to imbue the religiously-oriented object with power: “[an object’s] very materiality, perhaps even perceived

2. Trimble’s careful treatment of the Zoninus collar in her discussion of Late Antique slavery and its sensory-visual effects here. offers inspiration: Trimble, Jennifer. “The Zoninus Collar and the Archaeology of Roman Slavery.” *American J. of Archaeology* 120.3 (2016), 447-72.

permanence, gives structure and solidity to values, powers and forces that may be thought derived from beyond the material sphere” (Droogan 2014: 2). Here, the object and space become transcendent as both a symbol and as the very *locus* of religious piety. In many ways, Robin Osborne, quoting from anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, explains this unique character of religious objects as “votive deposition matters because it is an integral part of the... ‘social life of things’” (Osborne 2004: 2).

This social dimension of pilgrimage’s materiality, the necessity of such spaces to be visited and used, the necessity of objects to be revered and seen allows for a close examination of the objects and spaces themselves. As more than just passive passengers, accompanying their bearer to various shrines and churches, these flasks, trinkets, statuettes, and the like were integral to the process of pilgrimage itself. Indeed, C.A. Gregory goes so far as to, in some cases, assert the primacy of the social dimension of pilgrimage and its associated objects “in which the relation of giver to god is manifestly a vehicle for the expression of relations between men” (Gregory 1980: 644).

Thus, to explore objects and the materiality of sites is to explore the everlasting (and self-consciously so) vestiges of socially charged interactions and moments of religious import, the object, in cooperation with and informing textual accounts, might serve to guide an understanding of pilgrimage as a lived experience (Droogan 2014: 1). Ultimately, to borrow from the words of Hunter-Crawley, “it is through the experiences of pilgrims that narratives of pilgrimage are constructed, narratives which define and incite acts of pilgrimage for others” (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 189).

Case Study: Abu Mina—The Site

Its popularity, its continued use across multiple centuries, and the wide dissemination of its associated material make the martyr cult of St. Menas and the pilgrimage center of Abu Mina an

interesting case study for demonstrating the value of studying material and physical space in a religious context (Bangert 2010: 294). Importantly, is the recently-demonstrated fact that a significant proportion of visitors to Abu Mina were women, adding to the demographic diversity able to be explored via the site (Stafford 2019). While an overview of the location and space of Abu Mina is incumbent, it is necessary to stress that as a major—and, as Drescher puts it—unusually popular cult, the site of Abu Mina and its relationship with St. Menas ought not to color perceptions generally about the material culture of the early Christian Mediterranean writ large (Drescher 1946: vi). Even to take it as representative of the effects that Christianity and votive material had on Egypt would be to extrapolate too far. Instead, it is the method with which objects such as the Menas flasks—receptacles for holy oil used at Abu Mina—might be approached and the consideration with which a walk through sixth century Abu Mina might be reconstructed that demonstrates the varying ways an object might be employed for objective and comparative inference.

Egypt's Christianization seems to have been well underway by the fourth century, when material deposits indicate a markedly Christian aspect (Brooks Hedstrom and Pettegrew 2018). That being said, various Gnostic communities and a burgeoning Alexandrian Christianity became detectable via papyri and other literary sources as early as the second and third centuries. It is in this context that Abu Mina and the cult of St. Menas emerge.

Drescher, in surveying the archaeological site of Abu Mina, provides a helpful overview. In terms of chronology, he notes how the site, approximately forty miles from Alexandria in the “Libyan semi-desert” shows signs of Christian use as early as the fourth century (Drescher 1946: iii). That being said, Bangert identifies the “zenith” of the site's use as occupying the latter stages of the fifth century to the seventh (Bangert 2010: 299). J.B. Ward Perkins offers insight into the surroundings of Abu Mina as being in “Maryût, the region which lies to the west and south-west of Alexandria, in the angle between the sea and the western edge of the Delta” (Perkins 1949: 27). Perkins paints a picture of a region

in decline during the centuries of Abu Mina's operation, speaking to the issue of obtaining and conserving fresh water as a driving factor (Perkins 1949: 28). A Coptic encomium of Menas seems to, at least to some extent, corroborate such a picture as the original builders of the site of Abu Mina "suffered distress because the place was a desert and they lacked water and the benefit of the Holy Mysteries" (Drescher 1946: 144). It was not until the reign of Arcadius (Augustus of the East from 383-408), Perkins argues, that the great church at the heart of the site was begun (Perkins 1949: 27). Thus, as the site originally came into being, as Menas' body was found and consecrated for the purpose of drawing in visitors, the site of Abu Mina was fairly described as consisting of a δωμάτιον and a τέμενος, an inner sanctum and associated precinct (Migne: LXXVII, pars 3, c. 3596).

Hunter-Crawley speaks to the architecture and layout of the complex with an eye to sensory experience, charting the ways in which visitors could have approached, entered, interacted with, and exited the shrine. In speaking to the topography of Abu Mina, Hunter-Crawley notes how, once the site became populated by both infrastructure and visitors, "man-made irrigation channels created a more cultivated landscape which blossomed...with palm groves, farms, and small conurbations, [with] oases...the largest of which was Abu Mena itself" (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 190). Furthermore, a processional path is outlined by Grossman as pilgrims may have—after spending the night in a hostel or even at the *hemicylium* abutting the church in hopes of a dream visitation, after bathing in the public *balneum*—descended stairs into the holding place of Menas' body before ascending a separate staircase as bodies flowed unidirectionally past the relics (Peter Grossman 1998: 286-288, 292). Ultimately, the site would be greatly augmented during Justinian's reign as the Martyr Church or "*Grufkirche*" was added (Grossman 1998: 294.) The overarching impression that the infrastructure leaves is that the site was intended to accommodate and service great hoards of visitors (Grossman 1998: 286).

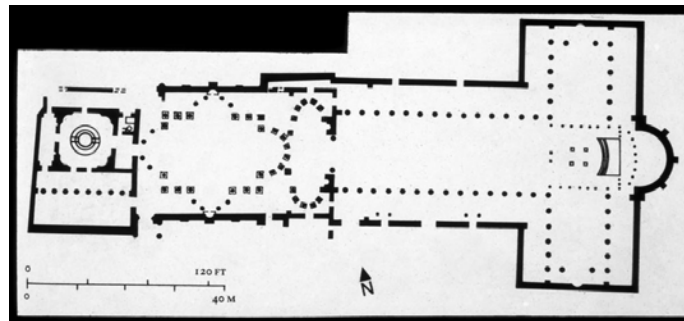


Figure 1: Floor Plan of the 5th century Great Basilica at Abu Mina³



Figure 2: Satellite image of the Archaeological remains of Abu Mina⁴

3.Unknown. *Saint Menas. Plan- 5th Century. Abu Mina*. Accessed March 8, 2021. doi:10.2307/community.12206014.

4. Bernand, A., and R. Talbert, Adam Prins, Jen Thum, Jeffrey Becker, Iris Fernandez, Tom Elliott, DARMC, Herbert Verreth, Sean Gillies, and Mark Depauw, 'Deir Abou

Literature on the saint and on the site

While this investigation is centered primarily on the value that objects bring to a discussion of non-elite religious practice, a brief survey of the issues surrounding the literary accounts of St. Menas, his martyrdom, and the site itself might serve to further highlight the value of the associated material. Such a discussion necessarily relies heavily upon the work done by Drescher insofar as he has translated from the original Coptic the Martyrdom text, the Encomium, and a series of miracle accounts. It is here worth noting that Drescher's text originates from a period after the extensive use of the site; the manuscript is presumed to have been composed in 892/3 but seems to have been derivative of an earlier Greek account (Drescher 1946: xxxiv). On the one hand, Drescher himself fronts a number of anxieties about the historical validity of the text, chief among which is the fact that the martyrdom account "is itself a flagrant plagiarism of St. Basil's Eulogy on Gordius" (i). Obviously, such a narrative origin might serve to further cloud any information to-be-gained about the saint rather than aid in its discovery. Furthermore, Drescher is forced by the text to suggest that "there were two Sts. Menas, the one Egyptian and the other Phrygian...they were fused into one by the hagiographer" (iv). Such an inference is a result of the text's curious nature: despite the fact that Menas' cult center was undoubtedly in Maryût at Abu Mina, the Greek Martyrdom text alleges that he was "an Egyptian soldier martyred at Cotyaeum in Phrygia" (ii). This complication has led Drescher to comment on the provenance of these stories at large as he wagers that Menas' "story soon became obscure since it was safeguarded by no official *acta* but depended on the oral tradition of the district" (ix). Thus, despite offering valuable information on the construction (and stages therein) of the physical site (xix), and despite gesturing to St. Menas' popularity as a function of his reputation for healing (xxi), the textual accounts of

Menas: a Pleiades place resource', *Pleiades: A Gazetteer of Past Places*, 2019 <<https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/727105>> [accessed: 22 April 2021].

St. Menas' life, virtues, and death offer little by way of illuminating the experience of a pilgrim visiting Abu Mina.

However problematic the nature of the text, it is worth noting that these accounts would have contributed to pilgrims' perceptions of the site. Transmitted orally, these tales may have enjoyed wide dissemination, and their stories of Menas appearing as an apparition to the workmen at the site, for instance, might have further compelled potential visitors to trek to the holy place (Drescher 1946: 152). Furthermore, for those afflicted with a physical ailment, or even for those fearing impending violence, the accounts surrounding Menas and his spirit might have reassured them that, just as others had been healed and delivered, so too a visit to the sanctuary might change their life for the better.⁵

The Menas flasks

While it is clear that, to understand the experience and the social dimensions of non-elite pilgrimage at Abu Mina, the text alone cannot offer more than tangential historical details and a rough outline of the perceptions surrounding the cult, recourse comes in the form of examining the material culture associated with the cult and the spatial layout of the site itself. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the potential misuse of such material as previously votive deposition and material culture have been cast into a reflexive relationship with the pilgrims that possessed them, suggesting the existence of non-elite visitors, and, at the same time, beginning and ending conversations regarding the behavior and interaction of such visitors. To extract real value from the Menas flasks, for instance, questions of material composition, use, appearance, significance, symbology, iconography, cost, and sensory detail must all be considered in the first place. To return to

5. The "fourth miracle" offered by Drescher tells the story of Menas' spirit aiding a woman who wished to give birth (Drescher, 116) while the "sixteenth miracle" details the story of a woman who visits the shrine to aid her hurting head and who ultimately is threatened with either rape or death by a man there, with the visage of the Saint and his holy oil acting as a salve for both afflictions (Drescher, 118-123).

Droogan, as material might “gives structure and solidity to value,” such a careful consideration of the structure might, in return, yield the values which are lost in textual accounts (Droogan 2014, 2).

In referring to the objects at hand as “Menas flasks” as opposed to *ampullae*, I am here adopting the terminology introduced by Anderson in his comparative study on Near Eastern Late Antique pilgrim flasks; in the eyes of Anderson, “Both were mould-made...but the circular bodied Menas flasks have handles spanning the body and neck, while the smaller and oval shaped Asia Minor type have two holes bored into the top so that they could be worn or suspended” (William Anderson 2004, 29). In this study, it is the Menas flask that will figure front and center as the object deserving of analysis, ultimately as a function of its ubiquity and unique use.



*Figure 3: typical Menas flask*⁶

An investigation into the significance, use, and sensory effect of these Menas flasks is undoubtedly indebted to the work done by Heather Hunter-Crawley as she outlines her vision of the flasks’ effect. A Menas flask was a vessel used by a pilgrim at the site of Abu Mina (or intended and crafted relatively locally for such use)

6. Egypt, 6th-7th Century. Pilgrim's Ampulla (Oil Flask) with St. Menas. Accessed March 7, 2021. doi:10.2307/community.15029921.

(Mervat 1992: 121-123) to take advantage of a defining feature of the site itself as oil to-be-collected might be found dripping from various openings in external walls as well as within the shrine's inner sanctum near the resting place of Menas' body (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 194). To harness and possess such oil, a Menas flask might be filled with such sacred contents for the pilgrim to carry away, possibly in relation to the healing qualities associated with the saint and the oil itself (Drescher 1946: 123). Drescher, espousing what seems to be a relatively outdated view, suggests also that the flasks may have housed water (Drescher 1946: xi). The suggestion of oil appears most persuasive given the detected lipid residue found inside extant flasks housed at the Ashmolean museum (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 192). Regardless, Hunter-Crawley has ascribed a sort of "transformation through liquid" to the flask and its contents (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 191).

In terms of appearance and iconography, the flasks are typically six to twenty six centimeters in terms of the circular body's diameter, and are often identifiable by the regular image on the front of this circular area: an image of the saint with palm trees and camels on either side of him (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 191-192). The coloring of the flask, with its distinctive earthenware shade, seems to be in part derivative of the fact that the flasks were composed of unslipped and unglazed clay (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 195). Bangert suggests that "each side [of the flask was] formed in a mould" (Bangert 2010: 299). She also establishes their production as occurring during the sixth and seventh centuries (Bangert 2010: 306). Despite such a marked iconography associated with the Menas flasks, Bangert also draws attention to the plethora of other objects that would have been sold and used at the site: the Menas flasks were "one of several types of pilgrim artefact produced at Abu Mina, which include head-flasks, female and horse-rider statuettes and jugs or juglets" (Bangert 2010: 307).

Hunter-Crawley seeks to emphasize the sensory aspects of the flasks, particularly focusing on coarse feel and aromatic smell that must have been associated with them. Great significance is read onto the rough aspect of the Menas flasks. On the one hand, the lack of fine detail used to display Menas on the front of the vessel—

derivative of “cheap mass manufacture” and a feature Hunter-Crawley claims need not have been intentional—may have, in the eyes of Hunter-Crawley, added a dimension of *mystique* to the sanctity of the figure: here Menas might both be invoked visually and concealed by the unchecked roughness which the production techniques contributed to the flask’s composition (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 192). As is clear, such a register of meaning may not have been apparent to every owner of a Menas flask, and may have been of secondary importance for many pilgrims, yet the point remains that, born out of the same space as Menas’ final resting place, the flask might contribute to the visual language associated with the saint’s enduring legacy. Thus, Hunter-Crawley astutely notes how, given the overlap and relation between the flasks and the site of Abu Mina itself, once taken home, the Menas flasks could have functioned as a physical reminder of the pilgrims experience: “the tactile qualities of the desert place of Abu Mena...were re-livable through handling [the flasks]” (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 192). Through the coarse nature of the flask and its association with the look and feel of Abu Mina, a pilgrim possessing a Menas flask might be reminded of their spiritual journey; in fact, Bangert suggests that the flasks were “produced of the local clay” along with other pilgrimage-oriented artefacts crafted at the site (Bangert 2010: 307). Indeed, while flasks might differ in their size or the extant quality of their iconography both on account of preservation and on account of various moulds of deteriorating quality being used, possessing a Menas flask must have conjured up memories of the site as the vessels and the foundations of the site itself were materially similar.

Touching upon the smell, the interpretation of the flasks as holding oil becomes critical. Hunter-Crawley, making note of the aromatic concoction that Abu Mina may have used in conjunction with the dripping oil, argues that, given the aforementioned unglazed nature of the flasks, they may have absorbed the oil and its intermixed smells, maintaining the distinctive scent of Abu Mina and reminding the owner of their time visiting the shrine (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 193, 195).

