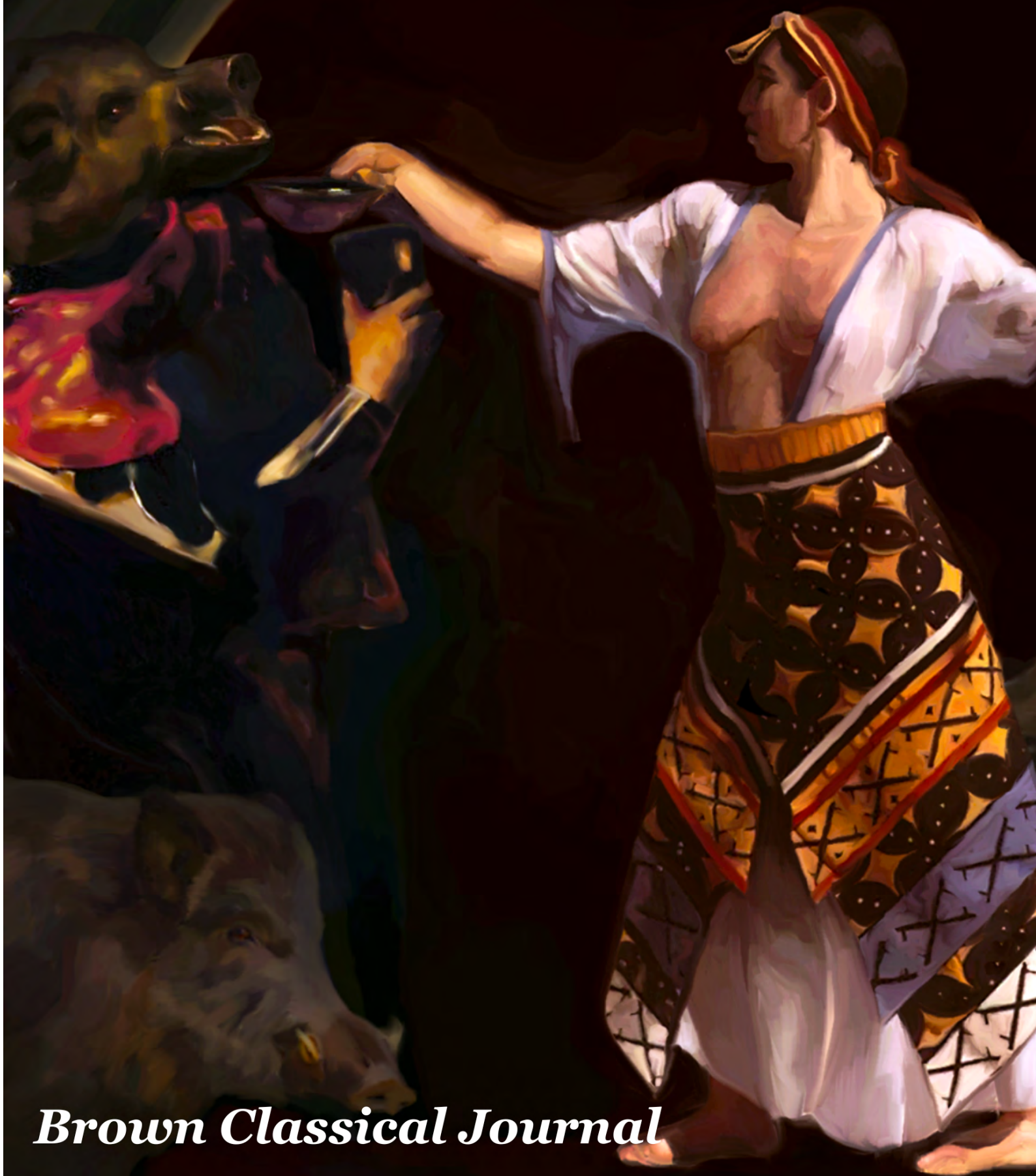


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# **Brown Classical Journal**

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## Volume 35

Tyāgarāja and Theory: Musings on the Task of Postcolonial Translation <i>Srinaath Perangur</i>	1
Some Reflections on the <i>Black Athena</i> Debate <i>Leo McMahon</i>	11
Female Virginity and Chastity in Roman Religion and Early Christian Narrative <i>Kate Van Riper</i>	17
A Single Ostrakon: The Life, Death, and Trials of Themistocles <i>Edan Larkin</i>	31
An Interpretive Translation of Alcuin's <i>Carmen</i> 46 <i>Michael Geisinger</i>	37
Orasho in Contemporary Japan: A Linguistic Analysis and Some Thoughts <i>Felix Montgomery</i>	45
A Plural Selfhood in Alcaeus, Fr. 129 <i>Alex Lee</i>	57
The Sexuality of Christ in Byzantium: An Examination of Christ's Crucifixion Iconography Before and After Iconoclasm <i>Rosella Liu</i>	61
A Share in the City: Athenian Autochthony, Citizenship, and the Political Family <i>Anna Barnett</i>	71

<i>Carmina Nulla Canam: Perspectives on Loss in Eclogue 1</i> <i>Isaiah Goldsmith</i>	81
Speakers, Interpreters, and the Prophetic Office: Pathways of Communication in the Works of Philo of Alexandria and Saint Paul the Apostle <i>Helen Zhou</i>	87
When Is Classical Indian Thought “Philosophy?” <i>Catherine Nelli</i>	97
Herodotus’ Post-Battle Vignettes: Architectural Signposts and the Fronting of the Author <i>Colin Olson</i>	101
How the Enslaved Philosophers Broke Their Chains Before Being Free <i>Kristen Quesada</i>	113
What Did Meletus Actually Say? <i>Jimmy Symonds</i>	127
The Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic <i>Sophia Decherney</i>	133
Riddle and Virgil’s Third <i>Eclogue</i> in Alcuin of York’s <i>Carmen V</i> <i>John Michaud</i>	145
<i>Pro Caelio</i> , Personification, and Poetic Quotations <i>David Del Terzo</i>	149
A Translation and Commentary on the Ekphrastic Passages in <i>Alexanders Saga</i> <i>Alexander Mayo</i>	157
The Water is Wide: Ariadne, Marriage, and the Sea <i>Rachel Kamphaus</i>	171

Egyptian “Helmet” Masks of First-Century Hawara 175  
*Livia Hoffman*

## List of Photographs and Artwork

Mosaics of Volubilis, Morocco 70  
*Arushi Parekh*

# Tyāgarāja and Theory: Musings on the Task of Postcolonial Translation

*Srinaath Perangur*

## I. Introduction

Carnatic—South Indian classical—music remains an essential ingredient in the cultural heritage of Southern India. The tradition is one of two major classical musical traditions in India (the other being Hindustani music, a style that developed in North India). Those unfamiliar with Carnatic music sometimes liken it to the other major classical music traditions of the world, especially European classical music. Carnatic music was developed over a similar time frame: some of its earliest proponents—Annamācārya, Purandaradāsa, and Kanakadāsa—lived in the sixteenth century, and its most celebrated composers—the so-called “Musical Trinity” comprised of Tyāgarāja, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, and Śyāma Śāstri—lived between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. However, the tradition attained its “classical” status only in the early twentieth century. Among the Trinity, Tyāgarāja is the most widely known and the most prolific, with roughly 600 surviving compositions (among the tens of thousands of songs tradition ascribes to him).<sup>1</sup>

The South Indian folk tradition—consisting of written hagiographies, orally transmitted legends, and musical storytelling performances called *harikathā*—have elevated Tyāgarāja’s status in South India to that of a spiritual leader.<sup>2</sup> William Jackson notes how even written accounts of Tyāgarāja’s life “all include episodes from *harikathā*-related versions,” demonstrating how “the *harikathā* performers have been influential mediators in the spread of Tyāgarāja stories.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, not only is Tyāgarāja of great historical importance to the Carnatic tradition and the corpus of South Indian devotional (*bhakti*) poetry more generally, but his legend has and continues to shape the South Indian folk imagination.

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1 Velchuru Narayana Rao and David Shulman, *Classical Telugu Poetry: An Anthology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 297.

2 For an example of a treatment of Tyāgarāja’s life from a simultaneous scholarly and spiritual perspective, see V. Raghavan’s introductory thesis to *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyāgarāja*.

3 William J. Jackson, *Tyāgarāja: Life and Lyrics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11.



His self-reflective, contemplative poetry has helped shape the philosophical and aesthetic frameworks that have evolved alongside Carnatic music for the last two-and-a-half centuries. Here I seek to lay the groundwork for new contemporary English translations of Tyāgarāja by exploring the issues of post-coloniality—both through the lens of Western literary theory and the perspectives of contemporary Indologists and translators of South Indian literature.

## II. Translation and Theory

Translation is, I believe, fundamentally an act of reconciliation. Of past and present, historical and legendary, theoretical and practical, and, for me, of Western and indigenous Indian intellectual traditions. The East-West distinction is not black-and-white. There has long existed, if not interdependence, then mutual influence between the intellectual traditions of India and Europe. Most striking is how comparative philology, which has transformed the Western humanities, grew out of British colonialism in India. The central role of comparative philology in the development of the humanities—inaugurated by Sir William Jones’ competent (for the time) English translations of famous Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit works in the late eighteenth century—cannot be overstated. Sheldon Pollock, a leading Sanskrit scholar, claims that philology has undergone a “fall from grace” because “most people today have only the vaguest idea what the word means.”<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, among a plethora of other scholars, has put forth a similar view.<sup>2</sup> But, as Siraj Ahmed duly notes:

[P]hilology has in fact never ceased to be hegemonic in the humanities. Though the Romantic-era philological revolution has been critiqued from various quarters, its central premises still reign supreme: every language undergoes historical change; all knowledge of the human domain must therefore be historical; and historical knowledge presupposes a historically specific understanding of the language being studied.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, regardless of the status of philology in the Western academic world, it has exerted an indelible influence on the study of language and textual traditions. European colonialism in India instigated significant cultural and literary exchange, as most clearly evidenced by the profusion of translations of Sanskrit,

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1 Sheldon Pollock, “Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World,” *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 933.

2 Edward Said, “The Return to Philology” in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

3 Siraj Ahmed, *Archaeology of Babel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 18.



Persian, and Arabic texts into Latin, French, English, and German beginning in the eighteenth century with Jones. This link has been solidified more recently by postcolonial studies, a field composed of literary and political theorists, philosophers of language, historians, and other thinkers who seek to investigate the lasting effects of colonialism on the development of cultural identity and trauma, structures of power, and the humanistic disciplines as a whole. Postcolonial theory draws from the work of European thinkers like Marx, Foucault, and Derrida but has been uniquely shaped by indigenous Indian theorists and writers. Gayatri Spivak's searing essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in which she questions whether the voice of a former colony has any authority under the oppressive shadow of its former imperial captors,<sup>4</sup> played a significant role in catapulting postcolonial studies into the global academic spotlight. She draws on Edward Said's foundational *Orientalism*,<sup>5</sup> which, in turn, as Leela Gandhi notes, is informed and abetted by Foucault's conception of discursive structures.<sup>6</sup> Postcolonial theory (and theory in general) is useful insofar as it forces us to question the origins of our thought and discourse—the paradigms we have taken for granted that will in turn be replaced or modified by new, (hopefully) more complete ones. But within this very cycle of reorientation with respect to the past, there is an inherent loss, a dismemberment in which the modes of thinking that are responsible for our current knowledge are shorn off as they are replaced. Is this a good or a bad thing? Can we see the horizon widening, or are we shedding our scholarly skins for new ones that are, surely, better, but at the same time are not quite as different as we imagined? Is theory really progress? Literary scholar Jonathan Culler writes of this cycle of theoretical discovery, naturalization, and disposal:

Since the impetus to theory, as thinking about thinking, is a desire to understand what one is doing, to question its commitments and its implications, its goals can never be achieved once and for all. Theory is driven by the impossible desire to step outside your own thought, both to place it and to understand it, and also by a desire for change — this impossible desire — both in the world your thought engages and in the ways of your own thought, which always could be sharper, more knowledgeable and capacious, more self-reflecting.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, according to Culler, theory generates the force to move one's own intellectual dispositions, paradigms, and beliefs toward complete understanding—an impossible ideal.

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4 Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Die Philosophin* 14, no. 27 (1988): 42–58.

5 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

6 Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 25.

7 Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17.

In many ways, literary translation finds itself in a similar position. Like literary theory, translation has grown to address serious problems of language, culture, and identity on the global multicultural stage: How does one achieve syntactic fidelity between two languages with incomparably different grammar? What constitutes fidelity of meaning, especially between two languages with utterly different dominant cultural paradigms? Must a translation lay bare the translator's personal perspectives, proclivities, and identity? And so on. Translation, moreover, also aspires to the impossible task of creating a textual simulacrum. It is not possible to recreate the original, for the original has already been created by someone else. What is left but the thankless, inching climb *toward* the ideal that is sure to fall short?

And yet, theory and translation are utterly at odds. One is an exercise in, as theorists themselves admit, speculation (with real practical benefits to be sure), the other the pursuit of an impossible (even impossibly) tangible product. Is their reconciliation possible? I believe it is, insofar as theory is used, alongside literature, to unearth new possibilities, to rediscover what we know with a new breath, to put language to the fleeting. Translation is, in part, art. Quoting Paul Valéry, A.K. Ramanujan writes, "Translations, too, being poems are 'never finished, only abandoned.'"<sup>8</sup> This gets at the impossible ideal of translation described further in the next section, as well as the notion that a translator's tastes may shift over time as they move from one translation project to another. Translators are, like other authors, dynamic, and this proclivity to change is every bit as evident in their translations as Fyodor Dostoevsky's or Hannah Arendt's or Jhumpa Lahiri's in their writings.

So what does this say of the task of translating Tyāgarāja? I think, most importantly, we have seen how Tyāgarāja's compositions are sung today in a world that would have been unrecognizable to him. This notion of temporal (in addition to cultural and geographic) removal further complicates the task of translation. It is no longer only a matter of transposing cultures across space; we must now cross a vast expanse of time and all we have learned during it. To me, it is a profound thing to face the enormity of the last two-and-a-half centuries of Indian and Western intellectual history, knowing that it has shaped the way Tyāgarāja's music has been performed, transmitted, and interpreted, and that these changes culminate in the present, when my act of translation is taking place. For, over the years, Tyāgarāja the historical figure has been superseded by Tyāgarāja the saint, the mystic, the legend. We have displaced and adapted Tyāgarāja to suit our needs. William Jackson states that "[i]t is hard to picture Tyāgarāja anywhere but in Tiruvaiyaru. His creativity *took place* in that regional 'oasis,' occasioned by the outlook and conditions there."<sup>9</sup> Jackson is speaking of Tyāgarāja the historical figure. Yet it is delightfully easy for me to picture 'Tyāgarāja'—at least the voice that shines through his lyrics—outside of his hometown because I have only heard his words elsewhere.

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<sup>8</sup> A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), xv.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, Tyāgarāja, 49.

They have followed me since I first learned them over a decade ago. It is this paradox of “knowing” without knowing Tyāgarāja that shapes my translation of his lyrics and has forced me to question the age-old question of the task of the translator.