Ultimately, the Menas flasks gained an extreme degree of popularity that extended across the Mediterranean and contributed to the disparate nature of find spots. Drescher makes note of the fact that they “have been found in places as far apart as Cologne and Dongola, Marseilles and Jerusalem” (Drescher 1946: xi). Bangert, acknowledging their appearance even in places as far from Abu Mina as Britain, notes how their regional popularity must have also been exceptional insofar as, with interested modern buyers, many “...were bought at the bazaars in the Near East” (Bangert 2010: 306-307). Clearly, these Menas flasks had the potential to travel the known world, perhaps exchanging hands, and most definitely carrying different meanings in different social contexts. Having outlined the physical attributes of these flasks, it is now possible to reconstruct—admittedly with some conjecture—how these flasks might have been perceived, carried, and used as an item of spiritual and social import. In doing so, insofar as the flasks were used in an interaction with the oil of the site itself, I choose the vantage point of a processing pilgrim to highlight the accompanying sensate experience.

Imagining the flask

Having established the physical properties of a typical Menas flask, it becomes possible to conceptualize the way in which it might have interacted with the site of Abu Mina, with the pilgrim who presumably owned it, and with a litany of social contexts. Such a depiction might allow for a better understanding of the emotional content and sensory stimulation that must have accompanied a visit to Abu Mina. While a description of the physical properties of a flask might aid in the visualization of such an object, the object becomes informative with respect to its bearer when its movement and broader meaning are considered.

Stopping outside of the *peribolos* of the religious site, or perhaps hailing from this residential quarter itself, a visitor to the shrine of St. Menas might have felt compelled to buy their favorite

of the many Menas flasks available (Grossman 1998: 293). With kilns at work throughout the day, no doubt the surrounding residents had recognized the demand for such flasks and attempted to meet such a desire with a steady supply (Grossman 1998: 293). Chances are that such a pilgrim, if not “local” per se, hailed from relatively nearby, although a long-distance traveler, perhaps looking to tour other shrines such as that of St. Thecla while in the area, would not be out of place, hauling a knapsack of personal goods to the built-in dormitory at the church’s back, carrying small change for food within the town or astutely planning their trip to coincide with a feast day (Bangert 2010: 295). Such a figure may also have been poised to spend considerable time at the site in hopes of medical care (Grossman 1998: 288). Embarking on the journey to the site itself, perhaps via the ever-narrowing *embolos* running North to South, the disparate sizes of the flasks would have been immediately apparent (Grossman 1998: 287). Some fellow travelers may have opted for the largest of the flasks with a diameter almost a foot long in measurement; undoubtedly, these ambitious pilgrims, hoping to take away from the shrine the maximum amount of oil, would have been forced to use both hands in transporting the flask, especially if throngs of an ever-condensing crowd made gripping a handle and swinging the flask by their side impractical. Maybe, with such sites necessarily ebbing and flowing in their population on account of seasonal changes, a less busy day would have best accommodated the use of the largest flasks. Some pilgrims, either without such a desire for a vast quantity of oil or else avoiding the considerable weight these larger vessels might have taken on when filled to the brim with pungent liquid, may have selected as their vessel of choice a relatively small flask, perhaps even small enough to fit naturally into the palm of their hand. Still others, attributing greater significance to their own objects or else trying to avoid the necessarily high prices of the area’s tourist economy, might be seen equipped with statuettes ranging in style and origin from across the Mediterranean. It may have been impossible to determine if an adjacent pilgrim was carrying a family heirloom or

a prized possession to the site or whether, by looking, the object's aim of drawing attention would have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, as the crowd rubbed shoulder-to-shoulder on a busy day of the year, the grunts, voices, smatterings of local and foreign languages, and the accentuation of a foul-smelling neighbor's stench amongst a group of recently-bathed pilgrims might have well reflected the similarly diverse array of objects in hand. A loud groan might be heard, piercing through the usual hubbub as an ailing individual sought healing from the saint in exchange for their earthly goods; for others, the worldly goods may have been the precise ailment they wished to escape.⁷



*Figure 4: female figurine found near the shrine, supposedly Greek and made in the fourth century*⁸

Getting ever closer to the body of the saint, some pilgrims may have stopped at the external walls of the basilica to get their fair share of oil (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 194). Perhaps a few knew that there would be oil at the body of the saint and were partially filling their flask as insurance against the jockeying of crowds in the crypt, others may have been prepared to fill up their flasks at the

7. Dedications of wealth to Menas are scattered throughout the miracle accounts as individuals seek to repay the saint's graces (or otherwise placate his anger). See "the first miracle" at Drescher, 110-111, for instance.

8. Higgins, R. A. "Terracottas." *The British Museum Quarterly* 33, no. 3/4 (1969): 117-20. Accessed March 7, 2021. doi:10.2307/4423030.

first sight of holy oil, while still others may have simply been following along. With some smoothness added to the coarse exterior of the flask as an imprecise filling could cause some spillage, some visitors may have struggled to grip and hold near their vessel as the group funnelled into the sacred space.

The great basilica would have cast a domineering shadow over the landscape and would undoubtedly have been marked as the pilgrim's destination. A pilgrim's first steps, as they moved eastward, would most likely have been through the relatively new baptistry (Grossman 1998: 283). Nearly the size of the upcoming tetraconch church, this space may have been the primary destination for some visitors, looking to be formally initiated into the faith at such an important site; indeed, given the curved space to the east of the basilica's altar, Grossman suggests that the site may have been the seat for prominent church figures along with their respective bishop (Grossman 1998: 283). Here a body of passers-by may have paused to revel in what must have been very welcome shade, with some even perhaps eager to touch or possibly drink from the water before them. Following the baptistry, the unique "double shell tetraconch" of the church itself may have come as a surprise (Grossman 1998: 283). With relatively parallel, straight walls enclosing this section of the site, the domed ceilings may have caused a sudden reverberation of the crowd's noise, ultimately encouraging the visitors to quiet down as they approached the body of the saint himself, housed in the narthex (Grossman 1998: 286). In proceeding to the downward stairs that would ultimately lead to Menas' body, another chance for oil-collection would have arisen at the altar "in front of the eastern conche" of the aforementioned church (Grossman 1998: 285). Undoubtedly, the aroma of this mixture would have been extremely pungent as its scent permeated the relatively small space. This, along with the newfound reprieve from the heat, would have only been accentuated underground in the crypt.

As the wave of Christians left the body of their martyred brother in Christ, perhaps the carrying of a Menas flask would not be so conspicuous. As mentioned above, it might even be expected

that, as the pilgrims exited the space, so too did a collection of these souvenirs. While some may have lightened their load by leaving their figurine at the shrine itself, for most the return journey might have called upon their strength even more as they bore the weight of the clay and the addition of various quantities of oil. Some individuals may indeed have chosen to use their Menas flask in differing ways; perhaps one visitor chose to house water in the way Drescher has suggested, perhaps others, valuing the iconography of the flask above all, simply were satisfied with an empty vessel, a light keepsake that would have made for relatively easy travel (Drescher 1946: xi).

As men, women, and children, contemplative and joyous, perhaps even healed from their visit to the shrine, exited Abu Mina, however, these flasks would have no doubt gained novel meaning dependent on the course and distance of their journey. On the one hand, for a local visitor—as many pilgrims hailed from nearby townships within Egypt—a flask may have been very recognizable to their surrounding community (Bangert 2010: 295); as the pilgrimage site existed far from the metropolis of Alexandria, a significant portion of the population may have even contributed to this economy of pilgrimage or else have known someone who did. People may have been ready to display their large quantities of oil, the relative beauty of their particular flask, or the flasks may have been inconspicuously nestled into various households as a function of the desires and social disposition of their owners. For those travelling across Egypt, the flasks might potentially be marked as non-local, as drawing the attention of a viewer, and as a testament to the great lengths the owner went to pay their respect to St. Menas. Undoubtedly, the clay composition would not have looked foreign, but perhaps Menas' iconography was associated with a relatively arduous trip. Perhaps the oil was gained for a medical need or even to recreate the baptismal rites of Abu Mina (Grossman 1998: 284). With the shrine and saint associated with healing, the oil may have been a precious commodity for a town or hamlet or even the family of its owner. Maybe this oil was to be rubbed on a particular wounded body part, or perhaps it was used in conjunction with local medicinal

practice, carrying a sort of spiritual dimension to aid in the recovery of the physical.⁹ While the flask would undoubtedly be inconvenient to carry with a pilgrim regularly throughout the day, its owner may have been marked as a figure possessing sacred fluid, to-be-approached for their precious oil, and endowed with a degree of respect and even authority as someone who had visited the shrine and borne witness to any “Holy Mysteries” (Drescher 1946: 144). For those flasks that made journeys across oceans to places scattered along the Mediterranean coast and beyond, they may have been transported homeward by a long distance pilgrim, or, perhaps more likely, they may have changed hands a number of times, becoming heirlooms to-be-passed between family members, becoming gifts of religious significance, perhaps even being sold as an exotic testament to Christianity made manifest in the desert. Undoubtedly these flasks (along with any replicas that may have been made far afield) would have provoked questions about their origin, their story, and their iconography. That being said, as St. Menas and his cult rose to a privileged state of prominence, even in these distant areas the flasks could have conferred social status, could have, analogous to the asceticism of a bishop, imbued the owner with a degree of earned authority (Rapp 2005).

Undoubtedly, the significance of a Menas flask would continue, perhaps even be augmented, upon leaving the sacred precinct of the saint’s shrine. Moreover, such an importance likely remained across generations as a reminder of an ancestor’s piety and devotion, for instance, or simply as a tool to use in times of sickness or peril. Thus, a careful consideration of the sensory aspects of a Menas flask highlights important information regarding the experience of pilgrimage to Abu Mina and the social role one’s status as “pilgrim” might have conferred: “it is precisely at the micro-level of phenomenological experience that the

9. “The fifth miracle” found at Drescher, 119; for a review of the ways in which only recently religion has been recognized as contributing to medical knowledge in Late Antiquity, see Marx-Wolf, Heidi, and Kristi Upson-Saia. “The State of the Question: Religion, Medicine, Disability, and Health in Late Antiquity.” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8, no. 2 (2015): 257-272. doi:10.1353/jla.2015.0029.

meaning of pilgrimage is constructed, as bodies move through space” (Hunter-Crawley 2017: 189).

Comparative insights via the material

As both the site of Abu Mina and the Menas flasks have objective purchase on any understanding of pilgrimage to the remains of St. Menas, so too might they be used in the comparative to assess how such a manifestation of early Christianity’s spread across Egypt and the Maryût region affected the landscape and its inhabitants. To reiterate, such an investigation is best taken not as elucidating general trends in votive deposition or infrastructure across the Mediterranean or even the region during Late Antiquity, but rather as a theoretical model with which to approach objects and spaces in their context to assess their significance.

In approaching Abu Mina and the Menas flasks with an eye to change over time, naturally a few core questions stand out: What did the area look like before the Christian site? How does associated material such as the Menas flasks relate to and diverge from earlier (and later) artistic models? Did the Arab conquest of the region alter the spiritual landscape, leaving a material imprint? What does this mean to the experience of a pilgrim or to a local of Maryût?

On the one hand, what emerges from a comparison between pre-Christian and Late Antique Christian votive material and spiritual space is a large degree of continuity. In terms of deposited votive offerings, Bangert, citing Moorey (Moorey 2003), notes how, especially in considering the lesser-studied offerings from Abu Mina, symbology and style might be supplanted from a non-Christian context into a Christian one as “These figurines are a typical example of a well-established prehistoric tradition of the Levant, where such figurines are seen over millennia and in particular the combination of female figures and horse-riders” (Bangert 2010: 307). Thus, despite possibly being meant to represent different individuals, particular typologies of objects

were invested with marked religious power in the Eastern Mediterranean over the *longue durée*. Lucca Ricci, an undergraduate student from UC Berkeley, has even gone so far as to suggest that the selfsame items that were used in pre-Christian Egypt may have been repurposed for Christian worship in the area (Ricci 2015). Elsner also arrives at a similar conclusion in positing the early Christian co-opting of artistic motifs and even the pre-Christian religious import ascribed to works of art and iconography (Elsner 1996: 515-31). Thus, while the advent of Christianity undoubtedly influenced the way people conceptualized fundamental aspects of religion such as God and the afterlife, material continuity exists with respect to artistic themes and the reverence for powerful icons. Bangert even notes a large degree of continuity when it comes to the production of votive offerings and souvenirs as the pivoting from making non-Christian to Christian votive material demonstrates “how easily existing customs can be incorporated into new religious environments for economic as much as ideological reasons” (Bangert 2010: 311).

With respect to the site of Abu Mina itself, there is disagreement as to whether the site had a religious function during the pre-Christian period; that being said, relatively more recent studies seem to suggest that in this sphere too a degree of continuity is demonstrable. Drescher emphatically relates his belief that the Christian complex at Abu Mina was a novel intervention in the landscape as “in any case it does not appear that St. Menas’ famous shrine was ever a pagan temple...the archaeological evidence agrees with the literary in knowing only Christian churches on the site” (Drescher 1946: viii). That being said, the analysis of Grossman is more telling insofar as it looks beyond the binary of temple-presence and no-religious-activity. Grossman, in introducing the history of construction at Abu Mina relates how “small statuettes of monkeys and miniature stelae of the god Horus-Harpocrates, discovered...in the earlier burial sections of the *hypogaeum*, suggest that this area goes back to the pagan period” (Grossman 1998: 282). Thus, while the Christian monumental architecture at Abu Mina undoubtedly represents a significant

intervention that would have had far-reaching repercussions on the economy of the region, the area's seasonal population, and the religious significance of the site, nevertheless, material testimony for religious observance in the area exists for the pre-Christian period. Vlastimil Drbal, in exploring the religious location of Mamre in modern Palestine and the way it evolved throughout Late Antiquity, makes note of how spaces in general might not even be considered definitively "Christian" or "not-Christian" as he notes enduring "non-Christian pilgrims" visiting sites that, according to various ecclesiastical authors, had been delineated by Constantine as exclusively for Christian worship.¹⁰

Grossman provides helpful background when it comes to the site during and after the Arab conquest. Grossman speaks to the architectural destruction derivative of earlier Persian invasion and describes how, by the end of the Arab conquest, it was the Coptic church who maintained control over Abu Mina as a sacred site (Grossman 1998: 296-297). Furthermore, he notes how the site, serving as home and spiritual center for a new body of inhabitants, was carved up architecturally in a number of novel ways, with subdivision of real estate the rule (Grossman 1998: 297).

Thus, the material culture deposited at Abu Mena and the remains of the site's buildings themselves allow for a picture of the locale over time, with continuity preserved with respect to religious imagery and the place's importance, and change illustrated via the growth and decay of the infrastructure the site boasted. Such changes and continuations would have perhaps had an even larger effect on the local population than the particulars of the site itself as the amount of yearly visitors and the presiding ecclesiastical body would have determined economic activity in the area, the ascribed importance to the site as an important holding of the church, and thus the degree to which Maryût, a

10. Drbal, 245-246 via Kristensen, Troels Myrup, Wiebke Friese, and Vlastimil Drbal. "Pilgrimage and Multi-Religious Worship" In *Excavating Pilgrimage: Archaeological Approaches to Sacred Travel and Movement in the Ancient World*, 245-262. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

day's journey from Alexandria, was interconnected with the broader religious world.

Methodological weaknesses

As noted at the outset, the analysis above is in no way meant to be taken as representative of all pilgrimage. In fact, the necessity of analyzing objects derivative of a distinct time and place undermines any attempt to discuss religious movements and their implications in broad strokes. Thus, the sort of careful examination used to interrogate the Menas flasks is best used to come to grips with the social realities of a given place at a given time and is not well-suited to analyzing systemic differences across religious shifts. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the reconstruction of a lived experience—in the manner deployed above when describing a pilgrim processing through Abu Mina—requires a degree of inference, conjecture, and ultimately educated guesswork. While patterns of movement and objects-carried might open a window to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of individuals, there is undoubtedly an interpretive leap in asserting such internal states. When done well, such a leap might resonate on a human level insofar as it outlines a probable reaction or an imaginable scenario, yet it would be foolish to not acknowledge that such storytelling is necessarily rooted in the teller's own frame of mind, and, to an extent, their own emotional experience. Lastly, as Bangert rightly notes, the tendency to focus on objects and places of great significance and popularity, as I have here done, neglects the more intimate and less formalized aspects of religious devotion that would have, in all reality, constituted the majority of such experiences. Considerable work needs to be done in the realm of survey archaeology and object classification to create a clearer picture of how different people in different spaces manifested their spirituality materially (Bangert 2010: 293).

Conclusion

Recent scholarly criticism has emerged regarding the prototypical separation of text and material when constructing historical realities. Trimble, for instance, calls for epigraphical reconciliation between the written text and the medium (Trimble 2016: 447-472). Furthermore, Droogan laments the anachronistic cleavage historians have imposed upon religious studies, separating the “spiritual” from the “material,” in an act that recreates postmodern religious sensibilities rather than Ancient lived experiences (Droogan 2014: 3). In an effort to reconcile text and object, specifically with regards to religious studies, Osborne calls for a study of material assemblage rather than one of material typology (Osborne 2021: 1-10). In suggesting such a methodology, Osborne suggests that conglomerations of votive objects, for instance, might be better characterized based on their find spot rather than their physical form. Who could guess that the statuette from Greece found at Abu Mina was a declaration of Christian piety simply using artistic considerations? While Osborne is right to front sacred space as a potential indicator of an object’s religious import, the study of the Menas flasks and their importance to the reconstruction of the pilgrimage experience highlights a notable oversight on the part of Osborne: while objects might have been deposited at a site in an act of religious sacrifice, so too might a representative piece of the site have been taken away as a keepsake for the pilgrim. An assemblage-oriented approach would necessarily neglect the prevalence of Menas flasks across modern Africa, Europe, and the Near East, for instance, and might have the circular effect of assuming that religious objects come from religious sites and that religious sites come from religious objects. Indeed, assemblage and typology need not, as demonstrated, remain wholly separate and can combine to offer the critical insight of how objects might take on different meanings in different spaces. Ultimately, a careful consideration of object and space—Who had it? Where is it? Did it move? What does it feel like? Smell like? How might it be moved? What might it represent? What contributes to its value?—allows for a nuanced

consideration of spiritual realities in a given place and time, and, what's more, can even serve as a useful yardstick for comparative inquiry. To accurately represent what spirituality meant to the men, women, and children who were not part of an elite and enfranchised class in Late Antiquity, objects and space need to guide the way.

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The Old Lie

Leo McMahon

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori. It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country. This line is probably the most notorious in all Horace's works, repeated for generations after Horace's death as a rousing encouragement for soldiers about to sacrifice their lives in war. Ode 3.2 received particular scorn, however, in Wilfred Owen's poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," which blasts Ode 3.2 as "the old Lie."¹ Horace's writing originated from a particular cultural context, that of Augustan Rome, but while this setting can help explain the tone of Ode 3.2, its continued resonance in the modern world indicates that there is more to Horace's militaristic exhortation than simple propagandizing for Augustus. To understand this ode to *virtus*, it is necessary to examine Horace's situation and language. Yet it is also necessary to look at the broader picture to fill the gaps left by the simplistic view of war Horace espouses in this poem.

Ode 3.2 is foremost Horace's defense of Roman ethical and cultural values both in war and in peace. The sentiments, while not universally held in Rome, are certainly quintessentially Roman and Augustan. In keeping with Augustus' moral legislation and this poem's inclusion in the political Roman Odes, Horace here urges austerity as a virtue: "*Angustam amice pauperiam pati*" (1). As is evident in his other works, Horace is not hostile to enjoyment – and even extravagance – by any means, but in Ode 3.2 he upholds the traditionalist Roman perspective of antagonism toward luxury and praises those who endure hardship *amice*. Notably, Horace, now no longer a young man, calls the object of this poem *puer*. This framing causes the poem to seem like advice from an older and wiser man when, in fact, Horace was only briefly a soldier.

1. Certainly, this is the context in which I first heard the poem ridiculed.

More than cultural mores, Horace's exhortations are based in Rome's historical situation. He urges the *puer* to vex the "*Parthicos ferocis*" (4), one of the few peoples, along with the Germans, whom the Roman Empire was unable to conquer despite many wars. And far from the Romans vexing the Parthians, the elusive Parthian cavalry, known for their ability to fire arrows while riding in any direction,² harassed and vexed Roman armies. Having strayed from his typical terrain of nature and wine, Horace returns by praising "*vitamque sub divo*" (5), which furthers the poem's encouragement of military activity in defense of the state while remaining suitably Horatian.

The following lines present a peculiar fantasy of barbarian women watching their menfolk die by Roman iron. The use of the jussive subjunctive (*suspiret*) makes the image all the more disturbing because it is not a mere description of fact but a picture that Horace wishes for. The brutality of the picture is all the more salient because of the description of the young barbarian fighter as "*rudis agminum*" (9). The opponent of the Roman *puer* is no hardened warrior but a youthful fiancée who seeks to avoid death and contact with his opposite: "*laccessat...asperum/ tactu leonem*" (10-11). Horace even goes so far as to describe the Roman as a *leonem* with the clear implication that he will make short work (in *caedes*) of the pitiful bridegroom. This image strikes the modern viewer rather poorly; Horace apparently does not concur with the modern conception of a fair fight but, as Romans were wont to do, simply cheers on victory for Roman arms, even in such a bloody-minded way as reveling in the slaughter of youths before their mothers and lovers.

These same lines also call to mind well-known sections of the *Iliad*. In Book 22, Hecuba stands on the walls of Troy and watches Hector die by the hand of Achilles. The metaphor of the lion, a common device in Homeric simile, reinforces this link.³ This

2. The renowned "Parthian shot"

3. Alternatively, this passage could simply be drawn from countless examples of Roman sieges. The defeat of Boudica and the resulting slaughter of the Britons' families, who had gathered to watch the battle, is particularly strong in my mind – though this

allusion to Homer⁴ makes the passage less objectionable in its gratuity. Nevertheless, Homer himself has a tendency to relish describing bloodshed and Horace did choose to use a jussive, so it seems likely that the desire for slaughter reflects a very real Roman and Horatian cultural motif beyond a Greek linguistic inheritance.

The fourth stanza is the zenith of the militaristic section of Ode 3.2. The last three lines of the verse are standard, plain exhortations not to flee in battle because even flight cannot save one from death.⁵ The one interesting aspect of these lines is the use of “*imbellis iuventae*” (15). Nowhere in the Ode does Horace use *milites* to describe the Roman soldier, only *puer*, *leonem*, and *iuventa*, a choice that reflects the citizen character of a Roman army (even with its increasing professionalization) made up of citizen youths fighting *pro patri*.

Line 13, “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” (13), however, continues to vex the modern reader. S.J. Harrison produced an interesting exploration of the Greek literary precedent for such an interesting line, particularly Horace’s perplexing use of *dulce* to describe death for Rome. He traces the use of “sweet death” forward to the second century AD author Achilles Tatius (Harrison 1993: 92), who wrote that, for the sake of friendship, “*γλυχὸς ὁ θάνατος*.”⁶ Despite the similar usage by Tatius, *dulce* seems an odd way to think of death, even one nobly accepted for one’s comrades and homeland. The falseness of Horace’s description may originate from his lack of familiarity with war. He may have served as a tribune for a brief spell, but Horace was no soldier, and his nonchalance in encouraging men to go to their deaths is clear proof of that fact.

particular battle occurred afterwards, under Nero’s regime, so Horace was surely unaware of it. Regardless, this type of situation was not rare in Roman warfare.

4. David West has similar views on this point (see: Horace Odes III, p. 26)

5. In fact, in hoplite battles, very few soldiers were killed in the battle itself, often only a few dozen. Only when the phalanx collapsed into flight (and the hoplites’ interlocking shields became useless) did large numbers of men die. This context makes it clear that what Horace argues is not just rhetorical; in the Greek literary tradition he was continuing, this advice would be literally true as well as stirring.

6. In the context of the original work, roughly “death would be sweet”

A comparison between Horace's Ode 3.2 and Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est" reveals the limits, but also the importance, of Horace's perspective. Owen, unlike Horace, had experienced the horrors of war in their full intensity on the Western Front, and this experience gave him a wildly divergent point of view from Horace. Where Horace ignored or even celebrated the inevitable carnage of war, Owen condemned it with an urgent intensity. His writing gives a feeling of combat and its chaos in a way Horace never attempts. This vividness ("An ecstasy of fumbling/fitting the clumsy helmets just in time" (9-10)) shows that Owen understands how his war felt to the men in combat. Horace can write with mere platitudes about patriotism and allusions to Homeric epic because he knows war only from one battle, Philippi, in which he threw away his shield and fled.

This divorce from the reality about which Horace writes gives this ode the appearance of sanctimony; an older man living in the lap of luxury tells youths about the sweetness and honor of dying for king and country. As Owen writes: "My friend, you would not tell with such high zest/ to children ardent for some desperate glory/the old Lie: Dulce et decorum est/ pro patria mori" (25-28). Particularly given Horace's admission elsewhere of cowardice in combat, this poem is the height of hypocrisy. That the phrase "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" was once in popular use hundreds of years after Horace's peaceful death by elites as comfortable as Horace himself only further illustrates the limit of Ode 3.2's perspective on combat.

Owen captures this other side, the point of view of the disillusioned soldier. Poison gas was not in use during Antiquity, but Owen's description of a dying victim of a gas attack is more wrenching than anything Horace wrote about the subject: "the white eyes writhing in his face/his hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin/...the froth-corrupted lungs/obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud/of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues" (19-24). This brutality is the other side of the fighting and dying that Horace praises so glibly. Part of this difference is the limited expressive power of Horace's style of lyric poetry, but Horace also exudes a certain aloofness from the reality of war that constrains him still

further. Conversely, Owen is willing to throw himself enthusiastically and stylistically into his descriptions of soldiers: “Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots/ but limped on, blood-shod” (5-6).

This difference between Horace and Owen is not simply one of different culture and era, either; Horace’s phrase retained wide currency in Owen’s day⁷ – and, to a lesser extent, in the present – and plenty of Roman authors showed reasonable scrutiny of fighting. Tacitus understood Owen’s perspective when he wrote⁸ of the Roman conquest of Britain: “*ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*” Their split is the same split that has occurred throughout human civilization. Each describes a certain aspect of war, but because of the essential ambivalence of war, neither is able to see the other side of the wars they write about. Owen, considering his greater personal experience and more serious attempt to describe the details of battle, may have done a more complete job in portraying the experience of war. But while Horace may not have been much of a soldier, his writing too⁹ reflects the perspective of many soldiers from Rome to the modern day who have fervently believed in the glory of war and the ecstasy of slaughtering a despised enemy. Aside from the artificiality of 3.2, that poem and “Dulce et Decorum Est” together comprise a more complete picture of warfare, one that encompasses its needless suffering as well as the sublimity of a heroic fight.

This contrast between Wilfred Owen and Horace accentuates Horace’s weaknesses because Owen’s strengths are precisely Horace’s vulnerabilities. Horace is too polished, too beholden to his patrons, and too insincere. Technically, his poetry shows the highest level of mastery, but there is a visceral intensity missing. When he writes about war, one can appreciate the elegance of his

7. Astonishingly, at the time, the phrase was the motto of the Royal Grammar School (a children’s school).

8. In a speech ostensibly delivered by a Caledonian chieftain (*Agricola*, Ch. 30)

9. Except, perhaps for *dulce*. I am skeptical that many soldiers, no matter how zealous, find death to be sweet.

construction, but one does not truly experience the scenes he sketches. It is not easy even to discern to what extent he cares about the message he is espousing because he is playing his role as a propagandist for Augustus' moral reforms and military campaigns. Thus, he produces a simplistic view of war as a glorious and virtuous pastime while blind to a good portion of the reality of the situation. Ode 3.2 follows this pattern exactly: expertly constructed but bloodless.

Carmen 3.2

By Horace; tr. [author]

Robust in fierce war, let the boy learn thoroughly
to endure needy poverty cheerfully
and let him as a fearsome cavalryman
vex the ferocious Parthians with a lance

and let him conduct his life under the open sky and in disturbed 5
matters. From the enemy walls
the wife of the warring king
and an adult maiden looking out at that one

may they sigh: "Alas, would that the royal betrothed, unacquainted
with the battle lines,
not provoke by a blow the rough lion, 10
whom bloody wrath seizes
though the middle of slaughters."

It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country:
death pursues even the fleeing man,
and it does not spare the knees 15
or the timid back of the unwarlike youth.

Prowess, ignorant of low repulse,
gleams with undefiled honors
and does not claim or put down the axes
by the judgment of the breeze of the populace. 20

Prowess, opening the sky to the undeserving of death,
attempts a journey by a denied way,
and spurns the assemblages of the multitude and
the moist earth by means of a fleeing feather.

And there is a safe reward for faithful silence. 25
I will reject whoever makes known the sacred ritual
of secret Ceres to be under these very beams
and to launch a fragile bark with me;

Often, Diespiter,
disrespected, added the blameless to the impure, 30
rarely does Poena abandon the preceding miscreant
although she has a lame foot

“Dulce et Decorum Est”

by Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots, 5
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time, 10

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight, 15
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin; 20
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest 25
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
 Pro patria mori.

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Martial's Burn Book: A Collection of Mocking Epigrams

Michael Geisinger

Introduction

Marcus Valerius Martialis was a Roman poet and satirist who lived and wrote in the first century C.E. Martial is considered a master of epigrams: a type of witty, memorable statement expressed in a brief phrase. Martial wrote twelve books of epigrams, most of which were comprised of a single elegiac couplet. The epigrams which I have translated below come from six of the twelve books of Martial's epigrams, and, in my opinion, they represent some of the funniest insults which Martial leveled against his friends and foes in the Roman world. Martial's epigrams are often read for their insight into the workings of Roman society and daily life in the later first century, which they undoubtedly provide in abundance. However, they are also meant to be witty, clever, and, at times, absolutely hilarious, aspects which can sometimes be overlooked when they are translated into English. Thus, my guiding principle when translating the epigrams below has been to write them in as humorous a way as possible, while still remaining true to the Latin original. Martial's epigrams are great fun to read, and I hope you will enjoy reading them as much as I enjoyed translating them.

Translations

I don't love you, Sabidius, nor am I able to say why.
The only thing I am able to say: I don't love you! (1.32)

You recite nothing- and wish, Mamercus, to seem a poet.
Whatever you want, you will be—provided you continue to recite
nothing! (2.88)

It is said Cinna would write little verses about me.
He ought not write, whose poems no one reads! (3.9)

Thais has black teeth, Laeonia has white teeth.
What is the reason for this? Laeonia bought her teeth, Thais has
her own! (5.43)

You say, “I am beautiful,” you say of yourself, Bassa, “I am
young.”
She who says these things is not either, Bassa! (5.45)

You want to marry Priscus; I’m not surprised, Paula, you have
great taste.
Priscus does not want to marry you: and he has great taste! (9.5)

I don’t know what you write to so many girls, Faustus.
But this I know: that no girl ever writes to you! (11.64)

You give me nothing while alive, you say, “I will give to you after
death.”
If you are not stupid, Maro, you know what I shall want! (11.67)

Nature and the Natural World in the Four Long *Homeric Hymns*

Abby Wells

The longer *Homeric Hymns* tell the stories of the gods and goddesses as they establish their places in the cosmos. Although each hymn focuses primarily on one or two gods or goddesses, the stories that these hymns tell take place largely on earth. Some of the hymns, like the *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, involve divine being interacting with mortals, the gods and goddesses in the hymns to Demeter, Aphrodite, Apollo, and Hermes interact with the natural world in which their respective narratives unfold. The natural world plays a role in each of these four hymns, but in the different hymns, nature enters and affects their stories in a variety of ways. Specific places, wild animals, as well as vegetation and trees all enter the longer hymns and affect the ways in which these divine stories are told.