### III. The Task of the Translator

No sooner can a translator utter those words than the immortalized title of Walter Benjamin’s essay appears in their mind—and refuses to leave. “The Task of the Translator,” which is often taken to be a quintessential exposition of the purpose of translation, is a case in point of the vast gulf that often separates the “theory” of translation (with all its nebulous implications) and its actual implementation. Benjamin refers frequently to a work’s “translatability,” which he calls “an essential quality of certain works” in which “a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, according to Benjamin, whether literary works deserve to be translated is independent of whether “men should prove unable to translate them.”<sup>11</sup> He goes on to claim that “[t]ranslation thus ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages....Languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express.”<sup>12</sup> These words may be tantalizing, but are they really true? It is difficult to imagine that the language of Bhavabhūti, an eighth-century Sanskrit poet and dramatist, is not a stranger to that of Ocean Vuong, one of the leading queer poets in the English language today. Take, for example, Vuong’s “Seventh Circle of Earth,” which begins with a description of a gay couple burned alive in their home in Dallas, Texas. Much of the rest of the poem is blank space; most of the rest of the words occur in footnote text, with slashes filling in for line breaks and sentences jumping across footnotes.<sup>13</sup> Contrast this with the following verse from Bhavabhūti’s *Uttararāmacarita* describing heterosexual love:

Identity in joy and sorrow,  
consonance in every condition,  
where the heart can find respite,  
whose rasa old age cannot spoil,

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10 Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” trans. Harry Zohn, 1968, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (2000; repr. from *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume I, 1913–1926* Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1998), 16.

11 Benjamin, 16.

12 Benjamin, 17.

13 Ocean Vuong, “Seventh Circle of Earth” in *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2016), 41–2.

what alone abides as time  
 removes all veils and pure love ripens—  
 that singular blessing is only bestowed  
 on a good man, and only then with luck.

I readily admit, of course, that language has always expressed what is *human*—both of the poems described above discuss, in one way or another, *romance* (*ṣṛṅgāra*). But this description, if anything, affirms the diversity of language’s capabilities. This applies not only to the range of experiences language describes, some relatable and others alien, but also to its very structure. How can we claim that the strict metrical structure of Sanskrit *kāvya* (poetry) and the societal paradigms in which Bhavabhūti operated produced the same sort of language as Vuong, whose form and subject matter push the boundaries of contemporary English in present-day America? I claim that the works of these two writers are utterly different “in what they want to express.”

And yet one *can be* translated into the other. So, like Benjamin and so many scholars since, I ask the question: *What exactly is to be translated?* Thomas H. Jackson derides the notion of a purely “faithful” translation, which yields something like a map “identical in size to the topography it charted—a bit cumbersome, but admirably accurate.”<sup>14</sup> The analogy, I think, is flawed; one can argue that witnessing the Grand Canyon oneself is nothing like walking across a 1:1 projection of it on a piece of paper. Nevertheless, Jackson’s comments lead us to an interesting point: the translator must identify their own purpose and translate in accordance with it. In other words, there is no such thing as a perfect translation—the success of a translation depends entirely on what the translator intends it to *do*. A translation that is “a bit cumbersome, but admirably accurate” has its place—for example, as a pedagogical tool or for the sake of pointing out syntactical subtleties in a passage of prose. In fact, there should be, if anything, a tendency to strive towards accuracy at the expense of readability (although, of course, the ideal is to achieve both), especially when translating between languages with completely distinct grammars. Jackson does not think so, adding: “Clearly no translator has the right to hornswoggle his audience about the original. But does it change your life to know that Li Po did not always mean what Ezra Pound said he did? Arthur Waley thought so, and offers us ‘correct’ versions of Chinese poetry that are hardly worth reading” (84). I am inclined to agree with Arthur Waley that, in fact, such a realization *should* change your life, because, if you have not had substantially the same (or as close as possible to the same) experience as someone reading Li Po in classical Chinese, you have not been reading Li Po at all!

This is not to say that a translation should not be poetic or readable; quite the contrary. A translation should be a transposition from one literary realm to another. It may be more productive, then, to speak of the *effect* of a work and its

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14 Thomas H. Jackson, “Theorizing Translation,” *SubStance* 20, no. 1 (1991): 81.

translation than of its *purpose*. Benjamin, in fact, recognizes this when he says that “[t]he task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original.”<sup>15</sup> Not merely an echo, I argue—for an echo suggests a simulacrum, a re-telling rather than a new, original telling dripping with the interpretations and biases of the translator. This time, it is more than a historical, temporal, cultural, or linguistic gulf that separates our interpretation from the author’s intention. Simply put, only the author can truly know the purpose of one of their works. The best we can do is use the literary content of the work in conjunction with the biographical details of the author’s life as evidence to suggest a possible intention. In my opinion, the applicability of even this to translation is, at least in the case of Tyāgarāja, small compared to an analysis of how the works have been recited, sung, recorded, passed down, performed, read, heard, etc. What use is guessing at Tyāgarāja’s intention when we can more clearly infer what the work has done and what we have done with it? Partially, this has to do with the nature of Tyāgarāja’s work in particular. Being a predominantly oral tradition, Carnatic music has always relied on the *guru-śiṣya* (teacher-pupil) relationship as the locus of the transmission of knowledge. Variability in melody (and, to a lesser degree, lyrics) is not only common but expected. Like with vernacular versions of Sanskrit epics, for instance, there are no “original or *Ur-text*,”<sup>16</sup> only the various versions that continue to be adapted and modified. It is better to aim at using the little biographical information we have about Tyāgarāja to situate his work in the history of Hindu *bhakti* (devotional) literature in the hopes of better understanding how his work incorporates, responds to, and furthers it.

#### IV. Postcolonial Translation

One further field that postcolonial studies have helped to cement is the study of postcolonial and immigrant literature. Postcolonial and immigrant literature has garnered significant attention in academic circles over the last several decades, and I do not intend to repeat here in detail what critics and scholars have already said. These literary fields, however, can help us understand the experiences of those who perform Tyāgarāja’s works today in India and in the English-speaking world and therefore deserve at least brief consideration.

Recalling her experience as a young Indian immigrant in America, Pulitzer-winning novelist and translator Jhumpa Lahiri describes how she “felt intense

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<sup>15</sup> Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” 19–20.

<sup>16</sup> A.K. Ramanujan, “Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation” in *Many Rāmāyaṇas*, ed. Paula Richman (Berkeley, LA, Oxford: University and California Press, 1991), 24–5.

pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new.”<sup>17</sup> In a way, this statement can also stand for Carnatic music, which sought simultaneously to ingrain itself in the South Indian cultural canon as a veritable “classical” tradition while coming to terms with the brand-new spaces, technologies, and audiences that rose to prominence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>18</sup>

Translation of Carnatic music for a modern English-speaking audience, then, must recognize the significance of relocating a tradition from its temporal and geographic context. Maria Tymoczko summarizes well the connection between translation and postcolonial/immigrant literature:

Translation as metaphor for post-colonial writing, for example, invokes the sort of activity associated with the etymological meaning of the word: translation as the activity of carrying across, for instance, the transportation and relocation of the bones and other remains of saints. In this sense, post-colonial writing might be imaged as a form of translation...in which venerable and holy (historical, mythic and literary) relics are moved from one sanctified spot of worship to another more central and more secure (because more powerful) location, at which the cult is intended to be preserved, to take root and find new life.<sup>19</sup>

For many Indians, the English-speaking world represents this “more central and more secure” location. There are burgeoning Carnatic communities in many parts of America, especially in New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts. The fact is, Tyāgarāja remains culturally significant even for relocated families: the largest Carnatic music festival outside of India is the annual Tyāgarāja Ārādhana in Cleveland, Ohio.

Tymoczko goes on to say that “[t]he primary difference [between translation and postcolonial literature] is that, unlike translators, post-colonial writers are not transposing a text. As background to their literary works, they are transposing a culture....”<sup>20</sup> But, as A.K. Ramanujan notes, there *is* a component of cultural transposition involved in literary translation: “The effort [of my translations and afterword] is to try and make a non-Tamil reader experience in English something of what a native experiences when he reads classical Tamil poems. Anyone translating a poem into a foreign language is, at the same time, trying to *translate*

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17 Jhumpa Lahiri, “My Two Lives,” *Newsweek*, last modified March 5, 2006, <https://www.newsweek.com/my-two-lives-106355>.

18 Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Weidman investigates this phenomenon thoroughly through the anthropological concept of “voice.”

19 Maria Tymoczko, “Post-colonial writing and literary translation” in *Post-colonial Translation*, ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 1999), 19–20.

20 Tymoczko, 20.

a foreign reader into a native one.”<sup>21</sup> Translation is reconciliation, Postcolonial writing—translation or not—is in itself a rediscovery of cultural and personal identity, a process of “[r]emembering [that] is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, the colonial encounter leaves an impression. It is a psychological phenomenon as much as a historical and cultural one. As Leela Gandhi puts it, “The mere repression of colonial memories is never, in itself, tantamount to a surpassing of or emancipation from the uncomfortable realities of the colonial encounter.”<sup>23</sup> The process of coming to terms with this encounter is, like literary translation, an impossible reconciliation between cultures, languages, and identities—and between individual autonomy and collective action. Homi Bhabha recognizes this paradox through his analysis of political action in the subaltern: “What must be left as an open question is how we are to think of ourselves once we have undermined the immediacy and autonomy of self-consciousness.... What remains to be thought is the *repetitious* desire to recognize ourselves doubly, as, at once, decentred in the solitary processes of the political group, and yet, ourself as a consciously committed, even individuated, agent of change....”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, this is an “open question”—we cannot answer it definitively. Reconciliation is always an act in progress. But the recognition of the need for this reconciliation, and the fact that it is occurring within the same communities that have always considered Carnatic music part of their cultural heritage, should affect how one approaches a contemporary translation of Tyāgarāja’s lyrics.

The translator must not be anonymous. For I must investigate who I am and where I stand before I am ready to translate, before I take one text that lies in one place within my personal imagination and recreate it in another. It is not a translation for *others* more than it is one for *me*. As AKR puts it, “A translation has to be true to the translator no less than to the originals.... Translation is choice, interpretation, an assertion of taste, a betrayal of what answers to one’s needs, one’s envies.”<sup>25</sup> The translator is contained and reflected in every word of their translation. And as for the translations of Tyāgarāja I intend to produce, I hope he, through me, can speak to you.

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21 A.K. Ramanujan, *The Interior Landscape* (New York: NYRB, 1967), 11.

22 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 63.

23 Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 4.

24 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 65.

25 A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva* (London: Penguin, 1973), 12–13.



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# Some Reflections on the Black Athena Debate

*Leo McMahon*

Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* represented a substantial advance for Classics, but the discipline should reject Bernal's many false contentions and seek to decolonize itself by recommitting to historical truth without valorizing any civilization, whether Egyptian, Phoenician, or Greek. At the most basic level, Bernal's arguments run contrary to the vast majority of linguistic, archaeological, and literary evidence. It is exceedingly unlikely that archaic and classical Greece was the direct successor to the earlier cultures of Phoenicia and Egypt. While Greece certainly adopted important elements of Phoenician and Egyptian language, religion, and art, indigenous Greek developments and, to some degree, Indo-European influences were preeminent in the Aegean. Despite Bernal's frequent missteps, *Black Athena* was a genuinely profound intellectual contribution because it demonstrated the extent of Afroasiatic influence on archaic Greece and shed light on just how antiblack and antisemitic Classical scholars had been since the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, replacing white supremacist myths of Greek exceptionalism with an equally mythical belief that Greece was an Afroasiatic civilization will do little to correct Classics's past failures. Instead, the future of Classics must lie with educating more students, particularly more students from all sorts of backgrounds, and broadening Classics's focus beyond the accomplishments of free Athenian men and the political intrigue of Roman senators.

As an attempt to understand Greece's history, its many failures of evidentiary support condemn *Black Athena* to failure. Bernal's arguments fall roughly into four parts of ascending importance<sup>1</sup>: First, that the ancient Egyptians were generally what modern readers would call black.<sup>2</sup> Frank Snowden, Jr. con-

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1 Guy MacLean Rogers proposed these categories in his 1996 debate with Martin Bernal, who did not dispute the fairness of this categorization. While never as explicit as Rogers, when Bernal summarizes his arguments, they generally correspond to Rogers' divisions. Reelblack, "Dr. John Henrik Clarke vs Mary Lefkowitz: The Great Debate (1996) | Best Quality," YouTube video, 2:55:47, January 28, 2019, <https://youtu.be/fmei-hUQUWY>, and Martin Bernal, "Very Brief Outline of the Black Athena Project," Blackathena.com, Last Accessed February 17, 2021, <http://www.blackathena.com/outline.php>.

2 While least important to Bernal's overall argument, this point took on outsized

vincingly demonstrates that Bernal misinterpreted the Greek terms μελάγχρωσ (dark-skinned) and ούλότριχος (wooly-haired). Those terms could refer to Greeks, Anatolians, or a number of other peoples besides Ethiopians, the ethnonym Greeks used for people we would call black.<sup>3</sup> Further, the Greeks were not exactly white but in fact saw themselves as a medium-brown midpoint of a continuum of skin tones ranging from ‘white’ northern Europeans to ‘black’ Ethiopians, with plenty of variation within each ethnic group.<sup>4</sup> The politicized debate over the relative historical contribution of black Egyptian and white Greek civilizations is particularly unproductive because it depends upon categorizing as “black” or “white” people to whom those categories had no relevance.

Second, Bernal argues that Egyptians and Phoenicians established colonies in Greece. There is no archaeological evidence for claims of colonization except some artifacts from Egypt and Phoenicia, which Greeks could just as easily have imported – as, in contrast to the colonization hypothesis, is firmly attested in the literary sources. Bernal also asserts that the high percentage of the Greek vocabulary derived from Afroasiatic languages suggests “suzerainty” of Egyptians and Phoenicians over the Aegean.<sup>5</sup> Even if Bernal had discovered a Graeco-Semitic-Egyptian sprachbund, that would hardly prove Egyptian and Phoenician colonization of Greece. Moreover, no prominent Indo-European linguists accepted Bernal’s linguistic work as correct or even a legitimate scientific undertaking.<sup>6</sup>

Third, Bernal argues that Phoenicia and Egypt exerted massive influence over Greek cultural development. As for language, Egyptian and Phoenecian contributed some vocabulary – and Phoenicia exported its alphabet to Greece – but the contribution was on nothing like the scale that Bernal proposes.<sup>7</sup> As for philosophy, even Bernal admits that there is no direct evidence of Egyptian influence, and some of his rationale stems from the debunked claims George G.M. James made about Egypt’s “stolen legacy.”<sup>8</sup> As for mathematics, Bernal cites Herodotus’ mis-

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importance in the public debate. Denise Eileen McCoskey, “Black Athena, White Power: Are Paying the Price for Classics’ Response to Bernal?,” *Eidolon*, November 15, 2018, <https://eidolon.pub/black-athena-white-power-6bd1899a46f2>, and Reelblack, “Clarke vs. Lefkowitz.”

3 Frank M. Snowden, Jr., “Bernal’s ‘Blacks,’ Herodotus, and Other Classical Evidence,” *Arethusa* 22, Special Issue: The Challenge of *Black Athena* (Fall 1989), 83-85.

4 Frank M. Snowden, Jr. “Misconceptions about African Blacks in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Specialists and Afrocentrists,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 4, no 3 (Winter 1997), 32.

5 Eric Adler, “Multicultural Athena,” from *Classics, the Culture Wars, and Beyond* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 124-125

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 James argued that Aristotle stole his philosophy from works at the Library of Alexandria – a library likely established after his death without Greek-translated

taken belief that geometry originated in Egypt. While Egyptians had some ability to measure area, geometry originated with Thales of Miletus and Pythagoras.<sup>9</sup> Even in fields in which Egyptian influence was more evident, like religion, Bernal reads his sources only in the direction of Egyptian influence. Herodotus wrote about the Egyptian adoption of the Greek rite of Perseus.<sup>10</sup> This flow from Greece to Egypt seems evidence that Eastern Mediterranean peoples' constant interaction caused customs and innovations to migrate in both directions, but Bernal is uninterested in reciprocal cultural exchange. The Egyptians and Phoenicians certainly influenced Greek art, architecture, and religion, but Bernal overstates the evidence that Greek culture descended in large part from Egyptian and Phoenician civilization.