Location, Location, Location

Specific places and spaces play a key role in several of the *Homeric Hymns*, and these hymns often establish important connections between certain deities and locations (Parker 1991: 3). As a result, spaces named in the *Homeric Hymns* can play key roles in establishing these gods and goddesses (Clay 1987: 499). One key location in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* is Mount Ida, outside the city of Troy. The poem itself introduces Mount Ida into the story: “Ἀγχίσεω δ’ ἄρα οἱ γλυκὸν ἕμερον ἔμβαλε θυμῷ, ὅς τ’

ἐν ἀκροπόλοις ὄρεσιν πολυπιδάκου Ἴδης βουκολέεσκεν βοῦς δέμας ἀθανάτοισιν ἐοικώς,” (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 53-55). Mount Ida’s introduction to the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* clarifies that Mount Ida is a natural, uncultivated space with words like πολυπιδάκου, and the phrase ἐν ἀκροπόλοις ὄρεσιν sets this mountain apart from civilization. But more importantly, Mount Ida comes into the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* at the same point that Anchises does. In fact the name of this particular mountain only appears in line 54 of this hymn, and it comes in the clause, “ὅς τὸτ’ ἐν ἀκροπόλοις ὄρεσιν πολυπιδάκου Ἴδης βουκολέεσκεν βοῦς δέμας ἀθανάτοισιν ἐοικώς,” which modifies Anchises and also reveals that Anchises shares traits with the immortals (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 54-55). Beyond this, the proceeding line marks a major turning point in this story—this line describes Zeus causing Aphrodite to fall in love with Anchises. Beyond the placement of its introduction into the story, Mount Ida serves as the location for the rest of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*’s story. The mountain is named again a few lines later: “Ἴδην δ’ ἴκανε πολυπίδακα, μητέρα θηρῶν, βῆ δ’ ἰθὺς σταθμοῖο δι’ οὐρεος.” (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 68-69). These lines come as Aphrodite arrives at Mount Ida in order to seduce Anchises. This description repeats the epithet πολυπίδακα, but it also adds the detail that Mount Ida is the μητέρα θηρῶν, further connecting this place to the wild, natural world. Jenny Strauss Clay notes the importance of Mount Ida as the site of Aphrodite’s seduction of Anchises, since the hymn’s description of this location connects the wild, unruly mountainside to Aphrodite’s tryst with the mortal (Clay 1989: 171). At the beginning of the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, Mount Ida creates a specific tone to the hymn’s narration of Aphrodite’s seduction of Anchises that colors the way the rest of the story unfolds.

Another important location in both the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is caves. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Hecate hears Persephone’s screams as Hades abducts her from a cave. The hymn gives this detail immediately after Persephone’s kidnapping: “ἄϊεν ἐξ ἄντρου Ἑκάτη λιπαροκρήδεμνος,” (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, line 25).

Hecate's location is significant because she is one of two gods who heard Persephone's cries even though the hymn describes Persephone's screaming, saying, "ἤχησαν δ' ὀρέων κορυφαὶ καὶ βένθεα πόντου φωνῆ ὑπ' ἀθανάτη, τῆς δ' ἔκλυε πότνια μήτηρ," (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, lines 38-39). Because the *Hymn to Demeter* is so clear about how pervasive Persephone's screams are, it is odd that only Hecate and Helios hear Persephone. As a result, Hecate's presence in a cave is notable, since it allows her to hear Persephone when almost no one else could. Clay also notices the important role this cave plays in the overall themes and story of the *Hymn to Demeter*, noting that Hecate's cave is located between the upper and lower regions of the world (Clay 1989: 219). This connection between the upper and lower regions of the world is important to the *Hymn to Demeter*, since Persephone ultimately connects these two worlds, since she spends half the year in the upper world with Demeter and the other half in the lower world with Hades.

Maia's cave in the *Hymn to Hermes* serves a similar function with the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. When the hymn mentions Maia's cave, it gives her reasons for living there: "[Μαῖα] μακάρων δὲ θεῶν ἠλεύαθ' ὄμιλον ἄντρον ἔσω ναίουσα παλίσκιον," (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, lines 5-6). By setting the scene in Maia's cave in this manner, the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* contextualizes the cave, as well as Maia's position with respect to the other gods. The hymn clarifies the purpose of Maia's cave: "ὄφρα κατὰ γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἔχοι λευκώλενον Ἥρην, λήθων ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητοὺς τ' ἀνθρώπους," (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, lines 8-9). Clay points out the importance of Maia's separation from the other gods, especially from Hera, for the stability of Zeus's rule (Clay 1989: 103). Beyond this, Maia's need to remain separate from Hera sets her in parallel with Leto in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The connection between the two Titanesses is important since Apollo plays a key role in the *Hymn to Hermes*. Maia's life isolated from the other gods also becomes an important aspect of Hermes' reasoning for stealing Apollo's cattle. Hermes tells his mother: "βέλτερον ἤματα πάντα

μετ' ἀθανάτοις ὀαρίζεν πλούσιον ἀφνειὸν πολυλήϊον ἢ κατὰ δῶμα ἄνθρωπον ἐν ἠερόεντι θαασσέμεν,” (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, lines 170-173). Hermes’ perspective on his isolation from the rest of the immortals reveals how Maia’s cave influences Hermes’ actions for the rest of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. These caves appear at the beginning of their respective narratives and introduce a key theme for both the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*,

The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* contains two very important locations in its story: the island of Delos and the area surrounding the spring Telephousa. In fact, these two places are particularly notable because they both appear as speaking characters in the *Hymn to Apollo*. Delos makes her appearance after the *Hymn to Apollo* gives a catalogue of all the islands Leto visited as she looked for a place to give birth to her son. This catalogue showcases one key aspect of the *Homeric Hymns*, since these texts are unique in their ability to move throughout the world rapidly, and this sort of rapid movement shows the Greek world beyond a selected few locations (McDonald 2016: xxi). Clay gives another reason for both the existence and location of this particular catalogue within the *Hymn to Apollo*—it blurs the line and transitions from the hymn’s prologue about Apollo’s power to the narrative of his birth (Clay 1989: 33). Yet the most notable part of this catalogue is its conclusion—Delos. The hymn’s characterization of Delos is particularly surprising because the island speaks to Leto itself. Delos’ speech uncovers a range of emotion in the island: from her initial rejoicing, “χαῖρε δὲ Δῆλος,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, line 61) to her fear at the thought of Apollo’s immense power, “ἀλλὰ τόδε τρομέω Λητοῖ ἔπος,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, line 66). On top of this emotion, Delos hints at an agenda to seek security and glory from her services to Leto when she calls for an oath from the Titaness: “ἀλλ’ εἴ μοι τλαίης γε θεὰ μέγαν ὄρκον ὁμόσσαι, ἐνθάδε μιν πρῶτον τεύξειν περικαλλέα νηὸν ἔμμεναι ἀνθρώπων χρηστήριον, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα πάντα ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπους, ἐπεὶ ἧ πολυώουμος ἔσται,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 79-82). Delos’ oath demonstrates the island’s desire for station and status, much like Hermes’ speech to

Maia in the *Hymn to Hermes*. In many of the *Homeric Hymns*, the natural world reacts to the gods and goddesses, but rarely does nature react using words the way Delos does here. Delos' speech to Leto provides a window into how the natural world perceives the changes that the birth of a new god brings to the cosmos.

Telephousa makes a similar speech to Apollo later in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. Like Delos, Telephousa comes into the hymn at the end of an extensive catalogue of places to which Apollo comes in his search for a site at which to establish his oracle. Clay also notes the importance of this catalogue in particular in establishing Apollo as a Panhellenic god not tied to one specific location (Clay 1989: 48-49). As with Delos, the *Hymn to Apollo* portrays Telephousa as having emotions that cause her to react to Apollo's quest for an oracle site and respond in kind: "ἡ δὲ ἰδοῦσα Τελεφοῦσα κραδίην ἐχολώσατο εἶπέ τε μῦθον." yet while Delos reacts with a mix of joy and fear at Apollo's birth, Telephousa reacts with anger. Her reaction sets her in opposition to Apollo, a dynamic that does not occur in the other *Homeric Hymns* (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 255-256). As a result of this dynamic, Telephousa's speech is quite opposite to the one Delos gave to Leto earlier in the hymn. While Delos herself explained her motivations and desires connected with hosting Apollo at his birth, it is the hymn itself, not Telephousa, that reveals Telephousa's motivations and desires behind her exchange with the god: "Ὡς εἰποῦσ' Ἐκάτου πέπιθε φρένας, ὄφρα οἱ αὐτῇ Τελεφοῦση κλέος εἴῃ ἐπὶ χθονὶ μηδ' Ἐκάτοιο," (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 275-276). The concept of κλέος plays an important role in both speeches, but Telephousa wishes to essentially steal κλέος from Apollo, while Delos asks Leto to swear that the island will retain the glory of possessing Apollo's first temple.

Wild Animals in the Natural World

Much like the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* portrays the nature reacting to changes in the immortal sphere, the wild animals in the

Homeric Hymns also react to the gods but in different manners, and these reactions can reveal quite a bit about each hymn's portrayal of the god or goddess whom it describes. The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* includes wild animals reacting to the goddess as she makes her approach to seduce Anchises: "οἱ μετ' αὐτὴν σαίνοντες πολιοὶ τε λύκοι χαροποὶ τε λέοντες ἄρκτοι παρδάλιές τε θοαὶ προκάδων ἀκόρητοι ἦϊσαν," (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 69-72). These wild animals serve as a contrast to the hymn's description of the goddess herself, armed to charm the Trojan prince: "ἔνθα δὲ μιν Χάριτες λοῦσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα θεοὺς ἐπενήωθεν αἰὲν ἔοντας, ἀμβροσίῳ ἔδανῳ, τό ρά οἱ τεθυωμένον ἦεν. ἔσσαμένη δ' εὖ πάντα περὶ χροῖ εἶματα καλὰ χρυσῷ κοσμηθεῖσα φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη," (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 61-65). This description of Aphrodite preparing herself for her tryst with Anchises seems as though it should occur in a civilized, cultivated space, yet wild beasts are drawn to Aphrodite as she walks with her garments of seduction. However, the *Hymn to Aphrodite* describes these animals with the participle σαίνοντες, revealing that these beasts are responding to the goddess and not acting in accordance with their nature (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, line 70). Altogether, the hymn's description of the animals following Aphrodite, combined with its portrayal of Aphrodite herself, divinely clothed to attract the mortal Anchises gives a clear picture of Aphrodite's power to command ἔρος. Aphrodite herself appears immaculately beautiful, yet she is followed by tame wild beasts, revealing that she is not as tame as she may appear on first glance. Clay summarizes the hymn's description of Aphrodite here: "Between the city and the dens of savage beasts, at the boundary between civilization and the wilds, lies the realm of Aphrodite. In this liminal area, the goddess comes upon Anchises," (Clay 1989: 172). However, it is not only in this scene that wild beasts appear during Anchises' encounter with Aphrodite. The *Hymn to Aphrodite* describes Anchises' bed, saying, "ἔς λέχος εὖστρωτον, ὅθι περ πάρος ἔσκεν ἄνακτι χλαίνησιν μαλακῆς ἐστρωμένον· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεν ἄρκτων δέρματ' ἔκειτο βαρυφθόγγων τε λεόντων, τοὺς αὐτὸς κατέπεφνεν ἐν οὔρεσιν ὑψηλοῖσιν," (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, lines 157-160). By

specifying the type of skins on Anchises' bed by repeating the word *λεόντες*, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* makes a specific connection between Anchises' bed and the scene in which the divine goddess approaches the mortal man. These skins retain the image set out earlier in the film, showing that Aphrodite's seduction is made from tamed savagery; Anchises hunted these animals in the wild, but he now uses them in the domestic setting of his bedroom. These two paradoxical descriptions of two key points in this hymn's narrative clarify Aphrodite's ability to combine domesticity with untamed, wild animals.

Another encounter with a wild animal comes in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* when Hermes finds a tortoise just outside his cave. When Hermes sees the tortoise, he speaks to it, revealing his perception of the newfound animal. Hermes tells the tortoise, “σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ’ ὀνήσιμον, οὐκ ὀνοτάζω. Χαῖρε φυῆν ἐρόεσσα χοροϊτύτε δαιτὸς ἐταίρη, ἀσπασίη προφαωεῖσα· πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο χέλυς ὄρεσι ζώουσα;” (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, lines 30-33). Hermes' choice of words indicates the effect his discovery has on him; his use of words like *σύμβολον*, *ὀνήσιμον*, and *ἄθυρμα* reveal that this discovery goes beyond simply happening upon an animal. Hermes almost embraces his discovery of the tortoise as a sort of fate by calling her a *σύμβολον*, and the *Hymn to Hermes* goes on to prove this observation to be correct, since Hermes' invention of the lyre from the tortoise's shell ultimately leads to his reconciliation with his older brother (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, line 30). Hermes' discovery of the tortoise represents a key point in the hymn's narrative, since it is the tortoise that inspires Hermes to create his first invention: the lyre. However, the tortoise's appearance in the *Hymn to Hermes* is quite different from the other instances where the natural world enters these narratives—the tortoise does not respond to Hermes' speech the way Delos and Telephousa do. Additionally, it is Hermes that seems to be influenced by the animal, unlike the animals in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* who were influenced by Aphrodite. This difference becomes increasingly important as the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, as Hermes' ability to

draw inspiration from nature to create his other inventions like his sandals that become crucial elements of the young god's tricks throughout his hymn. In the introduction to her translation, Diane Rayor notes that the subjects of the *Homeric Hymns* often present themselves as threats to the other gods (Rayor 2014: 8). Certainly Hermes' predisposition for invention gives him the ability to challenge the other gods—so much that he even presents himself as a threat to Apollo, and the tortoise's appearance in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* marks the beginning of Hermes' display of his creativity.

Flowers, Fruits, and Trees

The plants and vegetative life come into the narratives in some these *Homeric Hymns* at key points. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the scene containing Apollo's birth describes the natural world surrounding Leto at the moment Apollo comes into the world. Nicholas Richardson notes the importance of these scene during which a god is born for the narrative of these *Homeric Hymns* (Richardson 2003: xv-xvi). As a result, the descriptions of the natural world surrounding this scene play an important role in the *Hymn to Apollo's* narrative. The first notable description of the natural world at this point in the narrative is the palm tree, which the hymn describes Leto with the palm tree: “ἀμφὶ δὲ φοίνικι βάλε πήγχεε, γούνα δ' ἔρεισε λειμῶνι μαλακῶ, μείδησε δὲ γαῖ' ὑπένερθεν,” (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, lines 117-118). This scene is quite visceral compared with most of the language in this hymn, and the verb βάλε creates an evocative image of Leto throwing her arms around this palm tree. The presence of a tree in this scene is important in its own right. William Brockliss points out that trees are often associated with pillars in Greek thought (Brockliss 2019: 95-96). This connection is particularly important for the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, since the hymn begins with Apollo hanging his bow on a pillar on Olympus: “καὶ οἱ ἀπ' ἰφθίμων ὤμων χεῖρεσσιν ἐλοῦσα τόξον ἀνεκρέμασε πρὸς κίονα πατρὸς ἐοῖο πασσάλου ἐκ

χρυσέου,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 7-9). This scene is important, since it reveals both the extent of Apollo’s power and his refusal to use it against the other gods, and so the connection between the palm tree in Apollo’s birth and the pillars on Mount Olympus creates an important nod to Apollo’s massive power.

The palm tree is not the only notable piece of nature that appears in the *Hymn to Apollo*’s description of the god’s birth. At the birth of Apollo, the meadow in which he was born suddenly blooms with flowers: “χρυσῶ δ’ ἄρα Δῆλος ἅπασα βεβρίθει καθορῶσα Διὸς Λητοῦς τε γενέθλην, γηθοσύνη ὅτι μιν θεὸς εἶλετο οἰκία θέσθαι νήσων ἠπείρου τε, φίλησε δὲ κηρόθι μᾶλλον. ἦνθησ’ ὡς ὅτε τε ρίον οὔρεος ἄνθεσιν ὕλης,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 135-139). Like the palm tree, Delos’ transformation described here looks back to Delos’ description earlier in the hymn. When Leto first arrives at Delos, Delos describes herself saying, “ἐπεὶ ἦ κραναήπεδός εἰμι,” (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, line 72). The hymn’s use of words like χρυσῶ, ἦνθησ’, and ἄνθεσιν when it describes Delos after Apollo is born provides a vastly different image of Delos than the one Delos provides upon her first meeting with Leto (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, lines 135, 139). Brockliss notes the symbolic nature of flowers in Homeric texts, arguing that flowers often symbolize youth and rebirth (Brockliss 2019: 180-181). As a result, Delos’ spontaneous blooming not only nods to the birth of a new gods, but it also reveals a sort of rebirth for Delos—this island has gone from a state of barren anonymity to one of blossoming glory as the first home of Apollo.

In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, many key scenes are explicitly tied to nature and the natural world. Perhaps the most poignant scene in the whole hymn occurs at its opening—when Hades abducts Persephone using the narcissus flower. The hymn itself narrates this scene: “ἦ δ’ ἄρα θαμβήσασ’ ὠρέξατο χερσὶν ἄμ’ ἄμφω καλὸν ἄθυρμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθῶν εὐρυάγνια,” (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, lines 15-16). While the narcissus had a detrimental effect on Persephone that alters the course of her life, the hymn’s description of the flower itself and its origins shed light on why the narcissus was so enticing to the young goddess:

νάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φῦσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη Γαῖα Διὸς βουλήσι
 χαριζομένη πολυδέκτη θαυμαστὸν γανώωντα, σέβας τότε πᾶσιν
 ἰδέσθαι ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἠδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις· τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ρήϊς
 ἑκατὸν κάρα ἐξεπεφύκει, κῶζ' ἦδιστ' ὀδμή, πᾶς δ' οὐρανὸς εὐρύς
 ὑπερθε γαῖά τε πᾶσ' ἐγέλασσε καὶ ἄλμυρόν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.
 (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, lines 8-14)

This description reveals that Gaia created the narcissus at Zeus's behest. Clay notes the importance of this detail, mentioning Gaia's role in the birth of Typhon in the *Hymn to Apollo*; Clay argues that this scene in which Gaia serves Zeus's plan over Hera's shows an important shift in her loyalties (Clay, 1989: 213-214). This connection between the monster Typhon and the narcissus flower shows up in Brockliss' argument as well—he cites the narcissus as one of many instances in which Homeric poetry connects flowers with monsters (Brockliss 2019: 219, 226-228). On the other hand, Ann Suter argues that Persephone does not grab the narcissus simply because of its beauty; she instead takes hold of the flower because she subconsciously desires to be free from her mother and enter adulthood (Suter 2002: 56). Beyond its connection to Persephone's abduction, the narcissus also connects the upper world to the underworld. Brockliss notes a connection between flowers and death in Homeric poetry, and serves as a bridge between the living and the dead in the *Hymn to Demeter* (Brockliss 2019: 186-192). By using a flower as the trap that brings about Persephone's abduction, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* retains some ambiguity in what this flower actually represents. Like the flower itself, the symbolic interpretation of the narcissus has a hundred faces.

Like the narcissus, the pomegranate that Hades gives to Persephone is equally ambiguous. The hymn itself uses words like λάθρη to describe Hades' action in giving the fruit to Persephone (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, line 372), and Demeter later refers to this action with the phrase “ἐξαπάτησε δόλω” (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, line 404), but Persephone herself labels the pomegranate with the word βίη (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, line 413). Suter picks up on this discrepancy between the hymn's depiction of the pomegranate and Persephone's, citing it as a reason that there is

some difficulty in determining what exactly this fruit represents for Persephone (Suter 2002: 40-41). Suter reconciles this discrepancy by arguing that the pomegranate represents Persephone's desire to be free from her mother but not to be permanently separated from Demeter (Suter 2002: 58). However, this solution does not quite fully consider the emotion present in the reunion scene between mother and daughter, which the hymn narrates: “ἄλτο θέει[ν, δειρῆ δὲ οἱ ἔμπεσεν ἀμφιχυθεῖσα:],” (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, line 389). The strong verbs θέειν, ἔμπεσεν, and ἀμφιχυθεῖσα suggest strong emotions in both parties, and this scene does not suggest any reluctance on Persephone's part to be reunited with her mother. Like the narcissus, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* uses another piece of nature to connect the upper world with the underworld, but it does so with quite a bit of ambiguity. Yet this ambiguity conveys the difficulty in the hymn's narrative as a whole—the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is ultimately a story of family conflict and separation that ends in a tentative compromise.

Concluding Thoughts

The images of nature and the natural world in these four *Homeric Hymns* go beyond simple setting a scene for their respective narratives. These appearances of the natural world reveal another layer of symbolism and meaning to these stories. Without this nuance, these four *Homeric Hymns* would lose their remarkable ability to characterize, complex, multifaceted gods and goddesses. In each of these narratives, the scenery surrounding the god or goddess reveals and reinforces attributes of these divinities in a way that simple narrative cannot.

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Three Poems by Alcuin

Paul Michaud

These are three poems by Alcuin of York (c. 735 – 804 CE) which I have translated into English. Alcuin's work is not well-studied, except maybe here at Brown, and so I was surprised by how much of it seemed to reverberate through later poetry—as far into the literary future as in the nightingale poems of Keats and Coleridge and the inscription poems of Wordsworth.

My project here has been to expand on what I see as Alcuin's project of rigid form. For him, it seems to me, religious being is a kind of paradox—the intentionally strict restrictions of monastic life produce an otherwise unattainable freedom of mind and soul. The same idea seems to be replicated in his poetry—strict form leads to the freedom of multiple meanings and interpretations—and so I've tried to make these poems both rigid and playful, strict and free-form. In order to make the relationship between form and content a little clearer to us, who live now, I've chosen three later poetic forms: the sonnet, Terza rima, and a villanelle.

The Latin is included above each poem for two reasons: first, it is beautiful and worth reading; second, it may be interesting to see the liberties I'm taking in translating Alcuin's poetry. "A Nightingale Sonnet" is a fairly direct translation, "Terza Rima for an Altar" is less so, and I have called the third a poem "after Carmen 123" because, as a close reader will notice, it takes inspiration from, rather than directly translates, Alcuin's original poem.

I: A Nightingale Sonnet

Felix o nimium, dominum nocteque dieque
Qui studio tali semper in ore canit.

Non cibus atque potus fuerat tibi dulcior odis,
 Alterius voluerum nec sociale iugum.
 Hoc natura dedit, naturae et conditor almus,
 Quem tu laudasti vocibus assiduis:
 Ut nos instrueres vino somnoque sepultos.
 Somnigeram mentis rumpere segniciem.
 Quod tu fecisti, rationis et inscia sensus,
 Indice natura nobiliore satis:
 Sensibus hoc omnes. magna et ratione vigentes
 Gessissent aliquod tempus in ore suo.
 Maxima laudanti merces in secula manebit
 Aeternum regem perpes in arce poli.
 (Carmen 61, vv. 15-28)

Alas, too-happy master of both modes
 Who always sings with zeal in such a mouth:
 No food nor drink is sweeter than your odes
 Nor any other bird nor wedding-couch.
 Nature gave us this: a caring Founder,
 The One you praise with constant music-lines,
 To tell us, sleeping drunk and never sounder,
 To break apart the sloth which coats our minds.
 A sign you made, from reason and from sense,
 That there was nothing truer in the world:
 A sense which, fed by reason and from hence
 Is carried forth by all who trust the Word.
 Rewards for earthly praise are made of salt:
 The best rewards God keeps up in the vault.

II: Terza Rima for an Altar

Da tua celsithronus nobis suffragia semper.
 Exaudire preces famulorum. Christe, tuorum.
 Qui tibi vota ferant devoto pectore laudis,
 Perpetuam tribuens clementi muncre vitam.

Quisque deo lacrimas, lector, hanc fundis ad aram.
 Esto memor nostri, cecini qui carmina Christo.
 Exaudire preces famulorum, Christe, tuorum.
 Qui tibi vota ferant praesenti laudis in ara,
 Et da caelestis nobis pia dona salutis.
 Sis memor Alchuini, lector, rogo, carminis huius.

(Carmen 33)

Give to us your always-lofty mercy.
And hear, O Christ, the prayers of these your servants,
Raise them to you their vows of your great glory.

Give to the gentle ones unending life emergent.
And should we weep your Father at this altar,
Remember that for you we were observant

In prayer which we your servants long exalted.
Raise them to you more vows of your great grace,
Give us the life which never can be altered.

I ask you, reader, when you leave this place:
Keep me in mind, carved in this altar base.

III: Villanelle for Alcuin's Grave (after Carmen 123)

Hic, rogo, pauxillam veniens subsiste viator
Et mea scrutare pectore dicta tuo.
Ut tua deque meis agnoscas fata figuris:
Vertitur ó species, ut mea, sicque tua.
Quod nunc es fueram, famosus in orbe, viator.
Et quod nunc ego sum, tuque futurus eris.
Delicias mundi casso sectabar amore,
Nunc cinis et pulvis, vermibus atque cibus.
Quapropter potius animam curare memento,
Quam carnem, quoniam haec manet, illa perit.
Cur tibi rura paras? quam parvo cernis in antro
Me tenet hic requies: sic tua parva fiet.
Cur Tyrio corpus inhias vestiri ostro,
Quod mox esuriens pulvere vermis edet?
Ut flores pereunt vento veniente minaci.
Sic tua namque, caro, gloria tota perit.
Tu mihi redde vicem, lector, rogo, carminis huius.
Et dic: 'Da veniam, Christe, tuo, famulo.'
Obsecro, nulla manus violet pia iura sepulcri,
Personet angelica donec ab arce tuba:
'Qui iaces in tumulo, terrae de pulvere surge,
Magnus adest iudex milibus innumeris'.
(Carmen 123)

Stop here, I beg you, *viator*, and rest,
And ruminare these words deep in your heart,
So you may see in mine your fate's bequest.

Your form will alter, just as mine regressed:
I too was famous, just as you now art.
Stop here, I beg you, *viator*, and rest.

With empty lust I sought what looked best,
I am now ashes, dust, and food for vermin's part,
So you may see in mine your fate's bequest.

Why are you set on wearing Tyrian best?
The hungry worm will soon devour your heart,
Stop here, I beg you, *viator*, and rest.

I ask you something in return addressed,
Say 'Christ, forgiveness for my art.'
So you may see in mine your fate's bequest.

My name was Alcuin: I loved knowledge best.
Say silent prayers for me, before you part.
Stop here, I beg you, *viator*, and rest,
So you may see in mine your fate's bequest.

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Medical Anthropological Conceptualizations of the Xenon: An Entanglement of Empire, Eastern Monasticism, and Late Byzantine Medical Science

Jack Otero

Introduction

The Palaiologan era, dated between the 13th and mid-15th centuries, marked a period of great strain and challenge for the Byzantine Empire. The era is characterized by heightened military activity and warfare with Ottoman forces in Asia Minor and various militia groups in Eastern Europe, growing cognitive dissonance as the Empire endured several civil wars in 1321, 1352, and 1373, and repeated, destructive outbreaks of Bubonic plague in Constantinople. However, the Palaiologan era was also characterized by a profound Imperial emphasis on intellectuality and scholarly activity through participation in *theatra*, which became increasingly inclusive of medical authors and researchers from the 12th century on (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 2). In turn, a large-scale urban redefinition of Imperial healthcare systems was birthed, manifesting itself in a new image, role, and function of the Byzantine Hospital and Byzantine medical practices.

The Byzantine Hospital is a unique social arena and key area of study necessary in order to understand the intricacies of interactions and relationships between the Empire, the Eastern Church, and scholars of medical science during the late Byzantine Empire. The concept of the Byzantine Hospital originated with the implementation of the *typikon* of the Pantokrator Monastery in 1136 A.D. and became increasingly developed under the patronage

of the Palaiologan Dynasty during the late 13th century until the Ottoman invasion of 1453 A.D. (Wolford 2019: 196). Byzantine scholarly activity in medical science as well as patronage of the Byzantine Hospital were greatest between the 11th and 14th centuries, and therefore that is the period to which this paper pays close attention. This paper aims to contextualize and understand the relationships within the Byzantine Hospital and the sociopolitical web in which it was caught, as well as explore the period-specific evolution of medical technology. By conceptualizing Byzantine healthcare as an entanglement of Church, State, and Science, one can appreciate the exceptional nature of healthcare characteristic solely of the late Byzantine era, in which the unique context of the era commanded and birthed a previously unknown approach to health and human resources.

Entanglement: The Web of Relationships Between Church, State, and Science

Healthcare in late Byzantium may be understood as a manufactured process in which agendas and foci of three primary actors - Church, State, and Science - interplay in the creation of a final product - the Hospital, known as the *Xenon*. This network of relationships became increasingly tight knit as the sociopolitical conditions grew more influential on the *Xenon*. To understand the development of this web, one must pay close attention to the context of the health of the Palaiologan army, the redefinition of the Christian *polis* after the Fourth Crusade, the historical importance of Christian charitable organizations, as well as the general culture and events in Palaiologan Constantinople.