Bernal's fourth argument, that the racism of nineteenth-century Classicists whitewashed the African and Semitic origins of Greek civilization, is much sounder than his first three. While Bernal exaggerated his arguments, each one held a kernel of truth within. Archaic Greece was not a 'white' civilization, many Phoenician and Egyptian artifacts reached Greek shores, and those cultures did influence Greek development. As Bernal notes, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the first advanced civilization in Europe arose in its farthest southeastern corner – the European region nearest the ancient civilizations of the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> This reality is one that many nineteenth-century Classicists found difficult to accept. Instead of dispassionate historical analysis, they produced what Bernal characterizes as “an extreme example of feel-good scholarship for Europeans”: encomia to Greek achievements.<sup>12</sup> Surprisingly, Mary Lefkowitz and Guy Rogers contest this point and argue that “an undifferentiated claim of racism and antisemitism cannot be sustained.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, the most prominent composers of classic multi-volume works on archaic Greece espoused, if not explicit racism, at least excessive pro-Greek sentiment. George Grote identified democratic Athens as the predecessor of liberal Anglo-Saxon governance. Georg Busolt, conversely, understood Athens and Sparta as state-building powers along the lines of his own homeland, Bismarckian Germany. K.J. Beloch was the most racist of the three and, perhaps not by coincidence, was also the most skeptical of Phoenician influence on archaic Greece.<sup>14</sup> And

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works. Reelblack, “Clarke vs. Lefkowitz,” and Snowden, “Bernal's ‘Blacks,’” 90.

9 Herodotus, *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), 119ff.

10. Herodotus, *Histories*, 2.91.

11 Reelblack, “Clarke vs. Lefkowitz.”

12 Here, in addition to defending his work as closer to objective analysis than traditional Classics, Bernal is making the implicit argument that Eurocentric scholarship should be given the same (dismissive) treatment as Afrocentrist scholarship. Ibid.

13 This point was, however, the least criticized of Bernal's arguments by Classical scholars. Lefkowitz and Rogers do not necessarily represent the consensus view. Ibid and Adler, “Multicultural Athena,” 169.

14 John K. Davies, “The Historiography of Ancient Greece,” from *A Companion*

the foundational art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann wrote that “the whiter the body is, the more beautiful it is.”<sup>15</sup> That many decades of Classical scholarship were deeply racist is indisputable; whether that racism concealed Afroasiatic influence on Greek culture depends on how much influence there was to conceal.

In addition to being Bernal’s most evidence-based claim, his condemnation of racist Classical scholarship is the most important of his arguments. *Black Athena’s* contentions about the origins of Greek civilization, if confirmed, would be remarkable, but the contention of racist scholarship threatens the very existence of Classics, in terms of both our historical knowledge and the future of Classical scholarship. Bernal was certainly not the first person to decry racist Classicists, but the force and cultural resonance of his critique made his argument matter in ways that extended beyond intellectual creativity. Coupled with Classics’s elite heritage – the product of centuries during which only the wealthy could afford to educate their sons in Greek and Latin – profound racism in Classics challenges the notion that the discipline can be a force for good and an inclusive site of learning. As access to a college education democratizes and Classicists reckon with their discipline’s racist past, these defects are changing somewhat. For instance, when an attendee of a Society of Classical Studies conference made racially insensitive comments to a black Classicist in the course of arguing for the traditional, pro-Greek approach to teaching, she was expelled from the conference.<sup>16</sup> In times past, her teaching priorities would have held the support of a supermajority of attendees. Nevertheless, the old habits of Classicists die hard. Lefkowitz herself argued that “the Greeks, least of all peoples, deserve the fate to which the Afrocentrists have subjected them.”<sup>17</sup> Classics has not nearly finished its reckoning with its past racism and exclusivity.

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to *Ancient Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Hans van Wees (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 6-7.

15 Rachel Poser, “He Wants to Save Classics from Whiteness. Can the Field Survive?,” *The New York Times*, February 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/02/magazine/classics-greece-rome-whiteness.html>.

16 To add insult to injury, the offender, not employed by any university, responded to her expulsion not in a scholarly journal or Classics-specific publication, but with a tendentious screed in the libertarian, anti-cancel culture website Quillette. Besides a dishonest accounting of her opponents’ positions and an ironic lack of grammatical care, she insists upon the use of “[sic]” after every tiny error of speech made by anyone who disagrees with her. Colleen Flaherty, “The Trouble with Classics Continues,” *Inside Higher Ed*, March 4, 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/03/04/new-video-shows-exactly-what-was-said-during-heated-discussion-annual-gathering>, and Mary Frances Williams, “How I Was Kicked out of the Society for Classical Studies Annual Meeting,” *Quillette*, February 26, 2019, <https://quillette.com/2019/02/26/how-i-was-kicked-out-of-the-society-for-classical-studies-annual-meeting/>.

17 McCoskey, “Black Athena, White Power.”

To forge a path forward for Classics, the discipline must purge itself of the legacy of racism and reinvigorate Classical study along inclusive and intellectually rigorous lines. But while rejecting the racism of past scholars, Classicists must resist the temptation to replace racist pseudohistory with antiracist narratives that correspond more to our moral desires than the guidance of the evidence. Of course, all scholarship will be biased by the ideology of the scholar, but the attempt to arrive at objective historical truth is vital. Rather than “writing an entirely new story about antiquity,” as Princeton’s Dan-el Padilla Peralta argues, defeating racist arguments about the ancient world requires the strongest possible evidence.<sup>18</sup> Neither does the solution lie in Cambridge’s Mary Beard’s progressive reinterpretation of ancient peoples’ moral values.<sup>19</sup> The archaic Greeks were not modern people; they committed mass killings, at times suppressed core political freedoms, enslaved much of their population, and despised other ethnic groups as barbaric. If we can learn any moral lessons from the Greeks, we are as likely to learn from their failures as their wisdom.

The truth, as in all subjects, is complicated, and scholarship would benefit from less moralizing and more self-skepticism. This sort of scholarship, however, requires new Classicists to be produced, and there are relatively few Classics students being trained now. This situation is difficult to rectify because by the time a potential Classics student reaches college, it is often too late. Only in high school do students have the time to begin learning Latin and Greek.<sup>20</sup> To reinvigorate Classics, the field must concentrate on secondary education: by expanding Latin and Greek in predominantly working-class schools and increasing the percentage of Latin programs that are mandatory.<sup>21</sup> Those two measures would create a large base of trained Classics students from diverse backgrounds and ready to build an antiracist Classics.

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18 Poser, “He Wants to Save Classics.”

19 Ibid.

20 Brown University’s Greek and Latin track Classics concentration requirements total fifteen classes, including two intensive introductory classes, for a student new to both languages. Other colleges require fewer, but these extensive requirements limit a student’s ability to discover Classics in college and successfully complete the most rigorous version of the concentration.

21 The intention of mandatory Latin is not so much to increase the number of Latin students but to expose students to the language who would otherwise never have known how interesting it can be. At my high school, which required two years of Latin, there was only one white student in any of the most advanced Latin and Greek courses. Many of my classmates would never have discovered their passion for the subject unless our school had forced them to try the language. To teach every student in the U.S. Latin might be a poor use of resources, but making Latin mandatory at some humanities-focused schools would do a service to the students, to Classics, and to the intellectual life of the country.

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# Female Virginity and Chastity in Roman Religion and Early Christian Narrative

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For Roman Vestal Virgins, their unviolated sexual state represented the state of Rome; in the theology of Early Christianity, the virginal female body represented a stronghold for God, a marker of self-control and freedom from sin, with the ultimate paradigm of perfection for female sexuality embodied by the Virgin Mary. To align or conflate these two conceptions of female sexual conduct is to completely misunderstand the aims and practices of Roman civic religion and early Christianity in the Roman Empire. In both the state religion of Rome and in early Christianity, virginity and chastity became a method of “setting apart” women in a religious context. However, the context of this separation is completely different: though Christians were separating themselves from worldly society, virginity and chastity were an expectation and ideal for the entirety of their community, while for the Vestal Virgins, their special status, partially constructed by their virginity, was not meant to be a model for other Roman women, as most did not have the distinct status associated with being a Vestal Virgin assigned to them.

In the first centuries CE of the Roman Empire, early Christians constructed virginity as a tool in an individual’s relationship with God that was readily available to all Christian women regardless of their background. Early Christian conceptions of virginity were based around personal choice and the willpower to leave behind the teachings and relationships of the world, as I will examine through the case study of the “Acts of Paul and Thecla,” a second-century CE text depicting the conversion and attempted martyrdom of a woman named Thecla. Yet virginity was not necessarily a requirement for elevation into the canon of martyrs and saints. The second century martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, for example, are both mothers at the time of their death. Nonetheless, both women undergo a sanctification of their bodies in the extant narrative of their martyrdom. Just as physical virginity is available in the form of personal choice and abstinence to Christian women, spiritual chastity is also available to married women. Women like Perpetua and Felicitas were made new through detachment from earthly relationships, such as husband and child, and their non-virgin bodies could still become a stage in service of God. Without claiming a direct parallel or applying a Christian framework to a Roman religious one, I aim to explore the ambiguities of the classifications of “virginal” and “chaste” holy women in the

religious settings of the Roman civic cult and in the martyr narratives of early Christian culture, examining how in both cases, a seemingly straightforward designation such as “virgin” or “non-virgin” is constructed upon the layers of each religion’s history, paradigms for personal practice, and relationship to the state.

Before investigating the ways in which female chastity and virginity were constructed in religious settings, it is necessary to define what these concepts meant to the Romans and distinguish these definitions from a solely Christianized view of the terms. Roman religious ritual settings categorized women “in terms of their sexuality, or, more accurately, in terms of the stages of their sexual relationship with men,” separating sexually active women (wives and prostitutes) from non-sexually active women (virgins and old women).<sup>1</sup> While Vestal Virgins could get married after they had served their term, their virginity was a socially designated status excluding them from the expectations of marriage or childbearing. The analyses of both Mary Beard’s 1980 article “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins” and Staples’ *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins* emphasize the virginity of the Vestals as a literal, physiological state; while this state certainly carried associations of ritual purity with it, this purity was unique to the Vestals and not a prescriptive model for the behavior of other women. Chastity, on the other hand, or *castitas*, alongside *pudicitia*, the feminine virtue of modesty and “fitting” sexual shame, was a code of virtuous conduct for Roman women that did not require physical virginity, as it was a code designed for married women to uphold. While the associations around the Vestal’s virginity are manifold and a subject for scholarly debate, it seems safe to view their virginity as an uncontested fact of their duties—of course, with the exceptions of formal accusations of *unchastity*.

Theories around the implications of this virginity for understanding the social and religious category of the Vestal Virgins include Beard’s argument in the “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” which takes the approach that “[Vestals] combined aspects of two separate categories that were for the Romans even more distinct than they are for us: the married and unmarried woman...some of their characteristics might perhaps be seen most closely to resemble those of men.”<sup>2</sup> Staples positions physical virginity as a “necessary” aspect of Vestal Virginhood, but more importantly, a signifier of a “much more complex, abstract, and politically charged ideal of virginity that was peculiar to the Vestals.”<sup>3</sup> Beard also notes that the Vestal’s sexual position can be considered an “isolating agent from the traditional family and social structure of the Roman community.”<sup>4</sup> Yet Brown makes an important distinction in relation to such a claim: though a Vestal’s virginity did

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1 Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins: Sex and Category in Roman Religion* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 58.

2 Mary Beard, “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980), 15.

3 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 135.

4 Beard, “Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” 21.

separate her from other women and prevent her from engaging in the usual stages of life for a Roman woman, the Vestals “fitted into a clearly demarcated space in civic society... The presence in some cities of a handful of young girls, chosen by others to forgo marriage, heightened the awareness of contemporaries that marriage and childbirth were the unquestioned destiny of all other women.”<sup>5</sup> Narratives like Thecla’s, Brown posits, challenge this “unquestioned destiny” in a way that the institution of the Vestal Virgin never did. In both the contexts of the Vestal Virgins and the female martyrs of the first and second centuries, chastity separated virgins in Rome from other women. Before examining this effect of “separation,” it is first useful to understand the religious prescriptions for non-Christian, non-priestess Roman women surrounding duty and sexual conduct, as well as the potential for Roman women who were not virgins to interact with the divine.

### Sexual Standards for Roman Women

For most Roman women, sexual propriety involved chastity and loyalty to a male head of the household rather than absolute virginitv. In his account of the founding of the Republic, Livy uses the Latin word *castitas*, the root of the English “chastity,” to describe one of the forces spurring on Sextus Tarquinius to rape Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus: *Sex. Tarquinius mala libido Lucretiae per vim stuprandae capit; cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*, “It was there that Sextus Tarquinius was seized with a wicked desire to debauch Lucretia by force; not only her beauty, but her proved chastity as well, provoked him.”<sup>6</sup> Tarquinius is drawn to Lucretia because of her exemplary virtue, as well as the original *impetus* for his violent act, Collatine’s boasting about Lucretia’s beauty and kindness. In her final moments, Lucretia proves that her *pudicitia* is still intact despite the brutal rape; Livy has Lucretia specify that she is afraid of “unchaste,” or *inprudica* women using her as an example: *nec ulla deinde inprudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet* (“not in time to come shall ever unchaste woman live through the example of Lucretia”).<sup>7</sup> Lucretia kills herself, and the horror of her death leads to the usurpation of the kings and the eventual formation of the Republic. In a duality of sexual associations, Lucretia’s story embodies both the virtuous wife and the violated woman; Livy demonstrates the threat that wives pose to their husbands through their potential to be raped. Staples analyzes this duality as part of a broader ambivalence embedded in the institution of Roman marriage and its roles, an

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5 Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 8.

6 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.57.10.

7 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.58.10.

ambivalence included in founding stories like the rape of the Sabine women, a narrative which aligns the very existence of wives in Rome with foreignness.

Female chastity was constructed in relation to the patriarchal household: “A chaste and industrious wife could prosper a man’s house and family. But an unchaste wife could destroy it. The story of Lucretia demonstrates how the potential for either outcome could inhere in the same woman.”<sup>8</sup> One might recall the story of Caesar and his wife Pompeia after Clodius’ intrusion on the rites of the Bona Dea in 62 BCE; the association of his wife with any hint of sexual violation caused Caesar to divorce her, on the grounds that “Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion.” This notion might have implications for a more widespread attitude towards wives, with the tale of Lucretia in mind: as Staples points out, Lucretia is constructed as being “above suspicion” even after sexual violation, but in Livy’s story, her decision to kill herself comes from the knowledge that her defiled body cannot continue to occupy the role of Collatine’s wife. Her self-sacrifice suggests that a violated wife cannot be returned to her previous position, even if she is as virtuous and blameless as Lucretia. Indeed, the rape of Lucretia is the epitome of the corruption and wickedness of the Roman kings; because her suicide is a catalyst for the foundation of the Republic, the Republic itself can be understood symbolically as a new, “unviolated” state, a metaphor which seems to have resonances with the trials against Vestal Virgins for unchastity as well. The story of Lucretia thus illuminates the construction of chastity by historical, religious, and political forces, forces which are difficult to analyze separately from one another in a Roman context.

## Female Participation in Roman Religion

Staples examines the participation of women in Roman religion through the lens of sexual categorization, a method which classifies people according to gender as well as sexual statuses such as virgin, married woman, or prostitute. In his *Fasti*, Ovid depicts some of the festivals and rituals in which Roman *matronae* participated, such as the Matralia to Mother Matuta: “Go, good mothers (the Matralia is your feast).”<sup>9</sup> Another religious job for matrons was performed on April 1st each year as married women ritually washed a statue of Venus. According to Ovid, women would strip the statue naked and wash it, then strip naked themselves and wash themselves, and then drink a mixture of poppy, milk, and honey. Ovid explains the significance of this action in relation to both wifely duties and the health of the Roman state:

Do not flinch at the poppy crushed in snowy milk...