The sacking of Constantinople in 1204 A.D. marked the apex of the Fourth Crusade, in which Crusader armies led by the Republic of Venice captured and looted the Byzantine capital. Mass destruction of the urban cityscape and infrastructure left the metropolis in a state of disarray, leaving Constantinople in dismal condition until its recapture by Byzantine aristocrats from the

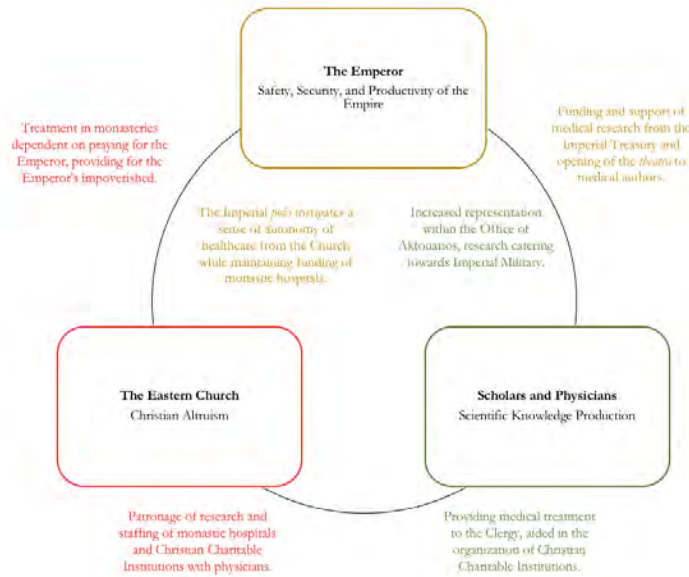
Empire of Nicaea in 1261 A.D. Despite the delays in reconstruction efforts when the city returned to Byzantine authority, the Fourth Crusade allowed for an opportunity to redefine the cityscape and urban structure of the Christian *polis*. This led to a birth of the presence of Christian charitable institutions integrated into the realms of health and social service, especially crucial considering the failures of unproductive government after the period of urban depression. Despite the rise of Christian charitable institutions in the city, the newly redefined Christian polis created a sense of autonomy for spheres of public life previously dominated by the Church, most importantly, healthcare. Following the sacking of the city, Constantinople's aristocracy reinvested capital into healthcare, creating larger hospitals to account for the city's growing need for human resources, especially pertaining to the defense of the city through a healthy armed force: The Palaiologan Army.

The Palaiologan Army was a successor state military force to the Komnenian Army. The Komnenian Army, established by Alexios I during the late 11th century, was a response to significant Byzantine defeats in southern Italy during ongoing conflicts with the Normans for western territories. The preceding Palaiologan Army, an extension of the Empire of Nicaea, aimed to be symbolic of a Byzantine revival after the dissolution of the formidable Komnenian Army. Emperor Michael VIII, the first of the Palaiologan Dynasty, emphasized heavy funding of the Navy, resulting in a strong naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, due to a lack of funding of land forces, as well as general poor fiscal organization and crippling bureaucratic red tape in the empire's central government during the reestablishment of post-crusade government authority, the Palaiologan Army heavily relied on mercenaries, typically of Serb, Bulgarian, Venetian, and Genoese origins. In accounts by Alexios Apokaukos, a prominent naval commander, disease was a major hindrance to the strength of the Palaiologan army, with living conditions for both land and sea forces ideal for the spread of dysentery, plague, cholera, and quartan fever. In this came a stronger focus on maintenance of

troops and military, with greater consideration for the importance of medicine and medical research. Without sufficient hospital capacity and treatment methods for endemic disease, the Palaiologan Army and its symbolism for Byzantine rebirth would be rendered ineffective, incurring a demand from individuals like Commander Apokaukos for new medical technology and healthcare systems.

To further contextualize healthcare in late Byzantium one must consider the historical importance of Christian charitable institutions. From the beginning of the first millennium, hospitals were almost entirely housed and supported by the Church, with monasteries and Churches hosting infirmaries and small sanitoriums, which catered to not only sick clergymen, but also to travelers, community members, and the Byzantine military. The Church is often credited with providing the human resources that the Byzantine government did not, including lodgings for travelers, sustenance to communities in need, and being the sole provider for healthcare, particularly the 'holy sickness', epilepsy. However, Christian charitable institutions were typically small, hosting up to only 20 beds, with the majority hosting fewer. As recalled by Alexios Apokaukos, the growth of the Byzantine army and Constantinople's rapid growth as a city demanded larger capacities for caring for the ill. This commanded a greater focus on medical research for new technologies, which was widely nonexistent in the Church, which relied on the same medical technologies in the 12th century as it had for hundreds of years.

From this milieu, the *Xenon* was birthed in a new, redefined conceptualization of Byzantine medical technology, human resource capacities, and urban infrastructure.



An illustration of the relationships and flows of the Byzantine Hospital.

The *Xenon* acted as an arena that harboured the interests of three primary factors in an equation. On one hand, the Emperor and State relied on the Hospital to ensure the productivity, health, and security of their military and populace. This is evident in *Case Histories in Late Byzantium: Reading the Patient in John Zacharias Aktouarios' On Urines*. One of the case studies included in this collection is John Zacharias's medical textbook *Medical Epitome*, which was not only commissioned by, but also dedicated to, Alexios Apokaukos, a commander of the Byzantine fleet, noted for having a "lively interest in medicine" (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 2). The relationship between State and Scholars in Byzantium is one based on politics and academia, in which specific Emperors of the Palaiologan Dynasty, notably Andronikos II, open the *theatra* to physicians (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 2). This was observed to be atypical as the *theatra* tended to be more focused on literature and the arts for the pleasure and intellect of the court. In turn, the relationship between physicians and the State

aided in the formation of the ideal “late Byzantine sophistic” (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 3) and an era of great scholarly activity in which the Emperor himself participated - a period which Petros Bouras-Vallianatos goes so far as to compare to the Second Sophistic. The *theatra* extended to politics, notably, with the transitioning of staff of the Office of Aktouarios. The Office of Aktouarios was an Imperial bureau which was charged with dealing with the finances of the Imperial treasury and government expenditures (Bouras-Vallianatos 2020: 183). However, from the 12th century on, the Office of Aktouarios became associated not with economists but instead with physicians, as more and more doctors became high ranking Imperial officials. By granting more physicians the title of Aktouarios, greater representation of medical scholars in high-ranking government positions from the 12th century forward allowed for increased Imperial funding of healthcare, contributing to the birth of medical knowledge during this period. Evidently, medical research and scholarly activity was visualized as an important Imperial focus for development and Empire, a focus that in turn had profound implications on social structure and public life.

The Eastern Orthodox Church adds an interesting facet to the dynamic between State and Science. *Xenones* took two forms, one in which the Hospital was integrated as a symbol of the new Christian *polis*, and another that housed the Hospital within the confines of a monastery or religious institution (Miller 1984: 53). Whilst prior to the 12th century there certainly did exist the popular use of inns, spas, and other institutions of health, some of which were associated with the Church and some of which were private, the Palaiologan Dynasty marks a point wherein hospitals “...took their place alongside of other buildings as representative features of Byzantine urban life,” while simultaneously “...despite their urban associations, monastic leaders occasionally included hospitals as a part of rural religious house” (Miller 1984: 57). The 12th century marks an important historical development of the Hospital, which then possessed some degree of autonomy from the Church, although only in urban contexts. Nevertheless, the 12th century saw a proliferation in Christian charitable institutions,

which provided care and aid to the sick in monasteries and also existed “so that the sick and poor may pray for the soul of the Emperor” (Wolford 2019: 196). This illustrates an important relationship of respect from the Church towards the Emperor, which may have been linked to patronage from the Crown to these monasteries. This can be seen, for example, in the signing of the *typikon* of Pantokrator Monastery by Emperor John II in 1136, which provided the monastery with the necessary endowment to fund an old age home and leper hospital (Wolford 2019: 196). Interestingly enough, despite the sense of autonomy from the Church that healthcare enjoyed in the 12th century, the treatment of epilepsy, which was considered the sacred disease, and leprosy remained limited to religious institutions such as Saint Zotikos Hospital (Wolford 2019: 196). This was largely associated with the “ancient tradition” of providing care for leprosy patients in monastery-housed clinics. The symbolism of Christian altruism tied with the charity of the Emperor created a distinctive patient-worship experience in which the healing and recovery of patients in the Hospital was partially dependent on their faith in God and loyalty to the Emperor.

The Unique Nature and Composition of Late Byzantine Medical Knowledge

The unique characteristics of Byzantine healthcare in the later years of the Empire is not only a result of a highly contextual entanglement between Empire, Church, and Medical Scholars, but was also partially attributable to the medical knowledge of the era. This is most clearly outlined in John Zacharias’ *On Urines*, published in an era with “...a flourishing of notable medical authors” (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 2). The period of the 12th century onward accounted for an increased number of medical volumes in circulation, with works of the Roman-era physician Galen being popular along with “...a considerable number of Arabic medical texts in Greek translation” (Bouras-Vallianatos

2016: 2). The 12th century coincided with the later years of the Golden Age of Baghdad, which, coupled with the already available Roman and Greek medical textbooks in the Empire, created a uniquely diverse understanding of medical science in Byzantium, particularly in the realms of pharmacy and humoralism. The influences of Arabic, Greek, and Roman physicians was rather obvious in the practice of Byzantine physicians. In the case of John Zacharias, a physician of the Imperial Court, his incorporation of case histories in patient files may have been directly linked to the work of Galen, who is the “...last medical author who made use of case histories” before Zacharias (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 3). As a leading physician of the court, Zacharias inspired and led much of Byzantine medicine’s transformation in the 12th century on. The informed and unique nature of medical science from the 13th century forward is especially traceable to the “...rich intellectual activity...in high style Greek” during the reign of the Palaiologan Dynasty (1261-1453) (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 4). Galenic case histories (or ιστορία, meaning written account, or inquiry in *On Urines*) contributed to a more significant shift between doctor-patient relationships that shows similarity to those of the modern era. An extract from John Zacharias’ *On Urines* demonstrates:

Του ζήτησα να φέρει το φιαλίδιο ούρων με τα ούρα του την επόμενη μέρα...Σύμφωνα με την κρίση μου, του έμαθα με λόγια ότι δεν πρέπει να δείξει δυσπιστία στους γιατρούς που τον διοικούν

I asked him to bring the urine vial with his own urine the following day....
According to my judgement, I taught him with words that he should not show
disbelief to the physicians that command him... (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 9)

This interaction demonstrates a physician's mentality of the time with hints of Galenic practices as well as emphasis on individualistic care popularized by doctors such as Ibn Sina (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 10). Atypical of the often generalized tendencies of medical practices before the 12th century in Christian charitable hospitals, the visual encounter of the urine vial, coupled with drug preparations and increased physician-patient interaction, transformed the Hospital experience into one of individualistic care

that patients were able to understand, and were more likely to respond to. Zacharias emphasizes his own close relationships with his patients, taking note in his records with his patients of their socioeconomic background, their experiences with his own professional expertise, and their response to his treatments. The shifting attitudes towards doctor-patient interactions introduced by physicians like John Zacharias and the improved technologies and information available in the 12th century thanks to increased medical literature output and circulation, led to the creation of healthcare technology and efficiency previously unknown. The focus on individualized care remains contradictory to the medical care found in Byzantine Christian charitable institutions, in which clergymen trained in medicine, yet who were not physicians, provided often rudimentary and generalized treatments for their patients.

Galen	John Zacharias Aktouarios
<i>On Anatomical Procedures</i> 7.13 (K. 2, 632, 5 = Garofalo, 459, 16): διὰ γὰρ τὸ χρήσιμον τῆς ἱστορίας [...].	<i>On Urines</i> 6.12 (Ideler 2, 163, 29-30): καὶ τοιαύτην ἱστορίαν ἐτέραν, καὶ ταῦτα προσεπιθήσω τῷ λόγῳ [...].
<i>On the Affected Parts</i> 4.8 (K. 8, 266, 11-12): βέλτιον οὖν ἔδοξε μοι καὶ ταῦθ' ὑμῖν ἱστορῆσαι.	<i>On Urines</i> 6.13 (Ideler 2, 166, 26-27): καὶ προσθήσω κάπὶ τούτων ἱστορίαν ἐτέραν σαφηνείας τινὰ τῶν λεγομένων ἔνεκεν.
	<i>On Urines</i> 7.13 (Ideler 2, 181, 12-13): καὶ ταύτην ἐπιθήσωμεν τὴν ἱστορίαν τῷ λόγῳ λυσιτελοῦσαν [...].
	<i>On Urines</i> 7.15 (Ideler 2, 186, 5-6): ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα θεῖς τῷ λόγῳ ἱστορίαν

The above table (Bouras-Vallianatos 2016: 5) compares the use of the term ἱστορία (case history) between Galen and Zacharias's written medical records. While written case histories were introduced by Galen, he mentions them in his own work at a lesser frequency than Zacharias, indicating the profound importance of ἱστορία in Zacharias's medical practices. While Zacharias took inspiration from Galen, the use of case history speaks to a broader

evolution of ancient Greek and Roman medicine into a more central and redefined importance in Byzantine healthcare.

The doctor-patient relationship has often been a point of contention in both ancient and modern medicine, being a connection often fraught with problems and delicate intricacies. Using primarily cognitive methods through explanatory models, the ιστορία model explains a greater documentation of empirical data in physician practices inspired by Zacharias, in which the considerations and issues between doctor and patient are recorded and explained. By focusing on humanistic aspects of health through the use of case histories, Byzantine medicine hence became intertwined with what health and sickness meant to the patient, providing insight to the physician's perspective about the consequences of a patient's beliefs and how it might have altered their prescribed treatment.

The importance of *On Urines* must not be understated, as Zacharias's publication inspired a transformation of Byzantine diagnostic medical capacities. The paper speaks to a new technology of diagnostics that was accompanied by a specialized vial commonplace in the *Xenon*, in which the φιαυτόν (high style Greek for vial) was used to separate urine into 12 different layers. Each layer represented a specific ailment, humor, and organ of the body, in which fluctuations in each layer pointed to a diagnosable condition. Zacharias further explains how the vial established clear trust and understanding in the patient, allowing them to visualize and comprehend the condition they suffer from. By allowing the patient to decipher the physician's actions through the use of the φιαυτόν, Zacharias's work allows one to conceptualize how the importance and acceptance of individualized care became common in Byzantine medical practice. Moreover, the φιαυτόν embodied a development of medicine that paralleled the people who use it, in which the vial is not simply a diagnostic, but an attempt to bridge and connect people, medicine, and professionals in the context of the *Xenon*.

Conclusion

In short, the later years of Byzantium saw an interesting and progressive phase of healthcare and medical technologies. Medical scholarly activity from the patronage of the Palaiologan Dynasty to the unique exchange of Empire, Church, and Science helped redefine medicine and healthcare, and ultimately the creation of the Byzantine Hospital. Through the redefining of the *polis* after the sacking of Constantinople of the Fourth Crusade, the *Xenon* emerged and grew into a remarkable social and political arena. Coupled with a birth of new Byzantine medical practices, particularly inspired by Byzantine physician John Zacharias who took inspiration from Arab and ancient Greek and Roman understandings of medicine, the *Xenon* in post 12th century Byzantium represents an important subject of study in the history of medicine and human health. These phenomena were birthed solely out of a highly contextual setting in an empire under pressures and trends that commanded a need for the *Xenon*, which holds key information to conceptualize Palaiologan Byzantium and the ancient practices of medicine in Asia Minor.

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Eleusis, and the Problems with “Megaron” B

Felix Montgomery

“Let a great temple, with a great altar at its base/ be built by the entire demos. Make it at the foot of the acropolis and its steep walls” (ll. 270-271). So relates the “Hymn to Demeter,” as that very goddess issues the aforementioned order to the royal family of Eleusis. Working within a tradition of “Homeric” archaeology, excavators like George Mylonas assumed that “the palace of the ruling prince,” built during the Late Helladic II and III, was in tandem with the introduction of the cult of Demeter (Mylonas 1947: 133). Assuming a tradition of cultural and religious continuity from the Mycenaean era, early archaeologists at the site borrowed heavily from Archaic (8th-6th C. BCE) sources to fill the gaps of their knowledge. However, Pascal Darcque, through his careful re-examination of George Mylonas’ ideas, challenged the notion of religious continuity at Eleusis, and was seminal in shaping current attitudes towards Mycenaean (pre-1200BCE) activity at the site. While Michael B. Cosmopoulos re-evaluates Darcque’s arguments, questions concerning the function of “Megaron” B remain. By following the arguments of Pascal Darcque and Michael B. Cosmopoulos, one can see how the Mycenaean “Megaron” B is a building unrelated to Demeter, with it only having a vaguely religious function; furthermore, by examining the “Hymn to Demeter” in the context of this discussion, one can also see what utility it has in examining pre-Archaic, pre-8th century BCE Eleusis.

George Mylonas and other early excavators at the site of Eleusis were working in a tradition of “Homeric archaeology,” and often assumed continuity of worship at Hellenic religious sites, even when little such evidence existed. As one set of British

archaeologists in the 1970s wrote about a sanctuary to Demeter in Crete “[despite] that a scatter of Protogeometric sherds hardly afford positive evidence of continuity... few scholars, on those grounds alone, [would] be prepared to deny religious continuity from the Bronze Age” (Coldstream et al. 1973: 181). It was the assumed thinking that, though there often existed little affirmative evidence to link Mycenaean sites with later Archaic and Classical tradition, it was “clear” that there was such a link, however tenuous. Thus, in similar fashion, Mylonas and others who excavated the site of Eleusis, “from a great deal of circumstantial evidence,” “deduced that [‘Megaron’ B] was the earliest temple of Demeter” (Mylonas 1947:135). It took until the 1980s and Pascal Darcque’s article “*les vestiges mycéniens découverts sous le telesterion d'Eleusis,*” to challenge the notion of “Megaron” B as the cult of Demeter. To Darcque, Mylonas’ work was untenable for literary, historical, and archaeological reasons.

With regards to the literary evidence, Darcque asserts that Mylonas’ identification of (1) localizations in the early sanctuary, and (2) the lack of contemporary textual evidence undermines his theory (Darcque 1981: 597-598). Indeed, while Darcque notes that Mylonas’ placement of the Kallichoron “*primitif*” is “*très séduisantes,*” he asserts that in the “Hymn to Demeter,” her temple was “*dans la cité... peut-être sur l'acropole,*” as opposed to at the foot of a hill (597). This is further undermined by the fact that not a single trace of a Mycenaean rampart encircling the sanctuary existed, as Mylonas contends (1981: 597). Additionally, there also exists a remarkable dearth of references to a cult of Demeter at Eleusis before the late 7th century BCE—as he writes, “*Le dossier littéraire serait incomplet si l'on ne signalait que ni Y Iliade, ni Odyssee, ni les poèmes d'Hésiode ne mentionnent l'existence d'un culte de Déméter à Eleusis*” (The literary argument would be incomplete if we did not indicate that neither Iliad, Odyssey, nor the poems of Hesiod mention the existence of cult to Demeter at Eleusis) (598). This lack of textual evidence is further compounded by the absence of Demeter in Linear B inscriptions (Cosmopoulos 2014: 417). Although scholars have tried to derive

the epithet “la déesse des boeufs de labour” (the goddess of the cows of plowing) from “qo-wi-ja,” these “alternative interpretations based on hyper-speculative readings” are seen as “[without] any strong, clear, or natural association with Demeter” (Palaima 2006: 66).

Moving on, Darcque similarly finds fault with Mylonas’ “history” of Eleusis, and the notion of “religious continuity” (Darcque 1981: 598-599). As he points out, much of the archaeological evidence which indicates continued activity at “Megaron” B is scarce and unreliable; he states that “Les premiers vestiges postérieurs à l’époque mycénienne dateraient, selon Desborough, du VI^e siècle,” (The first vestiges after the Mycenaean epoch would date, according to Desborough, to the 6th Century) with only “deux anses géométriques” (two geometric-era vases) accounting for the intervening centuries (599). Despite this scarcity of evidence for continuity, “B, M.P, Nilsson” and others, though “très hésitant,” acquiesce to Mylonas’ opinions, and declare that “the continuity of the settlement justifies an assumption of the continuity of the cult” (1981: 598). Indeed, Darcque challenges even this tenuous evidence, by noting the imprecision of the tools with which he was working, for “la fouille qui a été effectuée par dégagements «mécaniques» de 30 cm d’épaisseur est loin d’offrir toutes les garanties stratigraphiques voulues” (the excavation which was done by “mechanical” clearings of 30 cm thick is far from offering all the wanted stratigraphic guarantees) (599). In short, he succinctly summarizes that a gap of roughly five centuries—from the 12th century to the 8th century BCE—separates Mycenaean activity from the Archaic cult of Demeter (599).

Lastly, and perhaps most controversially, Darque further criticizes the conclusion that “Megaron” B was an actual “Megaron”—referring to the structure as “L’édifice B,” he astutely notes that few features differentiate the said building from the surrounding dwellings, and that “l’édifice B n[’a pas] ... [les] proportions plus massives” (edifice B does not have proportions so massive) (600). In fact, he precisely shuns that term for its “connotation religieuse” and since “la structure à peu près

rectangulaire” does not resemble “le noyau central du palais mycénien” (600). He makes further arguments against the religious aspects of the site, finding special fault with the altar identified by Mylonas and others. Per Darcque, “les fouilleurs l'avaient interprétée, de façon plus plausible, comme un ouvrage de soutènement pour le sol de la pièce principale” (The excavators had interpreted it, in a more plausible fashion, as a supporting structure for the floor of the main room) (600). The only significant feature which Darcque admits to distinguish “L’édifice B” from the surrounding dwellings is the existence of the peribolos (601). Yet, while he admits that “l'isolement de l'édifice B... pourrait en faire un bâtiment hors du commun,” (the isolation of Edifice B could make it an extraordinary building) he challenges even this very notion by pointing to the existence of earlier archaeological illustrations which shows “un complexe couvrant une superficie d'environ 30 m × 30 m” (a complex covering a specified area of 30 m × 30 m) (601-604). From here, he suggests that “ces dimensions sont proches de celles des résidences royales ou princières” (these dimensions are closer to those of royal or princely residences) but refrains from explicitly naming them as such (604). All told, Darcque, with the evidence available to him, provides a convincing argument for discontinuity, and made an important point about the nature of “Megaron” B: that continuity of activity at a site does not equate to the continuity of the *same* activity at a site. It is this last point which is especially important in the formation of contemporary attitudes towards Eleusis and “Megaron” B, as it helped to highlight the many differences between the Mycenaean era and the Archaic.

Yet, despite the evident impact of Darcque’s critique, Cosmopoulos in “Cult, Continuity, and Social Memory” refines and refutes some of the claims which the former made. While Cosmopoulos agrees wholly with Darcque’s literary criticisms, and mostly with his historical analysis, archaeological evidence unavailable to Darcque sheds new light on the nature of continuity at “Megaron” B. For example, it has been made clear that there did

exist some activity during the intervening period (12-8th century BCE) of the Mycenaean and the Archaic; the evidence of a “sub-Mycenaean vessel,” “three early Geometric sherds,” and the “construction of a Geometric retaining wall” all indicates such (Cosmopoulos 2014: 405-413). While admittedly there was a significant decline in the level of activity, there is nothing to indicate a complete absence of human interference, as Darcque believed (2014: 422). Meanwhile, the two different archaeological interpretations for the peribolos was nothing more than a preliminary report’s incorrect hypothesis—the first plan was a preliminary assessment, whereas the other report detailed a better understanding of chronological relation (416). Far from being a smoking gun, the “existence” of the peribolos was fairly well established by the original excavators. However, the greatest criticism of Darcque, would be Cosmopoulos’ observations about the “altar” in front of “Megaron” B. The latter notes that if the platform were truly a retaining structure, then it would most likely resemble other such structures in the vicinity (415). Yet, whereas these retaining structures are “straight, long walls,” the platform “has a symmetrical Π -shape” and other uncharacteristic features (415). Meanwhile, the remains of “burned pig bones” near the platform further suggests that it is an altar—as Cosmopoulos elaborates, the “bones, belonging to non-meaty parts of at least three pigs... are calcined straight through to the medullary cavity,” which suggests that “they had been left for several hours in a fire burning at high temperatures” (412). Per Cosmopoulos, this style of burning resembles “the remnants of burned animal sacrifices,” and with the lack of the hearth in Megaron B, “these bones [only] could have been burned [on] the platform” (412). In short, to him, there is convincing evidence to suggest that the platform was used as an altar, and thus, that there is a religious significance attached to “Megaron” B. In this fashion, Cosmopoulos takes a centrist position between Darcque’s secular “résidences royales,” and Mylonas’ “Mycenaean temple to Demeter” hypothesis. Cosmopoulos provides several reasons for why “Megaron” B mostly likely began as a royal dwelling during the Mycenaean era, but was later transformed into a sacred space. He engenders

support for the palace-cum-temple hypothesis by firstly pointing to the lack of a royal “mansion,” as is often seen in other Mycenaean states. If there exists no larger, undiscovered dwelling, then “Megaron” B would best suit the description for such a building during an early Eleusinian polity (418). He also points to the presence of a large tomb, which features “one of the largest known graves... made of schist slabs,” as further evidence for a royal personage having once inhabited the structure of “Megaron” B (418). According to Cosmopoulos, a sure sign of an “elite family” is the presence of a nearby, elaborate tomb (418). Perhaps his best evidence for this argument, though, is in the form of a stirrup jar which “includes the sign wa-, an abbreviation of wa-na-ka-te-ro”: Linear B for anaktoron (kingly-chamber) (423). With his elite dwelling argument established, he then goes on to demonstrate how a transition into a sacred space could occur (423). As he notes, “Mycenaean religious architecture grew out of local domestic architecture” (418). Since it was “non-standardized,” it often paralleled the “non-formalized” ritual and development of early Mycenaean religion (418). By further combining the evidence of the altar and peribolos, two features he considers religious, he marries the religious aspect of the site with evidence for habitation by elites (417). Hence, all told, Cosmopoulos largely refines the ideas which Darcque proposed, and merely corrects him where the archaeology has yielded new evidence. Taking many of Darcque’s ideas, Cosmopoulos strengthens them with his extensive archaeological research.

While all of the research and archaeology has been sound, one part of Cosmopoulos’ assessment seems odd and unconvincing; specifically, his hypothesized reconstruction of the activity at “Megaron” B, and, more generally, the reasons for why the site was sacrosanct. His four critical pieces of evidence for this are the special architectural features, the evidence of pig bones, and what appears to be votive offerings (Cosmopoulos 2014: 417). Although it is reasonable that the presence of sacrificial pig bones is evidence for some form of religious activity/space, his conclusion that this find of “at least three pigs” constitutes “religious ritual”

seems shaky (422). While having undeniably religious undertones, the lack of continued rite casts some doubt on how much this practice was a tradition. Though Cosmopoulos asserts that this “ritual” occurred during “LH IIB/IIIA1 and possibly through LH IIIB,” there are only a few remains (422). Indeed, if the “Megaron” truly were a sacred space for that period of time, as Cosmopoulos suggests, then one would expect a much larger deposit of bones, indicating a repeated occurrence of such a thing. Much like the archaeology of Classical Eleusis yields rich deposits of pig bones, it would not be unreasonable to expect a deposit indicating repeated sacrifice (Evans 2002: 242). Yet, the evidence which is available seems to show at most a couple of instances—could, then, this sacrifice have been for a ritual? Cosmopoulos’s estimation for this “ritual” is roughly a period of 300 years (Cosmopoulos 2014: 417). This creates even greater doubt, as now the length of time is so great that a couple of sacrifices surely could not have been sufficient for a repeated custom. Rather—though pure speculation—I am inclined to believe that these bones were the remains of a Mycenaean equivalent of a house-warming/get-together. Though joking somewhat, it highlights the essential point: that, unless there are undiscovered deposits, a neighborhood get-together would neatly explain why archaeologists have such a limited set of remains. Indeed, if this “Megaron” truly were home to a wanax, it is hardly beyond the scope of imagination for him to have sacrificed a few pigs to propitiate a deity, leaving the edible portions for a friendly cook-out. As Cosmopoulos himself writes, the “pottery associated with these bones includes open vases, kylikes, and goblets”: evidence for some kind of meal (Cosmopoulos 2014: 412).

Therefore, the idea that “Megaron” B had some sort of religious sanctity preceding the 8th century BCE rests more on the evidence of “votive” offerings, and the other “special architectural features” found in the intervening period. Even here, however, one can problematize some of the evidence; for example, the peribolos, one of the two architectural features with religious undertones, could have been built for secular reasons. After all, what distinguishes a palace wall from a sanctuary wall? A royal personage would surely

seek “un bâtiment hors du commun” for the same reason that any temple would: to create a formalized space as a manifestation of authority (Darcque 1981: 601). The evidence of a peribolos per se does not suggest “cultic” architecture. Though granted that the “enclosure wall” which is “decorated with frescoes” does signify the presence of an important space, Cosmopoulos himself stresses the lack of standardization in religious imagery during the Helladic phase (Cosmopoulos 2014: 422). Far from being religious, this could be a secular wall. Indeed, it is arguable that the only explicitly “cultic” material from the Mycenaean “Megaron” B would be the presence of figurines, as found along wall 4 (414). Yet, Cosmopoulos qualifies these finds by stating that “large figures that could have been used as cultic images have not been found”; in short, while indicative of religious practice, this is not necessarily proof of ritual worship (422). Though the platform was most likely the origin of the bones found in the drain, the previous point of unrepeated practice could suggest a minimal use of the altar (415). Therefore, much of the evidence which Cosmopoulos uses to lend credence to “ritual” at “Megaron” B in pre-8th century BCE is problematic and inconclusive. Although this evidence in association can seem to suggest a sanctuary, when looking at the evidence closely, it is at best a tenuous argument. After all, it is wholly possible for religious observances to take place, without the space itself being sacred.

Despite this however, Cosmopoulos’ point concerning “*lieu de memoire*,” and the reason why Eleusynian worship after the 8th century BCE centered around “Megaron” B, seems plausible and well-founded. Even if “Megaron” B had absolutely no religious significance in the Mycenaean era, which is unlikely given the presence of the figurines and burnt offerings, the obvious antiquity of the site most likely attracted the “will to remember” which Cosmopoulos describes (Cosmopoulos 2014: 422-423). As Cosmopoulos states, “the selection of [Megaron B] for the later Telesteria was made despite the unsuitability of the topography,” because “it [was] a landscape with clear and visible remains of [the] past” (423). Comparing this with other examples of

Mycenaean spaces becoming sacrosanct in the 8th and 7th Centuries BCE, irrespective of original function, cults can “legitimiz[e]” themselves “through the antiquity of [their] location[s]” (423). In short, so long as the site is old, a cult can try and take advantage of that fact to lend credibility to its worship.

The critical piece of textual evidence which could clarify much about the early history of “Megaron” B, is “The Hymn to Demeter.” Having examined the history of archaeological discussion and debate about the structure, it is safe to say that “Megaron” B was not a Mycenaean temple to Demeter; although the presence of pig bones resembles later worship to Demeter, even that evidence is far from conclusive (Cosmopoulos 2014: 417). In fact, the Mycenaean “Thebes sealings” suggest that pigs composed roughly a quarter of sacrificed animals during major events like banquets and sacrifices (Palaima 2004: 222-223). Far from being reserved for the worship of a single deity, it appears that pigs were merely a commonly sacrificed animal. Couple this with the fact that Demeter’s name does not even appear in Linear B tablets, and one can see how quickly that theory falls apart (Palaima 2006: 66). Though some people have claimed a Minoan cup from the 2nd millennium BCE depicts Demeter and Persephone, this is also speculative and not securely identified (Keller 1988: 29). Yet, as mentioned previously, Mylonas believed that the “Hymn to Demeter” contextualized her worship in the Mycenaean era (Darcque 1981: 597). Since this hymn led Mylonas and others astray, does the poem still merit some use as a historical reference for the site in the Mycenaean age? Currently, the thinking identifies a late seventh century date of composition for the work, given internal evidence and similarities to other poems (Richardson 2011: 49). Meanwhile, sacrifice at Eleusis was renewed during the mid-8th century BCE (Cosmopoulos 2014: 422), with this re-initiation of sacrifice contemporary with the construction of a small temple at the site during the 8th century BCE (Evans 2002: 233-234). Interestingly, then, the “Hymn to Demeter,” would not have been composed during the same time that ritual was re-initiated at Eleusis, but would have followed the first telesterion by about 100 years or so (Evans 2002: 234).