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<sup>8</sup> Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 6.475-476.

When Venus was first led to her lusting husband,  
 She drank this. She was a wife thereafter.  
 Appease her with suppliant words. Her power secures  
 Beauty and character and noble fame.  
 Rome fell from chastity in our ancestors' time.  
 You ancients consulted Cumae's crone.  
 She orders a shrine to Venus. It was duly built,  
 And Venus henceforth named 'Heart-Changer.'<sup>10</sup>

This ritual seems to be paradoxically aligned with both sexuality and chastity, at least in Ovid's depiction. Prostitutes were also invited to join in the bathing and washing practice alongside matrons. Staples emphasizes the parallels drawn between the women and the goddess in this ritual; the supplicants are promised the physical perfection of Venus during the ritual, since their naked bodies' blemishes are obscured by Fortuna Virilis. Staples analyzes the deity Fortuna Virilis as a different name for Venus, but other scholars have understood the name as representative of a schism in this cult, with lower class women honoring Fortuna Virilis and upper class *matronae* honoring Venus Verticordia. Using Staples' framework of one festival, the elements of ritualized sexuality for both *matronae* and prostitutes in this practice are obvious; for example, the potion drunk by the women is the same one that Venus drank before having intercourse with her "lusting" husband. Ovid traces the establishment of a shrine to Venus to Rome's past "fall from chastity," implying that Venus has the power to enforce proper sexual conduct. It is clear that sexuality and attraction alone, for men and for women, are not the roots of such a fall, but rather a violation of honor such as the rape of Lucretia. Perhaps the ritual represents a way for women to use divine power to help them perform the right kind of sexuality.

Some scholars have argued that rites practiced by Roman women are inherently on the margins of Roman religious practice, characterized by locations of worship outside of Rome and "foreign" gods.<sup>11</sup> However, Staples counters that some of these female-led rites, open to sexually active women, were ritually significant for the Roman state and its health, and that this significance was recognized by Roman men rather than being marginalized. The rites of the Bona Dea, or "Good Goddess," were a religious institution led and practiced by Roman women, as evidenced by the scandal of the male intruder Clodius. This division was made according to gender alone, and not necessarily sexual status; though Cicero writes that wealthy matrons were in attendance, Staples posits that mentions of slave girls, courtesans, and freedwomen attending the festival elsewhere in ancient literature means that this cult was open to *all* women. Staples notes that Propertius calls the followers of the Bona Dea cult *puellae*, girls,

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10 Ov. *Fast.* 4.150-160.

11 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 5.

rather than women: “Puella...implies that in this instance the concept of sexual categorization does not apply. Puellae has the effect of embracing all female categories at once.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, virgins were allowed into the rites, but the rites’ power was not rooted in female virginity as they were for the Vestals. While Cicero regards nocturnal rites performed by women as suspicious, the rites of the Bona Dea are not included in this view: “Let there be no nocturnal sacrifices by women, with one exception: that which is performed for the welfare of the people...*sacrificia pro populo* referred to the rites of Bona Dea.”<sup>13</sup> Supervised by Vestal Virgins, this religious practice drew on a uniquely feminine relationship to the divine in order to benefit the state, supporting Staples’ argument that the rites were not “fringe,” but an accepted and necessary part of civic religion.

Much like the rape of Lucretia and the founding myth of the Republic, the legendary foundation of Rome itself seems to have a complex relationship to chastity: “Romulus was, after all, the son of Mars by a Vestal Virgin, who was bound on pain of death by a vow of chastity.”<sup>14</sup> Unlike Lucretia, whose *pudicitia* was emblematic of a dutiful Roman wife, Vestal Virgins existed in a category separate from the expectations for other Roman women. Scholars have noted points of conflicting symbolism in the rituals of the Vestal Virgins in various attempts to decipher the anomalous position. In “The Sexual Status of the Vestal Virgins,” Beard reviews the theories of Vestal Virgins as a kind of “wife” or “daughter” figure modeled on either the wife or daughters of early Roman kings. Beard also makes the key distinction that Vestal virginity was not viewed as “sterile,” but as a “mediator of stored up, potential procreative power, a fact that can be adduced against the view that the connection of the Vestals with various ancient fertility cults reaffirms their matronal status.”<sup>15</sup> Staples supports this idea with the observation that the sacred flame tended by the Vestal Virgins can evoke both “the idea of sexual purity in the female” and “the procreative power of the male” in its associations with both the goddess Vesta and the “symbolic equivalent of semen” in Varro.<sup>16</sup>

Beard’s later addition to her 1980 article advocates for an acceptance of these puzzling dual aspects of the Vestals’ identity and practices as inscrutable, even to the non-Vestal Romans. Beard turns the focus of her discussion of the unchastity trials to the messaging of such trials about the *transgression* of virginity, rather than using the accusations to construct an understanding of the Vestals’ sexual status as she does in her 1980 work: “the Vestals, in other words, can be seen not merely as a parade of anomaly, but a focus of negotiation around the category of virginity, a negotiation of the boundary between virginity and

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12 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 31-32.

13 Ibid, 41.

14 Mary Beard, John North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 200.

15 Beard, “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” 15.

16 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 149.

non-virginitv.”<sup>17</sup> While I find the later article’s philosophy of accepting elements of secrecy in the priestess-hood without trying to pin down explanations for each one useful, “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins” is still persuasive in its argument that the interstitial and anomalous nature of the Vestal Virgins, a nature partially but not entirely defined by sexual purity, formed their sanctity.

In keeping with the idea that Roman religion and politics were inextricably linked, the virginitv of Vestal Virgins was linked to the well-being of the Roman state. As a method to understand the construction of chastity and virginitv for Vestal Virgins, scholars have turned to the literary accounts of the punishment for a violation of chastity. The virginal status of Vestals seems to be accepted as fact and not “explained” by Roman source material, and so the relatively rare instances of violation help to pinpoint the significance of a Vestal Virgin’s sexual conduct. Plutarch claims that the punishment, live interment underground, dated back to the time of King Numa:

It was ordained by the king that the sacred virgins should vow themselves to chastity for thirty years...For their minor offenses the virgins are punished with stripes, the Pontifex Maximus sometimes scourging the culprit on her bare flesh, in a dark place, with a curtain interposed. But she that has broken her vow of chastity is buried alive near the Colline gate.<sup>18</sup>

This brutal punishment was not designated as human sacrifice, a taboo for the Romans, because the convicted Vestal was provided a small amount of food and water when lowered underground, even though the practice is, in respect to its final result, identical to human sacrifice. In the period between the first Punic War and the fall of the Republic, Vestal Virgins were punished for losing their virginitv in 216 and 114 BCE, both instances following “intense emotional upheaval following news...of the annihilation of the Roman army” and “two of three known instances of human sacrifice [in the Forum Boarium] in Rome.”<sup>19</sup> The military defeats were the “near annihilation of the Roman army by Hannibal at Cannae” and the “destruction of the army of C. Porcius Cato by the Scordisci in Thrace” respectively<sup>20</sup>. In both instances, more than one Vestal was accused and tried, suggesting the shared and potentially solely symbolic nature of the crime rather than a personal failure by one individual woman. Since these violations and subsequent trials occurred during times of state crisis, the virginal state of the Vestals can be interpreted as a metaphor for the health of the state as well as a part of the individual Vestal’s “isolated” status.

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17 Mary Beard, “Re-Reading (Vestal) Virginitv” in *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 1995), 173.

18 Plut. *Vit. Num.* 10.1-4.

19 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 134.

20 *Ibid.*, 136.



Separated from family, Staples argues that the Vestal's only identity lay "in Romanness," allowing their bodies to become metaphors for the safety and health of Rome.<sup>21</sup> In Inge Kroppenberg's "Law, Religion, and Constitution of the Vestal Virgins," she argues that the Vestals stood "at the boundary between chaos and order," and that the violation of a Vestal Virgin represented the threat of constitutional collapse for Republican Rome.<sup>22</sup> One example of this interconnected rhetoric comes from the imperial rule of Domitian, in which Pliny the Younger details how the Vestal Virgin Cornelia, accused of *incestum*, defends herself by asking "How can Caesar think me guilty of incest [unchastity], when he has conquered and triumphed after my hands have performed the sacred rites?"<sup>23</sup> Perhaps in a similar dynamic to that of Lucretia's violated chastity, a trial of Vestals for *crimen incesti* both illustrated the threat of corrupted female sexuality and the potential for a female body to bring about justice or righteousness for the state.

## Chastity for Early Christian Women

Rather than using unviolated bodies as a symbolic representation of the state, narratives about Christian female saints depict self-imposed virginity as an agent of isolation from both one's family and the state. Early Christian hagiographies focus on the body as the property of God which removes the sexual obligations of a Christian man *or* woman's sexual activity to any earthly relationships whatsoever. While the Vestal Virgins may seem to be "set apart" from other Roman women in many ways, such as their living space, their mandated abstinence from marriage or intercourse, and their unique sacred status, their virginity ultimately worked to uphold the order of the Roman. Vestal Virgins technically could marry after they left the position; according to the laws of Roman religion, they could be assimilated back into the usual course of Roman womanhood. However, in practice, their thirty-year tenure effectively prevented them from conceiving.<sup>24</sup> For female early Christian saints and martyrs, the form of chastity and virginity that these women took on represented a complete and final separation from sexual and romantic attachments. Two case studies, the hagiographies of Thecla and Perpetua, demonstrate the early Christian representation of virginity (for Thecla) and purification of the body even without virginal status (for Perpetua) as an aid in one's devotion to God. My earlier exploration of Roman *matronae* and their options for participation in Roman "pagan" religion allows a glimpse of the life upper class women who left

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21 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 143.

22 Inge Kroppenberg, "Law, Religion, and Constitution of the Vestal Virgins." *Law and Literature* 22, no. 3 (2010), 432.

23 *Ibid.*, 429.

24 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 147.

their families in favor of Christianity were abandoning. Thecla and Perpetua both came from wealthy families; Thecla was engaged to be married, and while Perpetua's husband or father of her child is not named, she has a young child already.

Located in Iconium, the story of Saint Thecla depicts the young woman's decision to turn away from marriage and family life and preserve her virginity in an act of devotion to God. Thecla was introduced to the Christian teachings by Paul during his travels. Since Iconium is a part of the Roman empire and Thecla is not in Rome itself, it should be noted that Thecla refuses a different role for women than that of the female *matronae*; the governor of Iconium asks her why she does not follow "the Iconian laws" and agree to marriage.<sup>25</sup> It is also important to emphasize that hagiographical narratives are created in order to highlight and valorize elements of the saint's life, elevating the figure as an emblem of Christian practice. Hagiographies are not necessarily a reflection of everyday practice and life for the "average" Christian. However, the principles and values which are uplifted in the lives of the saints are a telling indicator of the principles of early Christianity. Virginity is an agent of change for Thecla, signaling her departure from her inherited lifestyle. One of Thecla's first convictions as a Christian comes from Paul's teachings about virginity: "Thecla... betrothed to a man named Thamyris... listened day and night to the discourse of virginity, as proclaimed by Paul. And she... was led on by faith, rejoicing exceedingly."<sup>26</sup> Her worldly identity is tied to her impending marriage; virginity is an entirely different manner of conduct, rather than being a stage of womanhood from which she will eventually graduate. Later in the narrative, Thecla requests to be kept apart from her fiancé in order to remain pure until her death.

With Beard's model of the Vestals' virginity as an "isolating agent" in mind, the Christian teachings of virginity act in a somewhat parallel manner for Thecla. Thecla's zealous adoption of Paul's message causes her family to mourn for the loss of her worldly identity and relationships, "Thamyris [her fiancé] for the loss of a wife, Theoclia for that of a child and the maidservants for that of a mistress."<sup>27</sup> The disruptive, radical nature of Paul's teachings provoke accusations brought before the Iconian governor that Paul "deprives the husbands of wives and maidens of husbands, saying, 'there is for you no resurrection unless you remain chaste and do not pollute the flesh.'"<sup>28</sup> Rather than the necessary, socially and politically ordained separation from one's family that would occur for a girl chosen to become a Vestal Virgin, the personal choice to adopt the Christian conception of virginity rends apart the convert's social world. Thecla's

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25 "The Acts of Thecla," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2009), 20.

26 *Ibid.*, 7.

27 *Ibid.*, 10.

28 *Ibid.*, 12.

chastity and virginity keeps her body pure. Thecla baptizes herself before she thinks she is going to die by being devoured by seals, and “even the governor shed tears because the seals were to devour such beauty.”<sup>29</sup> Thecla is miraculously left untouched by any of the water’s beasts, and she first seeks out Paul and then returns to Iconium to preach the gospel. She finds her former fiancé dead, but her mother still alive, and she shares God’s promises with her mother.

Perpetua and Felicitas both provide examples of the radical and impossible-to-assimilate nature of Christian teachings about sexual conduct and one’s relationship to their body when practiced to their fullest extent. For these women, living as a Roman *matrona* and embodying *pudicitia* and *castitas* was not enough for spiritual fulfillment; after professing their Christian identities, their bodies must be fully devoted to God. Rather than upholding the family unit and thus participating in the ranks and systems of the Roman state, Christian women’s sexual status serves to uphold the stronghold of their own body, consecrating their physical selves and forming a connection between their souls and God.

The hagiographical narrative of Perpetua and Felicitas, both martyred in 203 CE, demonstrates that while virginity was prized in the teachings of the Apostle Paul, virginity was not a prerequisite for the sanctification of a female body and the conferring of metaphorical significance onto a female body, as it was for the Vestal Virgins. Perpetua comes from a “noble family and had a father and mother and two brothers and a son at the breast; she was twenty-two years old.”<sup>30</sup> In the process of their conversion, refusal to renounce Christianity, and subsequent martyrdom, both Perpetua and Felicitas distance themselves from their attachments to their families, including their own children, with the help of God. Both Perpetua, Felicitas, and Thecla leave behind their family, in a gesture that might be reminiscent of the Vestal Virgins’ departure from their family homes: “From the precise moment that she was admitted to the priesthood all ties with her family were broken...[and] freed from *patria potestas*.”<sup>31</sup> However, Vestal Virgins were not separated from all worldly powers, but rather transferred from a ward of their father to a ward of the state, as evidenced by their rights of inheritance; “if they themselves died without making a will their property reverted to the state.”<sup>32</sup> Christian martyrdom required a willingness to separate one’s self from *anything* aside from God in the most final and absolute way possible: death and ascendance to heaven.

When Perpetua is condemned to death, she must leave her baby, who has been living with her in prison. Perpetua writes that “as God willed, the baby had no further desire for the breast...I was relieved of any anxiety for my child and

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29 “The Acts of Thecla,” 34.

30 “Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas A,” in *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. Stephanie Cobb, 67-94 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 1.

31 Staples, *Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 140.

32 Beard, “Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” 21.

of any discomfort in my breast.”<sup>33</sup> In an act which Perpetua finds miraculous, she is freed from both the physical connection of breastfeeding and the maternal anxiety keeping her tied to the world. Felicitas is pregnant while imprisoned, and cannot be killed until she has given birth because a Roman law prohibited the spectacle of killing a pregnant woman in the amphitheater. A proconsul appeals to Felicitas’ sense of motherhood to give her a way out of martyrdom:

The proconsul said: “Have pity on yourself, young woman, and sacrifice so that you may live. Especially since I see you have a baby in your womb.” Felicitas replied: “I am a Christian, and it is commanded to me to despise all of these things for God’s sake.”<sup>34</sup>

But Felicitas refuses her child and rebukes the proconsul, professing her intent to glorify God above this connection to her child. In the moments leading up to her death after she has given birth, Felicitas is separated from her status as mother and even to some extent from her status as woman: “Felicitas followed...truly happy and to be consecrated by her own blood, not only did she offer an example of the female sex but also of male power, going to receive the crown of martyrdom after the burden of the womb.”<sup>35</sup> Felicitas is not a virgin, but she does detach herself from the physical manifestation of her sexual status—her baby—and subsequently achieves freedom from the “burdens” of the body, a freedom which comes with the reward of God’s “crown.”

## Two Forms of Female Chastity

Entering into the arena in preparation for her death, Felicitas is described as having “male power,” entering an almost sexless categorization. The question of masculinization for the Vestal Virgins also arises in Beard, Staples, and Kroppenberg’s studies. Beard uses “man” as one of the categories which Vestal Virgins inhabit in some way, contributing to their interstitial nature, in “The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins.” Kroppenberg, however, argues that while previous scholars have viewed the Vestal’s special privileges as “representing deliverance from male control over the female body” or a “legal masculinization,”<sup>36</sup> the role was definitionally female and separate from male priesthood; the Vestal Virgin was a separately constructed gender role, but a *female* gender role. Instead of a “masculinization,” Kroppenberg argues that the special privileges of the Vestals in comparison to other women arises from their status as a symbol of Roman

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13 “Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas A,” 6.

34 Ibid, 5.

35 “Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas B,” 9.

36 Kroppenberg, “Law, Religion, and Constitution,” 427.

freedom, especially during the Republican period. Staples also refutes the notion of masculinization, pointing towards the fact that a grown male Roman citizen would still be under *patria potestas* if his father was alive; the Vestals' separation from their family was not an equivalent to the social freedom of a man, but a different kind of power entirely. Nonetheless, it seems that in both the context of the Vestal Virgins and in figures like Thecla and Felicitas, literary accounts of virginity or detachment from one's body associated this physical status with ambiguity surrounding gender. Indeed, as this examination into a limited portion of Roman religion's construction of virginity and chastity has demonstrated, questions about the role of virginity are often answered with duality and ambiguity; these figures can both epitomize female virtue (a differing concept in each religion) and lose some of the associations of their femininity through their virginal status.

While both early Christianity and Roman civic religion place metaphorical weight on the unviolated female body, this symbolism is more figurative for the Vestal Virgins than Christian female saints. A violation of the Vestal's chastity directly reflected trouble for the state; the individual woman's personal failure was less significant than the violation as a *prodigium*-like occurrence. Accordingly, there is no option for repentance; once the violation has occurred and the accused Vestal has been convicted, the Vestal Virgin cannot restore her chastity. Conversely, the commitment of Christian women to virginity is entirely personal, woven into the individual woman's relationship with God. Certainly, the evidence present about the Vestal Virgins perhaps contributes to this understanding of their chastity as less of a personal choice; the existence of a first-person narrative like Perpetua's carries with it the risk of going too far in a view of Christian chastity as "individual" where Roman chastity is "communal." However, based on the evidence present, it seems that the choice to enter a state of lifelong virginity was a radical choice for Christian women, and a choice which was, in theory, available to all; the religious significance of Christian virginity lay within the purity and sanctity of an individual body. The avenue of Vestal virginity was only available to the chosen, young girls who had been deemed pure enough for the role. The significance of a Vestal's virginity was thus principally about continuing the institution of Rome's civic religion and representing a healthy state through female bodies.

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# A Single Ostrakon: The Life, Death, and Trials of Themistocles

*Edan Larkin*

Among the finds uncovered during an excavation by the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, one sherd of pottery found reads:

Θεμισθοκλεῖ  
Νεοκλέος  
Φρεαρρίοι<sup>1</sup>

For Themistokles  
son of Neokles  
of Phrearrioi<sup>2</sup>

Excavators uncovered this specific piece of pottery, called an *ostrakon*, at the Athenian Agora, bearing these few details about a man named Themistokles. The inscription, written in Greek, was carved onto the largest *ostrakon* ever discovered at the site, once part of the rim neck of a *pithos*, or sizable earthenware storage container utilized throughout the ancient Greek world.<sup>3</sup> It weighed 522.5 grams.<sup>4</sup> Hundreds of other ostraka inscribed with the name Themistokles have been found both at the Agora and at Kerameikos, an Athenian cemetery, dating somewhere within the 480s and 470s B.C.E.<sup>5</sup> While there was certainly more than one Athenian man named Themistokles, as this paper will later discuss, only one could have garnered so many ostraka.

This piece of pottery was undoubtedly used as part of an ostracism. The ancient Athenian practice of ostracism received its name from the ostraka on which

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1 841 (P 15727) E 2 (C 18:11) in “Ostraka,” ed. Mabel L. Lang, *The Athenian Agora* 25 (1990): 116.

2 841 (P 15727) E 2 (C 18:11) in *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Alexander the Great*, Third Edition, tr. Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland (London: Routledge, 2010), 350.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 G. M. E. Williams, “The Kerameikos Ostraka.” *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 31 (1978): 106.

Athenians carved the names of their fellow citizens. Each ostrakon represented a vote in favor of exiling the man indicated.<sup>6</sup> The fourth-century Attidographer Philochorus explains that this process occurred after the *demos* voted on whether or not to hold an ostrakophoria, usually during the sixth month of the year.<sup>7</sup> If Athenians voted accordingly, they sectioned off an area of the Agora, in which voters, all of whom were male citizens, “took a sherd and wrote the name of whomever of the citizens he wished to send out of the city.”<sup>8</sup> The man who received the highest number of ostraka above six thousand was exiled from Athens. He maintained ownership of his property within Athens and reserved the right to return once ten years elapsed. Governmental officials including the nine archons and the five-hundred members of the Boule supervised the voting process, which could only occur once a year.<sup>9</sup> With such a significant number of ostraka targeting Themistokles having survived, especially an ostrakon as well-preserved and readable as this one, exhibits that Themistokles was a popular choice during ostrakophoria for years leading up to his ostracism.

As for Themistokles, essentially all the preserved information regarding his parentage comes from Plutarch’s *Life of Themistokles*. From the patronymic featured in the ostrakon inscription at the start of this paper, it is known that Themistokles was the child of Neokles, about whom little is certain other than that his name either translated to “New Fame” or “Youthful Fame,” meaning he “was not of the old, landed aristocracy.”<sup>10</sup> Also mentioned on the ostrakon is the demotic “of Phrearrioi.” As Plutarch describes, Themistokles was of the Leontid tribe through his father and his mother “was an alien,” not born in Athens, making Themistokles a man of “lowly” birth.<sup>11</sup> Leading up to the second Persian invasion, Themistokles was one of the—if not *the*—most prominent political figures in Athens. Many considered him a hero of the second Persian invasion because he persuaded Athens to use the wealth it obtained from its silver mines to build a substantial number of triremes to bolster its navy, a strategic move that equipped Athens to triumph in the maritime battles against Persia.<sup>12</sup> With such fame, however, he garnered popular support but also powerful enemies. Themistokles had been a candidate for ostracism as early as the 480s B.C.E., but he was not ostracized until the late 470s.<sup>13</sup>

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6 Mabel L. Lang, “Ostraka.” *The Athenian Agora* 25 (1990): 1.

7 Philoch. *FGH* 328 F30.

8 Plut. *Aristeides* 7, tr. Mabel L. Lang.

9 Peter Keegan, *Graffiti in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2014)

10 F. D. Harvey. “Neokles, Father of Themistokles.” *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 29, no. 1 (1980): 110.

11 Plut. *Them.* 2.1

12 Arist. *Ath. pol.* 22.

13 Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland, “10.14 Ostraka: Examples of Individual Ostraka” in *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Alexander the Great*, Third Edition (London: Routledge, 2010), 350.

Although there is much to be discussed regarding themes such as what ostracism meant for Athenian democracy, how Themistokles's ostracism impacted the Persian invasions that followed considering the accusations against him for 'medizing,' or supporting Persian efforts, and Themistokles in Sparta, this paper will mostly focus on how and why Athenians utilized ostracism and what the political motivations behind Themistokles's ostracism might have been. In Athens, the collective fear of tyranny was so great that Athenians implemented checks on power, such as ostracism, to eliminate the possibility of popular politicians abusing their status to become tyrants. As Aristotle wrote, the law of ostracism "was enacted because of suspicion of men in positions of power."<sup>14</sup>

However, the reaction to Themistokles specifically provides significant insight into Athenian politics because it may demonstrate that this practice did not always target the tyrannical. Themistokles had several political rivals at home, most notably Aristides and Cimon, fellow powerful Athenians who greatly opposed him and who were also victims of ostracization, pointing to possible conspiracy but also supporting the idea that Athens feared any man who possessed excessive political power regardless of his political alignment or lack of tyrannical tendencies.<sup>15</sup> For this exact reason, ostracism was sometimes a method of humbling those who possessed notable prestige or relieving jealousy felt towards citizens rather than condemning tyrants, as was possibly the political reaction to Themistokles. Themistokles faced opposition throughout his most influential years and well before he was ostracized: ostraka indicating Themistokles, as previously discussed, had begun appearing in the 480s B.C.E.<sup>16</sup>

Further, in the fourth century, Aristotle asserted that ostracism had not always been "fairly applied in states; for, instead of looking to the public good, [Athenians] have used ostracism for factious purposes."<sup>17</sup> Despite evidence supporting that Themistokles was not a tyrannical figure, his popularity made him an enemy to others and ostracism provided the chance for revenge, not necessarily for the protection of the public. In his *Life of Aristides*, Plutarch corroborates this claim when he notes that ostracism served as "a merciful exorcism of the spirit of jealous hate."<sup>18</sup> Themistokles's apparent fall from grace in the aftermath of the second Persian invasion does not mean he began to demonstrate tyrannical behavior but that, instead, to some extent, his widely known success intimidated other Athenians. Politically, these men could have thought it advantageous to eliminate such a threat.

Could this mean that the political reaction to Themistokles in Athens was conspiratorial? Aristides was ostracized before Themistokles, but he was granted the right to an early return in 480 B.C.E. and was therefore in Athens at the

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14 Arist. *Ath. pol.* 22.3.

15 Arist. *Ath. pol.* 22.3-22.6

16 Dillon and Garland, "10.14 Ostraka," 350.

17 Arist. *Pol.* III

18 Plut. *Aristeides* 7.1-8, tr. Bernadotte Perrin.

times Themistokles was voted for and finally ostracized, while Cimon was not ostracized until 461 B.C.E.<sup>19</sup> Before his ostracism, Aristides felt compelled “to take a firm stand against [Themistokles’s] increasing influence” and it was ultimately Themistokles who “headed a successful faction and got Aristides removed by ostracism.”<sup>20</sup> Within Athens the rivalry between Themistokles and Cimon was known: Plutarch even emphasized Cimon as a “political rival of Themistokles,” largely because Themistokles was not exactly anti-Sparta but certainly pro-Athens and pro-democracy, while Cimon was an outspoken proponent of Sparta.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Themistokles had two major rivals in the 470s and 480s B.C.E.—one of whom he helped to ostracize—and thus, possibly a plot against him: led either by these rivals, their supporters, or his other opponents.

Considering that Themistokles was also voted for at the same time that Aristides was ostracized, his ostracism could also be indicative of Athenians choosing between two prominent political rivals. Additionally, multiple ostraka voting for Themistokles written with the same hand have been found, even though each citizen only received one vote per ostracism.<sup>22</sup> This may be further evidence of a conspiracy or some strategy to ostracize Themistokles, but it is also probable that only some men could write and, therefore, helped inscribe the ostraka of those who could not do so. Whether or not this all points to conspiracy is unclear, but at the very least it supports the idea that ostracism was not always a just process undergone for the express purpose of preventing tyranny in Athens: often, it was manipulated to achieve a political end.

The political reaction to Themistokles that resulted in his ostracism also relates to the excessive praise he received after the Battle of Salamis. The historian Thucydides, for example, ascribed the victory almost entirely to Athens and specifically to Themistokles.<sup>23</sup> Thucydides’ assertion that the success against Persia was achieved on behalf of Themistokles evoked the discomfort, distrust, and disdain that Athenian and allied soldiers, who did not receive the same recognition, felt toward him. It is, therefore, made clearer as to why he was seen as a political threat to enough Athenian citizens that his actions warranted resentment and ostracism. The allied commanders also appeared to recognize the worrisome power Themistokles had come to possess. Once Athens and its allies drove the Persians from Greece, these commanders gathered at the Isthmus to decide who would receive the prize of valor for battle, which they did by each voting for a first and second place winner. Themistokles won, because every man voted for

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19 Plut. *Aristeides* 8.1, tr. Bernadotte Perrin; Plut. *Cimon* 17.2

20 Plut. *Them* 3.2, 5.5

21 Plut. *Them* 20.3

22 David Sansone, *Ancient Greek Civilization* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 138.

23 *Thuc.* 1.73.2-74.3

himself first and most voted Themistokles second.<sup>24</sup> By indicating themselves, the allied commanders revealed not only a desire to be best but also the same fear of overtly powerful men that ostracism was concerned with. The commanders understood the influence Themistokles had but pointedly attempted to dilute it, foreshadowing the political reaction to him in Athens and his resulting ostracism.

Themistokles was undoubtedly well-known, acquiring a reputation that spread far beyond Athens. Themistokles's supposed former friend Timokreon of Rhodes wrote a poem preserved in Plutarch's *Life of Themistokles* that labels Themistokles as a "liar, criminal, and traitor" driven by greed and corruption, and describes the allied commanders who voted Themistokles for the prize of valor at the Isthmus as having "prayed for Themistokles' ruin."<sup>25</sup> These scathing opinions demonstrate both the wide-reaching fame of Themistokles—especially considering that the poem was preserved by Plutarch, meaning that it must have been noteworthy enough to garner the attention of such a reputable biographer—as well as the negative reactions Themistokles received after the second Persian invasion. Even Greeks who knew of Themistokles's military triumphs were still deeply averse to him, illuminating the possible motivations behind his later ostracism.

While there is much more to be explored on the topic of names, the inclusion of both the patronymic and demotic of Themistokles may also be indicative of a conscious effort on Themistokles's part. The nearly equal frequency in which Themistokles's patronymic and demotic appeared on ostraka voting for him far surpassed that of any other ostracized individual, possibly because Themistokles deliberately utilized his demotic to "increase his popularity among the common people"<sup>26</sup> Themistokles seems to have had so much name recognition that Athenians even remembered his demotic when voting for him, which was also likely a contributor to his ostracism.

As for the details of this specific piece of ostrakon: it was one of the hundreds found voting for Themistokles from both the 480s and the 470s B.C.E.<sup>27</sup> The exact dating of the ostrakon is an issue because there is no indicator of the year on the pottery sherd itself, and analyzing the lettering on the ostrakon can only reveal so much. Some discrepancies in the alphabets used on different pieces of ostraka cannot provide exact dates and sometimes have no chronological meaning at all, possibly only being the product of a voter's personal preference.<sup>28</sup>

Although it is unknown whether this specific piece of ostrakon was from the vote that ostracized Themistokles or an earlier one, it certainly speaks to the purposes of ostracism in practice—rather than theory—as well as the possible

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24 Plut. *Them.* 17.2

25 Timokreon, *Fragment 727*, trans. Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland. (Routledge, 2010)

26 Lang, "Ostraka," 9.

27 Dillon and Garland, "10.14 Ostraka," 350.

28 Lang, "Ostraka," 10.

motivations behind the ostracism of Themistokles in the 470s B.C.E. The implementation of the practice of ostracism was supposedly intended to combat the rise of tyranny in Athens. However, the case of Themistokles's ostrakon suggests that ostracism was sometimes used for personal gain, and maybe even as a method of conspiracy. Ultimately, the overwhelming recognition Themistokles obtained from the 490s through the 470s B.C.E. endowed him with a political influence that made him a threat to others, which this ostrakon encapsulates.