Further evidence from the rites of initiation suggests that the structure of the poem mimicked the experience of an initiate (Richardson 2011: 52). If this were so, then the writer of the hymn was most likely an initiate himself in the mysteries. Thus, taking this chronology together, one can see that many of the events of “the Hymn to Demeter” clearly belong to the late 8th or early 7th century—the introduction of the cult of Demeter, the Eleusinian rites, the renewed architectural activity: all of these are evidence for a document contemporary to that era. Indeed, the story itself mentions a Cretan origin for Demeter in the character of Doso, which would partially explain why there is no mention of Demeter in Linear B inscriptions (Lines 122-124). After all, Crete featured a different set of deities from that of the Mycenaeans in Pre-Archaic Greece (Downing 9). Despite this evidence, the presence of an Eleusinian royalty in the hymn is an interesting feature seemingly supported by the archaeological evidence associated with “Megaron” B (Line 160). Viewed in tandem, it appears as if the “the Hymn to Demeter” preserves the legacy of this pre-8th century BCE, Mycenaean “elite” family; even if the names of Keleos, Metaneira, or Demophon were completely fictitious, the fact that the goddess “came to the palace sky-nurtured Keleos,” with “a well-built chamber” is a tantalizing detail (184-186). Does this poem then preserve a piece of historical memory of an earlier Eleusinian polity? While a tempting conclusion to draw, one must temper that with the fact that little is known about the political organization of Bronze-Age Eleusis—Cosmopoulos and others have successfully argued that “Megaron” B was the dwelling of “an elite family,” but cannot positively identify if it belonged to a tribal leader or an important individual (Cosmopoulos 2014: 418). With the centrality of *basileis* in the Eleusinian rites, as well as the hereditary nature of some roles in the later cult, it wouldn’t be far-fetched to suggest that kings once existed in Eleusis (Mazarakis-Ainian 1997: 347). Yet, that sort of anachronistic thinking is the kind which Cosmopoulos calls a “methodological pitfall”; identifying prehistoric functions through the lens of later religious use will invariably bias the evidence towards continuity

(Cosmopoulos 2014: 422). Since many of the events described in the “Hymn to Demeter” can only be traced after 1200 BCE, it seems more likely that a line like “sky-nurtured Keleos” refers to some anachronistic title for hierophants during or after the 8th century BCE. Even if these titles originated from pre-historic Eleusis, the hymn’s contents should be used as evidence for events around the time of its composition; if all of the other components can be traced back only to that era, then why treat the literary evidence surrounding kings any differently?

To conclude, it has been made abundantly clear that “Megaron” B is likely unrelated to the later cult of Demeter; while there is sanctity of location, the actual practices had changed remarkably from the end of the Mycenaean age in 1200 BCE to the beginning of the Archaic Age in 800 BCE. Furthermore, one should not look at the “Hymn to Demeter” as a reliable account of events before 800 BCE, for it lacks an obvious connection to events preceding that date. Future questions should revolve around the relevance of “Megaron” as a way to refer to “Megaron” B, as well as compare the human figurines to votive material in other Mycenaean sites. Another unexplored topic is whether “Megaron” B resembles other, known palatial structures in the Mycenaean age. In doing so, one would hope to uncover the way politics were organized in the Mycenaean age, or if there were even a consistent theme in such institutions. Only then, will one learn what truly lay in the *thumos* of these most ancient mysteries.

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Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini (b. 1405 – d. 1464)

Mia Brossoie

Early Life and Major Works

Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini (Lat.: Aeneas Silvius Bartholomeus) was born in the Republic of Siena c. 1405 to a fallen nobleman (Campbell 2005). One of 18 children, he worked on the family farm and later attended school in Siena and Florence where he was educated in the *studia humanitatis* (Campbell 2005). Before his appointment as pope, he penned an extensive *corpus* of work. Best known is his 1444 erotic epistolary novel *Historia de Duobus Amantibus*, which tells the story of a married woman named Lucretia and her love interest Eryalus. He continued this interest in provocative writing with his comedy *Chrysis*, which he modeled after the comedies of Plautus and Terrence (O'Brien 2009: 112). In a similar vein, Aeneas tried his hand at a collection of classicizing love poems, *Cynthia*, which draws heavily from the likes of Propertius' and Tibullus' *corpora*. The publication of these three works dates to between c. 1432-1458 (Baca 1972: 221).

Career in the Church

Before he began his controversial writing career, Aeneas was appointed secretary to Cardinal Domenico Capranica in 1432. After completing several important diplomatic tasks, Aeneas declined official ordination due to his "dissolute personal life," but he remained involved with the church in other capacities (Campbell 2005). In 1439 Aeneas supported antipope Felix V over

Pope Eugenius, a position which he renounced in 1445 along with his life of promiscuity (Campbell 2005). Aeneas took additional steps in moving on from his old life, as he also took his poems and other erotic works out of circulation (his successor and fellow Piccolomini family member Pope Pius III continued this censorship) (Baca 1972: 222). Aeneas' campaign to separate himself from his sinful writings afforded him the opportunity to become a priest in 1446, thus beginning his path to the position of pope (Campbell 2005). In 1456, Aeneas was given the title of cardinal after completing a diplomatic negotiation for Pope Callistus. After Callistus died in 1458, Aeneas was elected Pope Pius II (Campbell 2005).

Since Aeneas became pope five years after Constantinople's fall in 1453, his greatest concern was to reclaim a Christian Constantinople, which he attempted to bring to fruition with his series of papal bulls spanning from October 1458 to October 1463. Aeneas' time as pope was marked by the turmoil of the church in the wake of the fall of Constantinople, which he catalogued in his *Commentaries*, the only papal autobiography (Campbell 2005). After falling ill, Pius died in 1464 in Ancona, a seaport on the Adriatic coast.

Selected Texts and Notes

Carmen 1.4 In Cynthia

Quid nimis elata es praestanti, Cynthia, forma?
 Labitur occulto pulchra iuventa pede.
 Non ita semper eris: variatur tempore vultus,
 nec semper roseo splendet in ore nitor. 5
 Mane, vides, primo candescunt lilia sole,
 vespere succisa languidiora rosa.
 Te quoque destituet fugientis forma iuventae,
 inque suos veniet curva senecta dies.
 Te miseram dices, rugis cum tempus arabit
 et faciet crispas in tua damna genas. 10
 Nunc tibi tempus adest, respondet lusibus aetas,
 talia lascivus tempora quaerit amor.

Te moneat facies, moneant te frontis honores,
 qui perit, o, miseri, sit tibi cura proci.
 Aspice, deficio, morienti consule amanti: 15
 si moriar magnum, Cynthia, crimen habes?
 Tu me sola potes longos deducere in annos,
 sola potes nostris addere, *nympha*¹, dies.
 Si mihi tu faveas, si me spectabis amantem,
 confiteor vitae spes eris una meae. 20
 Sumne adeo informis? nullon' sum dignus amore?
 Sumne ego pro gente degener ipse mea?
 O utinam facilis quantum formosa fuisses!
 Sic mihi tu semper, Cynthia, grata fores.
 Dum faciem specto, digna es quam Phoebus² amaret. 25
 Maius an ipsa suo, Cynthia, lumen habes?
 Et cui non placeas, cum sis placitura Tonanti³,
 cum dederis ventis post tua terga comas,
 vel cum contextum crines nodantur in aurum 30
 membraque purpurea cetera veste tegis?
 Quicquid formosas decuisset habere puellas,
 unum si demo, Cynthia dives habet.
 Hoc unum est pietas, quam si modo, Cynthia, sumis,
 usque adeo felix semper amator ero. 35
 Ergo vale et nostro cura indulgere furori,
 et socies mores cum pietate tuos.

Cynthia, why have you been too exalted by your superior beauty?
 The beautiful youth slips on a hidden foot.
 You will not always be this way: a face is changed with time,
 And a sheen doesn't always glimmer on a rosy lip.
 Stay, you see, the lilies begin to glisten at the first light,
 In the evening the weaker rose is pruned.
 The beauty of a fleeing youth also forsakes you,
 And the day, curved by age, will come.
 You tell your wretched self, when time will furrow you with wrinkles
 And will make trembling cheeks at your expense.
 Your time is now at hand, age answers with amusement,
 Wanton love seeks such seasons.
 The face warns you, the grace of a brow warns you,
 Which is ruined, o, miserable one, let a suitor be concerned for you.
 Behold, I falter, look out for a dying lover:
 If I'll die, Cynthia, will you be the cause of a great crime?
 Only you can lead me into long years,
 Only you can increase our days, nymph.

1. *nympha* – By referring to Cynthia as a nymph, Aeneas reinforces the natural imagery he uses in lines 5&6, given nymphs' close association with nature, while also nodding to classical literature.

2. *Phoebus* (Greek, Apollo) is known for his many amorous escapades, but he is also associated with light and the sun, which are important themes in this poem.

3. *Tonanti* refers to Jupiter or Jove (Greek, Zeus) by metonymy.

If you favor me, if you will observe my love,
 I admit you alone will be my life's hope.
 Am I not truly hideous? Am I not deserving of any love?
 Am I myself unworthy on behalf of my ancestors?
 O if only you had been as easy as you were beautiful!
 Thus, you were, Cynthia, pleasing to me.
 While I consider your face, you are worthy of someone Phoebus would love.
 But, Cynthia, do you have a light greater than his?
 And to whom would you not give pleasure, when you'd be pleasing to Jove,
 When you were going to give the hair behind your back to those coming,
 Even when your hair is tied in a knot in golden plaits
 And you cover your other limbs in a purple robe?
 Whatever was suitable for the seemly girls to have,
 If I remove one thing, Cynthia holds the wealth.
 This one thing is piety, just as if, Cynthia, you suppose,
 At every point, a lover will always truly be happy.
 Therefore, be well and concern is granted to us, frenzied,
 And let you join your morals with piety.

Carmen 1.66b Puella in Amatorem

Noctu me quaeris, sed habet me nocte maritus⁴:
 iura maritorum laedere, crede, nefas.
 Ille⁵ diem patrio totam consumit in agro:
 cur me nocte petis, tempora lucis habens?
 Forsitan et totus nudusque viderier horres? 5
 Mi tenebrosa potest nulla placere venus.
 Quid prodest noctu formosas esse puellas?
 Saepe fuit iuvenis credita turpis anus.
 Ergo placere magis si vis mihi, luce venito:
 nam mihi per tenebras gratia nulla tui est. 10

At night you seek me, but marriage holds me by night:
 To strike the laws of marriage, believe it, is to sin.
 My husband spends the whole day in the ancestral field:
 Why do you desire me by night, passing over daytime?
 And perhaps you, whole and nude, dread to be seen?
 No dark charm is able to be pleasing to me.
 What use is there for beautiful girls at night?
 Frequently an old woman was believed to be an ugly youth.
 Therefore, if you want to please me more, come by day:
 For, for me, through darkness, there isn't any favor of you.

4. *nocte maritus*: According to Michael Silk et al., the use of night serves a dual purpose and that "Under marital law, the nights belong to [a woman's] husband," yet the woman also considers that her lover might turn her away "because of the scruples about full-frontal nudity" (1.66b.5) (Silk et al. 2017: 89).

5. *ille* refers to the speaker's husband. The speaker feels frustrated that her lover only comes around by night since her husband is away all day.

Strikingly, upon becoming pope Aeneas adopted the papal name “Pius” as a nod to Virgil’s Aeneas and his epithet *pius Aeneas* (Campbell 2005). Aeneas was grounded in the Latin canon during his time as a student and as a figure in the church. These earlier influences especially shine through in his *corpus* of love elegy. *Carm.* 1.4 *In Cynthiam* is just one of several elegies to a Cynthia. This poem has many of the same characteristics of Propertius’ elegies to his Cynthia; although they both speak to a dramatic sense of desire, Aeneas is more measured in his passion than his Roman predecessor. In this way, when thinking about beauty and life and their connectedness to the passing of time, Aeneas discusses the looming threat of Cynthia’s beauty diminishing with age (1.4.1-10), a theme Propertius would never consider in his adoration of his Cynthia. As Baca notes, it is likely that, in the aforementioned paragraph, Aeneas alludes to the passage in *Elegies* wherein Propertius asserts that “lilies aren’t whiter than [his] mistress” and compares her youthful glow to “rose petals swimming in pure milk” (2.3.9-12) (Baca 1972: 223). This warning about the consequences of passing time marks a departure from the classical source material.

More broadly, Aeneas’ mention of *Phoebus* and *Tonanti* (Jove) points to the classical tradition. The very mention of these figures brings to mind specific myths, imagery, and themes. By invoking classical authors and ideas, the poet flaunts his rhetorical and literary knowledge, just as Propertius is known to do in poems like 1.1 where he references obscure places and plants to illustrate his sweeping erudition.

Just as Aeneas looks to Propertius’ Cynthia in thinking about his poetic lover, he also looks to Propertius in crafting his female persona. With his surprising ventriloquism of the female experience, his poem *Puella in Amatore* (*Carm.* 1.66b) is of particular note. The aim is clear from the opening line: “At night you seek me, but marriage holds me by night.” In 10 lines, this poem follows a married woman in her attempts to seduce another man while her husband is away at work. *Puella in Amatore* raises questions regarding authorial intent and historical accuracy in its

portrayal of a woman seeking sexual gratification. Male authors writing about the experiences of women (e.g., Ovid's *Heroides* and Propertius' *Elegies* 4.3) offer incomplete testimonies. The concept of a married woman intent on seducing a man could be seen as simply male fantasy, yet the Sulpicia Cycle of the *Corpus Tibullianum* gives pause to this theory. Although it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that Sulpicia was indeed a woman, current scholarship tends to agree that she was likely female. In *Carmena* 3.14-5 Sulpicia writes of her *invisus natalis* ("hateful birthday") and the plight she finds herself in—remaining in the countryside without her lover Cerinthus—and its resolution with her being permitted to travel to Rome. In such frivolities, some scholars find tepid writing, while others find real experiences and feelings of frustration with the Roman patriarchal family structure and contemporary social rules (Santirocco 1979: 239). In *Carmen* 3.16, Sulpicia reveals that her pursuit of Cerinthus is a controversial choice when she declares, "They are concerned for us, those for whom that is the greatest cause of grief, lest I yield to an unknown bed" (3.16.5-6). Sulpicia's resistance to familial and societal pressures underscore female agency within an erotic context. The suggestion to take Aeneas' words as pure male fantasy would be to discount the full range of female bodily autonomy in the mid-15th century. Aeneas' adoption of a female persona could have also served as a deterrent to his peers from taking his pining and erotic pieces too literally. His alter ego warns the audience that his rhetorical experimentation is purely an act of imagination. This distance between the author and the material would have been particularly important, given Aeneas' involvement with the church in official diplomatic capacities.

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