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# An Interpretive Translation of Alcuin's *Carmen 46*

*Michael Geisinger*

## Introduction

The Carolingian poet and scholar Alcuin's *Carmen 46*, also called "To Friducinus," is one of the most mysterious works of his poetic canon. Scholars are uncertain about the identity of Friducinus, the addressee of *Carmen 46*. Robert Forster suggests that Friducinus is the same as "Friduinus," the abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, both monasteries in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, to whom Alcuin addressed his Epistle 282. The lack or addition of a "c" in the name could easily be explained as a corruption in the text or a spelling error by Alcuin in either the poem or the letter. However, given that nothing is known about a Friducinus or Friduinus who could have been a contemporary of the poet outside of Alcuin's writings, it is currently impossible to verify this speculation.

Ernst Dümmler, the editor of the *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolingi*, challenges Forster's interpretation, noting that "Friduinus" is addressed as "father" in Epistle 282, while "Friducinus" is called "son" in *Carmen 46*. Dümmler argues that one person cannot be both a father and a son to Alcuin, and thus the two figures cannot be the same man. Dümmler bases his argument on a spurious relationship between genitics and monikers. While it is a truth of nature that one's biological father cannot be the same as one's biological son, the terms "father," and "son" were both forms of address akin to nicknames in the eighth century. A man would be called "father" as a sign of respect or an acknowledgment of his social or clerical superiority, while he would be called son to denote a level of inferiority in regard to the addresser. I argue that Friducinus could easily have been addressed as both father and son by Alcuin depending on the level of respect which Alcuin wished to accord Friducinus. In the context of *Carmen 46*, an advisory poem, it makes sense for Alcuin to write himself as the "father" to Friducinus's "son" in order to imbue his words with greater authority. If *Carmen 46* was written after Epistle 282, then the diminution of Friducinus from father to son may also have signaled Alcuin's disapproval.

Although this challenge to Dümmler's argument redeems the possibility that "Friducinus" and "Friduinus" could be one and the same, it offers no conclusive proof. It is likely impossible to definitively establish a link or lack



thereof between the two elusive figures. However, the possibility that “Friducinus” is “Friduinus,” an abbot of two monasteries near the infamous Lindisfarne Monastery, which was sacked by the Vikings in 793 CE, provides an interesting context in which to read Carmen 46. The sack of Lindisfarne, typically seen as the “beginning” of the Viking Age, saw the influential Monastery in the kingdom of Northumbria destroyed by Viking raiders who slaughtered or enslaved the monks and stole anything of value which they could find.

Carmen 46, a poem that would otherwise read as another of Alcuin’s pompous advisory poems becomes more understandable when read as a response to the tragedy at Lindisfarne. I have written an interpretive translation of Carmen 46, based on the twin assumptions that Friducinus is the abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and that the poem was written in the aftermath of the destruction of Lindisfarne. My goal is to demonstrate how reading the poem this way creates an additional meaning which is lost when Carmen 46 is dissociated from Lindisfarne and Friducinus’s role as an abbot. To support this goal, I have also written a line gloss of Carmen 46 which explains the choices I made in translating the poem and argues for a reading of Alcuin’s rhetorical devices and thematic patterns as supporting the notion of this poem as a response to Lindisfarne.

## Translation

Run ahead, my little letter, and bring to my son Friducinus greetings  
 Perpetual and my wish for peace in your mouth:  
 Say: “may your love of the sweet Father prevail always and everywhere  
 With your sacred duty, with your well-used riches.  
 Throughout all of the saint’s holy places pray always, son,  
 For your faithful father, if you remember your Albinus.  
 Be pious, meek, with cautious restraint proceed,  
 Prudent in your council, powerful in your piety,  
 Truthful in your speech, faithful in your heart,  
 Praising Christ with duty in your mouth.  
 Most of all, attentively pray to the saints in holy places,  
 Lest any aid neglect you.  
 Make merry in moderation with righteous companions,  
 Be bountiful to the poor, and be like a father to the wretched.  
 May you defend your own lands from wickedness and plunder,  
 Lest the heathens carry off your own with force and violence.  
 As holy David says: “I certainly did not see the righteous man forsaken,  
 Nor his seed lacking for sacred bread.”  
 The clamor of the poor reaches the throne of Olympus,

Where Christ himself hears their prayers.  
I pray: let not your table reek from a thief's plunder,  
Or your monastery be odious from the spoils of a sinner.  
Let a priest be frequently enthroned as your table-guest,  
A true servant of Christ, even if he is a pauper and a vagabond,  
Not a verbose man accustomed to evil speeches,  
Constantly increasing the impious words spewed in your ears.

### Original Latin

Cartula percurrens, Friducino fer mea salve  
Perpetuum nato pacis in ore tuo:  
'Dulcis amor patris valeas', dic, 'semper ubique  
Cum pietate sacra et prosperitate bona.  
Per loca sancta tui sanctorum, nate, fidelis  
Sis memor Albini semper in ore patris.  
Esto pius, mitis, cauto moderamine pergens,  
Consilio prudens et pietate potens,  
In sermone quidem verax et corde fidelis,  
Conlaudans Christum oris in officio.  
Sedulus in precibus sanctorum maxime templis,  
Ne te praetereat ullius auxilium.  
Sobria cum sociis faciens convivia iustis,  
Pauperibus largus ceu miserisque pater.  
Prohibeas propria sceleratis castra rapinis,  
Ne cuiquam tulerint vi sua forte tui.  
Sanctus ait: 'Iustum non vidi nempe relictum,  
Eius egens semen non ego pane sacro'.  
Pauperis ad thronum clamor conscendit Olympi,  
Audiet et Christus illius ipse preces.  
Non tua mensa, precor, furtis vel forte rapinis  
Vel miserum spoliis ipsa domus redolet.  
Saepius altithroni tibi sit conviva sacerdos,  
Et Christi famulus, vel miser atque vagus,  
Quam verbosa malis persona adsueta loquellis,  
Auribus ingeminans verba nefanda tuis'.

## Translator's Notes

**1:** *Cartula percurrens* is translated as “run ahead” to give greater urgency to the opening of the poem. Alcuin dreads an invasion of Wearmouth and Jarrow, meaning speed is of the essence.

**2:** *Nato* is the source of a great deal of confusion with this poem. Dümmler argues that Friducinus cannot be the same person as Friduinus, the addressee of *epis* 282 and the Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, because Friduinus is addressed as “father” whereas Friducinus is addressed as “son.” This argument can be countered by reading Alcuin’s use of son as diminutive, placing the Abbot in a lesser position relative to himself. This accords well with the haranguing tone of the poem. If Alcuin had previously addressed Friducinus by the more respectful title “father,” this effect would be augmented.

Since the letter is meant to bring greetings to Friducinus, I decided to translate the free-floating *pacis* as Alcuin’s desire for peace. This would contrast nicely with the traumatic violence which would have just occurred at Lindisfarne.

**3:** *Dulcis* can apply to *amor* or *patris*. I have chosen to apply it to *patris* as this strengthens the word father (likely meant to refer simultaneously to Alcuin and God the Father) by adding the moniker of sweetness. This reflects the mercy of the almighty, necessary in times of violence and turmoil, and further elevates Alcuin.

**4:** I translate *prosperitate bona* as “well-used riches” to fit with the theme of the poem emerging from line 12, which makes frequent mention of service to the poor and moderation in the consumption of worldly pleasures. It is worth noting that Alcuin likely would not have written this if he felt that Friducinus was serving the poor and acting with moderation in the correct manner of an abbot.

**5-6:** Alcuin constructs a trinity in lines 5 and 6. *Patris* is the Father, *nate* the son, and *fidelis*, which denotes faith, the holy spirit which dwells in everyone. Although *nate* is next to *fidelis* in line 5, *fidelis* actually describes *patris* in line 6; Alcuin, using this construction, implies that the “son” (Friducinus) must become closer to the holy spirit, taking as his model the “father” (Alcuin). Alcuin’s verbal architecture cleverly undermines the spiritual authority of the abbot without openly and directly challenging him.

**7:** I translate *mitis* as “meek” to reflect the word *mites* in Psalm 37:11: But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.<sup>1</sup> This is important given the context of the sack of Lindisfarne— the Vikings violently destroyed the monastery, but ultimately those who are peaceful will live eternally in heaven. The vision of an approaching age of peace would comfort Alcuin after the trauma of this violence.

**8:** *Prudens*, *pietate*, and *potens* stand out as a trinity of virtues that an en-

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<sup>1</sup> My translation from *Vulgata Clementina*, *Psalm* 37:11: Mansueti autem haereditabunt terram, et delectabuntur in multitudine pacis.

dangered abbot like Friducinus would need to maintain: “wisdom,” “piety,” and “strength.” Alcuin implies that this trinity of virtue will allow the abbot to persevere against the looming Viking onslaught. Alcuin implies later in the poem that these virtues are lacking.

**9:** Alcuin consistently refers to the mouth in this poem. He begins the poem by giving his letter a mouth (see vv. 2: *in ore tuo*) and ends it with a warning against verbose priests who speak evil words (see vv. 25: *verbosa malis persona... loquellis*). The rest of the poem is peppered with references to speech and consumption, some of which are framed positively, others negatively. Alcuin’s focus on oral abuses and their remedies makes sense for a poem sent to an abbot, whose power comes from his mouth. An abbot says prayers, delivers sermons, and provides guidance and correction to the monks in his care. He also demonstrates the proper amount to eat and drink, which the monks will emulate. A good abbot will use the power of his mouth to cultivate a devout Christian community of monks dedicated to the heavenly, rather than the earthly realm. However, a bad abbot can corrupt a monastery, leading to its abandonment by God. Alcuin fears this may occur at Jarrow and Wearmouth, leading them to suffer the same fate as Lindisfarne.

**10:** Another reference to the mouth. Alcuin advises Friducinus to keep dutiful praises to Christ in his mouth, which implies that the abbot had not been praying as regularly as befits a man of his office. This emphasizes the centrality of the mouth as the vehicle through which Friducinus could damn or redeem himself.

**12:** This line is especially important for reading this poem as a response to the sack of Lindisfarne. Alcuin subtly hints at his fear that Wearmouth and Jarrow will meet the same fate as Lindisfarne, implying that if their monks don’t pray hard enough to the Saints, they will be left defenseless against the Vikings. The high-handed manner in which Alcuin advises an abbot suggests a desire to create some form of control over the situation. A pagan force has just devastated a prominent monastery in his Northumbrian homeland, and they could strike again at any moment. Alcuin’s hectoring likely reflects his attempt to overcome feelings of fear and helplessness in the face of great uncertainty by prescribing actions which he believes will prevent further devastation. If the monks remain pious and continuously pray to the saints, Alcuin reasons they won’t be massacred like their compatriots at Lindisfarne. Lecturing Friducinus, then, gives Alcuin the feeling of agency in this baffling situation— by compelling Friducinus to be a better abbot, Alcuin can prevent the destruction of his monastery.

**13:** *Convivia* implies feasting, as it can translate to “table-companions.” It is contrasted with *sobria* which begins the line and *iustus* which ends it. In so doing, Alcuin does not deny Friducinus the pleasure of feasting with friends, as long as consumption is moderated and the companions are righteous, as their conversations should thus be pleasing to God.

**14:** *Largus* compliments the message in line 4, that a monastery should give away its wealth to help the poor and glorify God.

**15-16:** These lines provide some of the best evidence that this poem

was written in response to the sack of Lindisfarne. *Sceleratis* implies a wicked, potentially pagan force, while the use of *rapinis*, and *tulerint vi... forte tui*, suggests that this force will take the wealth of the monasteries from Friducinus with incredible violence (emphasized through the placement of *vi* and *forte* in the same line), much like what happened to Lindisfarne.

**17-18:** Alcuin makes two important changes to Psalm 37:25, adding meaning to the poem's context. First, in line 17 he adds the word *nempe*, translated as "certainly," which does not appear in the Psalm. The addition of "*nempe*" which makes the first part of the psalm read: "I certainly did not see the righteous man forsaken," adds weight to the phrase, perhaps implying to Friducinus that this is exactly what he is doing. Second, in line 18 he changes *quaerens*, (searching) to *egens* (lacking). These changes likely would have been noticeable to an abbot, meaning they were introduced to convey a specific meaning to Friducinus. Changing *quaerens* to *egens* substantially alters the meaning of the psalm, as the rhetorical "righteous man's children" are not searching for religion (the sacred bread) but are lacking it. Since this is directed at Friducinus, I argue this change reflects Alcuin's conviction that the monasteries under his care are not thoroughly religious.

**19:** *Clamor* has a negative connotation, yet it is ultimately heard by Christ, who provides succor. I believe the *pauperis...clamor* recognizes the power of the poor, as their humility grants them a privileged access to Christ. Alcuin seems to suggest that Friducinus and his monks emulate the condition of the *pauperis*, which monks were supposed to do under the vow of poverty, in order to gain the protection of Christ in their time of need.

**19-20:** It is suggestive that Alcuin places Christ on the top of Mount Olympos, the home of the Pagan Greco-Roman Pantheon. Alcuin creates an image where Christ has displaced the Pagan Gods of Olympos, perhaps signifying that Christ can also conquer the Pagan Vikings and their own Pantheon.

**21:** *Rapinis* is the same word applied to the Vikings in line 15. Alcuin seems to imply that Friducinus is not behaving any better than the Vikings, as his table is polluted by ill-gotten goods. This theme supports what has already been discussed in lines 4 and 14: namely, that monasteries should properly use their wealth to support the poor and glorify God. The frequent repetition of this theme suggests that Alcuin does not believe Friducinus is using this wealth properly. Beginning the line with *non tua mensa* calls the feast imagery of line 12 back into mind, likely to establish a contrast between the moderation that Friducinus and his monks should employ when eating with the table furnished by spoils, which ought to be put to better use.

**23:** Alcuin purposefully uses the word *sacerdos* as "priest" to allude to the root word *sacer*, meaning "holy." Alcuin does so to emphasize the quality of the priest that Friducinus ought to invite to his table: one who is holy rather than blasphemous, like the priest described in lines 25 and 26.

**24:** Here again Alcuin associates his rhetorical good priest with poverty to highlight its importance. Alcuin does not believe Friducinus has been following his vow of poverty closely enough, as he continues to associate righteousness with poverty

while implying the abbot has stocked his table and monasteries with “reeking” profit.

**26:** Alcuin also uses *ingeminans* in line 193 of Carmen 9, his poem on the sack of Lindisfarne, suggesting that he had Carmen 9 in mind when composing this poem.

This is the clearest example of negative speech in the poem. This priest turns conversation at the table away from God with *verbanefanda* “impious words.” Based on the concern that Alcuin places on consumption and conversation around the table, I argue that the priests Friducinus speak to are, in Alcuin’s view, typically closer to the priest described in lines 25 and 26 and not the good priest previously described.

Alcuin uses *nefanda* in line 222 of Carmen 9, offering further support to the notion that Alcuin had Carmen 9 in mind when writing this poem. The word itself is also suggestive of the Vikings. In Carmen 9, *nefanda* describes *bella*, the two together meaning “impious war,” the fighting of which will result in great rewards being given to God’s soldiers. This creates a separation between the Pagans and Christians on two sides of a battle, an appropriate motif following the destruction of Lindisfarne by the Vikings. Using *nefanda* in Carmen 46 introduces that sense of a holy conflict between the heathens and the Christians into the poem. Associating this with a “bad priest” suggests that Friducinus’s impious actions will ultimately leave him and his monks forsaken in this conflict: at the mercy of the Vikings, with no chance of aid from Christ.





# Orasho in Contemporary Japan: A Linguistic Analysis and Some Thoughts

*Felix Montgomery*

## Abstract

Orasho, a transliteration of Latin *oratio* into Japanese, are the traditional ‘chants’ of Hidden Christian—in Japanese, *kakure kirishitan*—communities in coastal regions of Western Kyushu. Incorporating elements of corrupted Latin and Japanese, these ‘chants’ were likely in existence from the seventeenth century following official bans on Christian worship and the closed-door policy of *sakoku*. Although the date of the orasho’s first appearance in Japan is unknown, the performance of these and other rituals outside of public view gave rise to the designation of their performers and attendees as ‘hidden Christians.’ Orasho seems to have had a continuous existence—but not without changes. My first focus is on translation and is based on ‘on the ground’ study in Nagasaki and elsewhere earlier this summer. I compare two extant orasho alongside their Latin originals to examine broad similarities in their phonological features. The first orasho is a version of “Ave Maria” chanted by an elderly kakure (i.e. a member of the hidden Christian faith) from the neighborhood of Sotome, and the second is “Gloriosa” as performed by kakure from Ikitsuki. While there are some easily identifiable correspondences (e.g. ‘*santamaria*’), it is difficult to establish a framework for their “translation” (e.g. ‘*nankinmono*’). Next, I examine briefly the continued role of orasho and kakure culture in traditionally Christian regions surrounding Nagasaki. In my conversations with inhabitants of Goto, Sotome, and Hirado, common themes of interest prevailed: depopulation and cultural inheritance. Although there are no silver-bullets for any of these issues, important considerations should be made in relation to the study of the *kakure*.

## A Brief Introduction to the Transmission of Orasho

To discuss orasho and their role within *kakure* organizations, known as 組織 (*soshiki*), one must first examine early Japanese Christianity. Japan’s “Christian

Century” is the title given to the period corresponding to the arrival of the Jesuit Missionary Francis Xavier in 1549, until the martyrdom of the last Japanese missionary, Mantio Konishi, in 1644.<sup>1</sup> Having established roots in Nagasaki, Hirado and other parts of coastal Western Kyushu, the Jesuits, Carmelites, Franciscans, and other Catholic orders met with some success in their proselytization. Although it is difficult to calculate the number of Catholic converts in this period, one scholar states that “in the early 1630s [they] totalled 760,00”—surprising, as the population of Japan at the time only numbered 12,000,000 people.<sup>2</sup> Outside of their operations in Western Kyushu, Christians were also numerous in Kyoto due to the importance which the missionaries accorded to the conversion of prominent and influential people.<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite the rapid growth of the religion, these figures are misleading; it appears that many of these new Christians only had a tenuous grasp on its core beliefs. Many daimyos would convert their fiefs to curry favor with Portuguese traders. Moreover, the missionaries prioritized the number of conversions foremost, and spread Christianity by accommodating it to a Japanese context.<sup>4</sup> Education was secondary and reserved for a privileged few. Per Akihito Watanabe, professor of Classics at Otsuma Women’s University, only “20 to 50” Japanese Latinists lived in this period. A better understanding of Japanese Christianity can be gleaned from this excerpt of a letter, sent by Friar Luis de Almeida in 1563.<sup>5</sup>

On this island (Ikitsuki) there is a large Christian village (Ichibu), but because of the length and difficulty of the road here, they are not able to go to Church as they hope to, and trusting themselves to God, are constructing a church so that they can send their children to learn dogma.... Yesterday, on the day of their new year (i.e. the start of the new Lunar year) they built a cross on Ikitsuki... A line a quarter of a league long formed to the Church and a thousand Christians participated.... Next, carrying an image of the Virgin Mary, we sang the litany and Laudate Dominum... And we all sang in our own language and the priest was satisfied.<sup>6</sup>

Even in this relatively large Christian community, the priest was able to visit it only once a year.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, while Christian hymns may have played

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1 Miyazaki Kentaro, “Roman Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan,” *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, edited by Mark R. Mullins (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 4.

2 Miyazaki, “Roman Catholic Mission,” 7.

3 Conversation with Patrick Schwemmer, Zoom, 21 June 2022.

4 Miyazaki, “Roman Catholic Mission,” 7.

5 Shunji Mastumata, “Ikitsuki Kakure Kirishitan No Seiritsu,” in Dohae Sakae, et al. (御爺役土肥栄), *Ikitsuki Ichibu Kakure Kirishitan No Goshō* (生月壺部かくれキリシタンのゴシヨウ (おらしよ)), (Tokyo: Fontec, 2000), 2-3.

6 My own translation of a Japanese translation from the Portuguese.

7 Even in this relatively large Christian community, the priest was able to visit only once a year.

a large role in village life, it is telling that great festivities happened on the Lunar New Year. Evidently, Christianization was syncretic and adaptive.

Thus, with the persecution of Christianity under the shogunate, its survival rested on the few rosaries, images, and rituals either remembered or conserved. What doctrine could survive amongst people who spoke virtually no Latin, had no contact with other Christians, and were without bibles? The prayers and hymns they had learned, the stories and holy days they had remembered, and the few Christian artifacts they had approximated the rhythms of Christian life. To fill the gaps and confuse their would-be persecutors, they supplied Buddhist, Shinto, and other indigenous materials to create the distinctive *kakure* culture known today. Hence, 天地の始まりの事 (the beginning of heaven and earth), the “holy-text” of the *kakure*,<sup>8</sup> contains references to Buddhist numerology as well as Shinto mythology.<sup>9</sup> The orasho are no different. Some are Japanese translations of Latin. The *Ikitsuki kakure* translate the first line of the *Credo* as 「万事に叶い給う」 (All things come true).<sup>10</sup> These, along with those Latin prayers which have been transmitted without a tune are, per the *Ikitsuki kakure*, called ゴシヨウ (*goshō*).<sup>11</sup> In fact, the *Ikitsuki kakure* refer only to those Latin prayers which are sung as orasho;<sup>12</sup> however, a *kakure* I spoke with in Sotome did not make such a distinction and spoke of the entire entity as orasho. Yet, as these orasho emerged organically after the ban on Christianity, it is only natural that such distinctions arose. Nevertheless, broad similarities are common to the practice of hidden Christian faith. While the names of titles varied by region, a *chokata* would usually have charge of the religious life of a *soshiki*.<sup>13</sup> Delegated with the upkeep of the religious calendar known as the *basuchian*,<sup>14</sup> he would also lead orasho, and oversee the correct execution of religious festivals.<sup>15</sup> Below him in impor-

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8 When Christal Whelan was doing fieldwork in the 1990s among the Goto *kakure*, many professed not to have a knowledge of the text. It is authentic nonetheless.

9 Miyazaki Kentaro, *The Beginning of Heaven and Earth*, trans. Christal Whelan (Hawaii, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 75-76.

10 Yasuyuki Suzuki, “Ikitsuki Kirishitan to Goshō,” in Sakae, *Ikitsuki Ichibu Kakure Kirishitan No Goshō*, 19-20.

11 Ibid, 10-11.

12 Even during the “Christian century,” it is likely that Japanese Catholics did not know the meanings of the individual Latin words they recited. Thus, when *kakure*—both past and present—perform orasho, they do so without understanding what they are saying. As for the orasho which are translated into Japanese, those were likely translated during the time of missionary activity.

13 Miyazaki, *Beginning of Heaven and Earth*, 26.

14 I had the privilege of seeing an example of a *basuchian* while in Sotome; per my conversation with a *kakure* there, I learned that it was a calendar of Catholic festivities from 1634 according to the Lunar year. These were copied by successive *chokata* and transmitted through the generations.

15 Conversation with a *Kakure* in Sotome. In-person, 25 June 2022.

tance was the *mizukata*, who was in charge of baptisms. Others who helped in the recitation of prayers and the execution of rituals were known as *kikiyaku*.<sup>16</sup> The transmission of prayers from generation to generation were of further importance in *kakure* communities. Although in some places selected children would learn orasho during the *kakure* period corresponding to Lent, those in Sotome learned prayers from October to April.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, this was done with great secrecy. For instance, in Sotome, *kakure* learned orasho under a boulder known as 祈りの岩 (*inori no iwa*, the “prayer rock”). With a cavernous space underneath it, the teacher would lie opposite his pupil, as he recited an orasho. Night after night, repetition after repetition, eventually the orasho were learned by his student.

## Gururiyo-za and Ave Maria

Over the course of my research trip in Nagasaki, the Goto Islands, and Hirado, I was able to find only a few *kakure*. On Goto, local community members told me that there were likely no *kakure* left. In Sotome, one elderly gentleman (81 years old) stated that all other *kakure* were also octogenarians. Hirado, specifically Kasuga village, was the only place where I found a *kakure* community where orasho were still being taught. The only orasho I recorded was that of the gentleman from Sotome; a transcription of his *Ave Maria* is provided below. Meanwhile, the other orasho—“*gururiyo-za*,” a corruption of the Latin prayer “O Gloriosa Domina”—was recorded in 2000 and sung by a group of Ikitsuki *kakure*.<sup>18</sup> While transcriptions are traditionally presented in katakana or sometimes in hiragana, for the sake of readability, I have decided to render them in the roman alphabet.

### *Text of gururiyoza*

ぐるりよーざ、どーみの、いきせんさ、すんでらしーでらきて  
や、きやんべるぐるーりて、らだすで、さあくらを一べり、こては  
でーす、でーすーさすととり、とりてじやるものじゃんめーら、いん  
てら、りんてら、たつ、だつびーる、ひーで、せーにせにー、つら  
ばすととり、とりてじやるもーの、じゃんの、いつもんた、ぶーる  
せつびーる、ぜんな、いたんで、たんで、びーるぜんな、ぜんて  
す、でですすで、ぐるーりて、ぐるりや、てんなどーみの、き  
よと、せーつ、れつ、びーるぜんな、こんばんちや、さんと、す  
べらべんつひー、にせんべーてんの、せくろ、せくらんめいぞー

16 Miyazaki, *Beginning of Heaven and Earth*, 23.

17 Kakure in Sotome.

18 Suzuki, “Ikitsuki Kirishitan to Goshō,” 12.

*gururiyo- za, do-mino, ikisensa, sunderasi-derakiteya, kiyambe, guru-ride, radasude, sa-kurawo-be ri, kotehade-su, de-su-sasutori, toridejarumonojanme-ra, intera, rintera, tatsu, datsubi-ru, hi-de, se-niseni -, tsurabasutori, toridejarumo-no, janno, itsumonta, bu-rusetsubi-ruzenna, itande, tande, bi-ruzenna, zentesu, dedesude, guru-ride, gururi ya, tennado-mino, kinyoto, se-tsu, retsu, bi-ruzenna, konpancha, santo, suberabentsuhi-nisenbe-tenno, sekuro, sekuranmeizo-*

Latin “Original”

O gloriosa domina excelsa supera sidera qui te creavit provide lactasti sacro ubere | Quod Eva tristis abstulit tu reddis almo germine intrent ut astra flebiles caeli fenesta sancta es | Tu regis alti janua et porta lucis fulgida vitam datam per virginem gentes redemptae plaudite | Gloria tibi domine qui natus es de Virgine, cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu in sempiterna saecula. Amen

Compared alongside one another, it is immediately clear that the transmission of “O Gloriosa Domina” among the Ikitsuki *kakure* was unsystematic; though the two are evidently related, it is hard to tell why certain changes prevail over others. That said, there are several interesting phonemic changes which correspond to the properties of Japanese. Rarely is there an example, after all, of a Japanese-influenced Latin. These influences can be broadly categorized into the following ways: (1) loss of phonetic properties lacking in Japanese, (2) a supplementation of Japanese phonetic characteristics, (3) and “mistaken” parallelism often in the form of hyper-corrections.

The first of these is the most obvious consequence of the two languages coming into contact. Inevitably, phonemes which are difficult to pronounce for the speaker of one language are less likely preserved. As a rule, Japanese does not have consonant clusters. The only exception pertains to the moraic nasal [N], which can come into contact with other consonants (eg. *hanbun* ‘half’). Thus, Latin consonant clusters such as the /*ksk*/ in *excelsa*, /*gl*/ in *gloriosa*, or the /*kt*/ in *sancto* are all changed in various forms. For instance, the Japanese word likely corresponding to *excelsa*, *ikisensa*, separates the voiceless alveolar sibilant [s] with the epenthetic vowel [i]. Furthermore, there is also a loss of one of the voiceless velar consonants, [k], in this cluster. This is similarly observed with the word *lactasti*, whereby the [kt] consonant cluster is resolved to the voiced alveolar plosive [d] (*radasude*). While it is hard to postulate a rule on these two instances alone, perhaps initial velar consonants in a consonant cluster are more likely to be lost. Another instance of “loss” is observed in *kiteya* and *kinyoto*. Likely corresponding to “qui te” and “qui natus es” respectively, the loss of the labialization in the unvoiced labiovelar [kw] is completely expected. Again, this phoneme is nonexistent in Japanese; thus, the shift to its velar counterpart is entirely natural. Similar “replacements” are also found with the voiceless alveolo-palatal sibilant

[ç] for the voiceless alveolar sibilant [s], and the voiced bilabial plosive [b] for the voiced bilabial fricative [v] in *sidera* and *biruzena* respectively. Quite interestingly, the voiceless alveolar sibilant is a phoneme present in Japanese. Yet, it receives this treatment as the vowel-consonant combination [si] is otherwise not present.

More intriguing to consider are the ways in which a Latin “text” receives Japanese phonetic characteristics and feel. Take the *ya* in *kinteya* as an example. While it is hard to see how “*ya*” corresponds to the word “*creavit*,” “*ya*” is a commonly used particle. For a group unaware of the particulars of the Latin language or the exact provenance of this chant, it might have served as a corrective method to give the text a “Japanese” feel. Thus, a “*ya*” could have been supplied to give the chant a more “authentic” texture, corresponding to the grammar of the Japanese language. Similarly, word final consonants such as *et* receive a vowel, and may even form a new word altogether. This is at least the case for *itsumonta*, whereby the Latin “*et porta*” is likely linked to form a new, single entity. Similarly, *jarumono* and *toridejarumo-no* also feature interesting epenthesis of *almo* and *tu regis*. Although the reason for the inclusion of a “no” and “mo-no” element is unknown, potentially, this gives the text a more “Japanese” appearance as the two words now end in the common Japanese suffix *-mono*. Lastly, consider that there is much use of the moraic nasal to represent sounds for which more obvious transliterations might take place. This can be observed with *ikisensa* for *excelsa*, and *sekuran* for *saecula*. As mentioned previously, consonant clusters in Japanese only occur when between a moraic nasal and another consonant. What is curious about the first example, however, is that the [n] seems to have manifested as a replacement for the voiced alveolar lateral approximant [l]. Thus, while it would seem most logical that the voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] (as present in *rakuda*) would replace this phoneme, it is realized as a moraic nasal instead. Lastly, observe that some word edges are blurred and formed into new words. While not all words are given such a treatment, notably *sacro ubere* became the single *sakurwoberi*. Although this is a result of the two vowels adjacent to each other, Japanese speakers elided the two to form an entirely new word.

There are also several instances of what might be called “mistaken” parallelism. Throughout the chant there are several places where a word or a set of sounds are repeated. This can be found at *sundera sidera*, *intera rintera*, and *itande tande*. Reduplication, though not a uniquely Japanese feature, is characteristically Japanese and features in onomatopoeia, plurality, and in other contexts.<sup>19</sup> Since the

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19 Whereas in a number of Indo-European languages reduplication features in verbal morphology and its derivatives (ie. Sans. *cakra*, Grk. *pepheuga*, Lat. *dedi*), in Japanese, reduplication is used for certain plural formations and mimetics. Mimetics, though often onomatopoeic, also expresses states, characteristics, and other features of “being.” For instance, *pika-pika* means “bright,” and forms the name of the beloved cartoon character *pikachu*. For more, please refer to Nahyun Kwon and Shaoyun Yu, “Experimental Evidence for the Productivity of Total Reduplication

*kakure* did not understand the individual meanings of words, perhaps they considered the above as examples of such. Still, it is evident that this trend towards reduplication was felt quite strongly; so much so, that the “dera” could replace the original ending of “super.” Although not a form of reduplication, another form of “mistaken” parallelism manifests in *domino* for *domina*. *Domina*, interestingly, is an easily transliterated word for a Japanese speaker, meaning this should not pose a problem of pronunciation. Yet, the final vowel “a” is changed to “o.” Although speculative, it is possible that this was done as a “hyper-correction”,<sup>20</sup> in other chants, the word “domino” appears.<sup>21</sup> Once more, it bears repeating that the *kakure* were unlikely to understand the exact subject matter of this chant. Thus, they would not have been sensitive to the feminine referent of “domina,” and could have replaced it with “domino” accidentally. Lastly, note that there is the odd transliteration of *provide* and *plaudite* as *gururide*. This is especially odd as *sempiterna* and *spiritu* are both transliterated with the bilabial voiced plosive [b], seen in *nisenbetenno* and *subera* respectively. Yet, *nota bene* that *gururide* resembles *gururiyoza*, the very name of this chant. Indeed, for the *kakure* the “ide” sequence may have been enough to draw such superficial parallels. Thus, *gururide* mistakenly replaced these other forms as a way to rectify a perceived error.

*Text of “Ave Maria”*

アーメ、マリヤ、バラシャーケナド、ドーマイレイグ、ペレトツ  
ヨ、イイモノイイグリツ、エーケンジャン、マーレツ、グローツベー  
ケ、ゼゼス、サンタマリヤ、ブリゴウジャ、マーテンテン、ゲンキン  
ツーリ、ナンキンモノズロ、アーメン、ズズス (my own transcription)

*a-memariya, barashakenado, do-meireigu, peretotsuyo, iimono, iiguritsu,*  
*eikennja, ma-retsu, guro-tsube-ke, zezesu, santamariya, birigouja, ma-tenntenn,*  
*genkintsu-ri, nankinmono, a-men, zuzusu.*

*Latin “original”*

Ave, María, grátia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in muliéribus, et benedíctus fructus ventris tui, Iesus. Sancta María, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

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in Japanese Ideophones and Ordinary Vocabulary,” *Language Sciences* 66 (2018): 166–182.

20 “I saw many meese in Canada.” Some might recognize this as the “incorrect” plural of moose, analogized from the example of “goose-geese.” This form of “over-correction” is often referred to as a “hyper-correction.” In other words, a hype-r-correction is often an attempt by speakers to “correct” an otherwise acceptable variety on the basis of a perceived prestige variant.

21 Suzuki, “Ikitsuki Kirishitan to Goshō,” 43-44.



Immediately, it is clear that this text is far more corrupted than the *Ikitsuki* version of *Gururiyoza* is to its Latin source material. While certain words are easy to identify, (eg. Santamaria), overall, the text poses a greater challenge in comparison. Part of this reason lies with transmission; the person from whom I had recorded this chant was raised *kakure* in a time when the religion was fast disappearing in the region. Born in 1940, the only orasho this individual learned was “Ave Maria,” even though his grandfather was a *chokata*. Unlike in Ikitsuki where *kakure* faith has maintained a strong presence in the region, Sotome has seen a remarkable decline in the number of *kakure*. As this individual told me, there are “only fifty or so” people left in the region, all of whom are a similar age or older. Although he assured me that some others in Sotome are a bit more knowledgeable in orasho, none seem to have a full grasp of the entire set of prayers. However, despite the rapid extinction of different *kakure soshiki*, note that there still exists a strong regionalism in the production of orasho. The Ikitsuki version of “Ave Maria” is a Japanese translation, albeit interspersed with “Santa Mariya,” “Amen,” and other foreign loanwords.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the Sotome version—although highly corrupted—is clearly a version of the Latin chant.

Thus, in analyzing this hymn, it is easiest to start with the words which are most like their Latin counterparts. “a-me,” “maria,” “zezesu,” “santa mariya,” “a-menn,” and “zuzusu” are likely Japanese equivalents for “ave,” “maria,” “Jesus,” “sancta maria,” “amen,” and “Jesus” respectively. Again, similar phonetic properties and changes are observed between the Ikitsuki and Sotome chants. The unvoiced velar consonant [k] in *sancta* drops out in favor of the extended moraic nasal [n]. This is entirely in keeping with the phonetic properties of Japanese as only the moraic nasal can form a consonant cluster. Likewise, the voiced bilabial fricative [v] drops out as such a phoneme does not exist in traditional Japanese phonology. Instead, it is replaced with the voiced bilabial nasal [m]. Interestingly enough, however, this differs from the example of *gururiyoza*, where [v] shifts to the voiced bilabial plosive [b] (e.g. *biruzena*). While purely conjectural, perhaps the following word, “maria,” influenced such a change; it might have been easier to pronounce two voiced bilabial nasals in conjunction. Equally, this might also be a hyper-correction influenced by the “a-men” at the end of the prayer. Given the similar phonetic properties of both, it is not hard to posit such a mistaken connection. Finally, the “zezesu” also shows some interesting characteristics. Not only has there been voicing of the alveolar sibilant from [s] to [z], but this has reduplicated and replaced the beginning glide [y]. Although the exact provenance of *zuzusu* is somewhat difficult to ascertain, it is possible to believe that this is a corrupted form of Jesus as well.

There are also those words and sequences which are difficult to determine

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22 Suzuki, “Ikitsuki Kirishitan to Goshō,” 18-19.

but could have a possible relation to the Latin text. These include “domeireigu,” “iimono,” “ma-tenten,” and “nankinmono.” “domeregu,” on the strength of the shared “do,” does bear a slight resemblance with dominus. Confounding this connection, however, is the “regu” ending. Potentially, this could represent a form of “tecum,” whereby the final nasal [m] has dropped out, the velar consonant [k] has undergone voicing to [g], and the voiceless alveolar plosive [t] has rhotacized. While highly speculative, it would make logical sense for the rhotacization to have occurred before the voicing, as that would have permitted rendaku to take place. Whether this is the actual case remains to be seen. Meanwhile, “ma-tenten” bears a resemblance to “mater dei,” a likely result of the phraseology. As “mater dei” refers to one entity, the creation of a new word from the two could easily follow. Moreover, the moraic nasal replacing the [r] is a commonly observed feature, due to its ability to form consonant clusters. *Nota Bene*, however, that the voiced alveolar plosive [d] has fallen out for its unvoiced counterpart. What has happened here? Perhaps this is another instance of mistaken reduplication. “ten” is a common Japanese word which has several meanings. As [d] is merely the voiced version of [t], it would be easy enough to confuse them or form a hyper-correction of some variety. Lastly, “iimono” and “nankinmono” should be considered in conjunction due to their identical ending of “-mono.” This betrays a mistaken parallelism, a consequence of the lack of Latin comprehension by the *kakure*. Putting this aside, however, one could argue that “iimono” is a corruption of “in mulieribus” and “nankinmono” of “nunc in hora mortis.” Although the former is tenuous, the presence of the close front vowel [i] and the voiced bilabial nasal [m] might point to such an identification. Meanwhile, the latter seems to contain a variant of the word “nunc in” in the form of “nankin”; though the words have elided and the stress has shifted, there has been comparatively little change in form between the words. Yet, the presence of the “mono” might throw off a positive identification. Why should such a form follow the end of the word? If one were to posit that “hora” dropped out, then the [m] element of “mortis” would be next. In such a circumstance, a “mistaken” parallel could have added a “no” element to create the “mono” ending. Of course, this is guesswork. It remains to be seen if this is a plausible explanation for the creation of such a word or not.

## Reflections on the Kakure and Orasho

While it is hard to design a general framework for the methodology of orasho “transliteration” and transmission, there are still some rules to keep in mind. Inevitably, the phonetic characteristics of Japanese will influence the Latin prayer. However, those words which are least likely to be forgotten are the ones used most frequently. Imagine a game of telephone where none of the partici-

pants understand the language of the message. Whispered in hush secrecy over centuries, any message which was once comprehensible will likely change. The fact that any of the chants were able to survive persecution, great spans of time, and ignorance is a true testament to the tenacity of *kakure* belief and worship.

However, in conversations across Nagasaki, Goto, Sotome, and Hirado, concerns of depopulation and the loss of cultural knowledge were common. Twenty-five years ago, Christal Whelan filmed the documentary *Otaiya*; following the last two *chokata* of the Goto Islands, it records their celebration of *otanjo* (birth-date), the *kakure* equivalent of Christmas. When she filmed the documentary, she was curious as to whether any *kakure* were left in Goto. Having followed in her footsteps nearly three decades later, I traveled across the region to see what I could find of the old believers. In Sotome, I found only one *kakure*, whose orasho I recorded. On the Goto Islands, although many of the artefacts of *kakure* life still remain, none were or knew a *kakure*. Only in Hirado did I find a community where *kakure* faith seemed more than moribund. Yet paradoxically, the history of the *kakure* and their culture has never been easier to access. In 2018 the region was designated a cultural heritage zone, and much funding has been funneled into curating a *kakure* cultural experience. Although it was difficult to visit the remote communities where *kakure* lived, these connections now exist where once they didn't. *Kasuga* village, a place where the majority of residents are *kakure*, became accessible to the nearest large town via a tunnel in 2018. Adam Driver, Martin Scorsese, and actors of their ilk have made the story of the *kakure* known to a worldwide audience in the movie *Silence*.

But whose story is this? The *kakure* are a group whose categorization defies easy labels. When I spoke of this with the *kakure* I met in Sotome, he spoke warily of the Catholics and an outwardly Christian identity. As a child, his Catholic classmates used to bully the *kakure* for what they considered a backwards belief. Although the label *hanareta*—distanced—has fallen out of use, he pointed out that it only makes sense in a world where being Christian is the norm. He further protested against the designation of churches as culturally significant for *kakure* history. “These churches are at most 150 years old. There are better, grander ones in Europe. *Kakure* have been around for centuries before them,” he protested. But even he admitted the attraction of associating the churches with *kakure* history. “It’s hard to get people excited when all that’s been left behind are a few rosaries, prayers, and statues.” Moreover, many of the Catholics who live in Nagasaki count *kakure* as among their ancestors. When I asked one Catholic Narujima-native if he knew any orasho, he told me “our ancestors needed them, but we didn’t. We grew up going to church.” After all, the *kakure* did their best to preserve the remnants of the little faith they had. Would not a persecuted Christian of 1600 have been glad to see his descendants able to practice their faith unmolested?

All of this, of course, is taking place against a backdrop of severe population decline and ageing. No rural region in Japan has been spared; urbanization has pried away young people from their ancestral communities. Narushima, one of the

last places which had *kakure* in Goto, has suffered a near 80 percent population decline. In 1957, approximately 10,000 people lived on the island (“Iyashinoshima”). That figure has now recently dipped under 2,000 people, and there are no signs that this trend will be reversed (“Narushima”). Few of the people I met were under forty. In one conversation I had, a septuagenarian church warden gestured across the street to a dilapidated elementary school. “When I was a child, there were about fifty children in a grade. But now, there are only weeds at the school.”

In fact, even the many and pretty churches which dot the landscape have become hard to maintain for Christians. The church I visited at Narushima has a monthly service; occasionally, there is a second service if there happens to be a major holiday like Christmas. Oftentimes, there is only one Catholic family which lives near the church, with the rest of the Christians having to drive from whatever large town there is on the island. Of the ten or so churches I visited, few of them had any worshippers at the material time. In a region as grey and as depopulated as Goto and Sotome, the churches are one of the few ways to attract tourists to an otherwise economically depressed region. A close association with *kakure* history builds into this appeal. Many residents of these islands are proud of the churches which their forefathers built and sense a tangible connection with their history by visiting such locations.

And yet, the cultural loss is evident even in casual conversations that I had with local inhabitants. In one instance, I asked a man in his mid-sixties about the existence of *kakure* on Narushima at a visitor center. He shook his head. “I remember hearing about them in the seventies, but that’s over forty years ago now. People still find *kakure* things in their family belongings, but they no longer can understand them. Only professors are able to make sense of them.” The *kakure* I spoke with in Sotome was stark in his assessment too: “It’s good that you came to Sotome now. If you were to have come ten years later, I don’t know if you would have found any *kakure* left.”

At least in tandem with the times, old religious animosities have faded. The man at the visitor center in Narujima told me “We all love going to each other’s festivals. My wife is Catholic; I’m Buddhist, but that’s never been a problem. We all get along and celebrate every faith.” In these sleepy towns, it’s hard to imagine that there ever was a time when religious violence was common. In fact, as the *kakure* have disappeared, it’s obvious that other religions now keep many of the holy spaces and circles which *kakure* once occupied. On my way to (半泊まり) Handomari, a traditionally *kakure* village on Fukue Island, I passed by a centuries-old shrine to Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy. Secluded from the main road, it was likely a secret *kakure* shrine to maria-sama, who was otherwise associated with Kannon due to similarities in depiction. With the *kakure* gone, its upkeep has been continued by local Buddhists. As a syncretic religion, its symbols are valuable even for those outside the religion.

There is much which can be written on this subject, and more generally, on cultural loss. It happens locally, although its effect is felt on a regional level. In Goto, the

extinction of the *kakure* appears complete. While it figures prominently in the minds of inhabitants, it is no longer a living, working thing. Sotome seems destined to follow the same path of gradual extinction. It is only in the area of Ikitsuki and Hirado that the *kakure* maintain a strong presence and continue transmission of knowledge.

Yet, with the passage of time and the gradual twilight of the *kakure*, the fact is that questions still remain. More immediate questions of transmission and survival dominate the narrative, but even unresolved historical issues loom. Who was *basuchian*? How do the orasho relate to their Latin originals? How about to one another? Why are there regional differences in their composition? With these still standing, it will become even more difficult to answer these with the further passage of time and loss of cultural knowledge.

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## A Plural Selfhood in Alcaeus, Fr. 129

Alex Lee

Many of the poems by Alcaeus of Mytilene explore the fraught political state of the poet's beloved homeland, with fragment 129 (fragment 6, Miller's numbering) no exception. Written during one of Alcaeus' periods of exiles, fr. 129 is an impassioned prayer in which Alcaeus wishes for his political enemy, Pittakos, to receive punishment for a heinous moral crime. On another level, the prayer is also an introspective exploration of the role of the self in society. To Alcaeus, the "self" is an identity which exists in the plural; that is, a person's *selfhood* is defined by the fact that each citizen exists in relation to the other – an interdependence which holds society together. Violating this interdependence, as Pittakos did in betraying Alcaeus, has dire consequences on the well-being of a society.

Fr. 129, like many prayers, first sets the stage for an invocation of the relevant deity. Before explicitly addressing the goddess to whom he prays (namely, Hera), Alcaeus marks the setting of his poem as a religious sanctuary and offers a brief history of the land on which this sanctuary sits, writing "men of Lesbos founded this precinct [...] common to all, and in it set altars..."<sup>1</sup> By specifying that his homeland is "common to all," Alcaeus at once decenters himself (or, his "selfhood" as a distinguished native of Lesbos) and sets an egalitarian tone. As he beseeches a deity for help in a "common" sanctuary, Alcaeus now resembles the common man – an effect which may suggest that Alcaeus does not consider himself – or perhaps any noteworthy figure – as someone more deserving of divine assistance than everyone else. To Alcaeus, a decentered, humble self is the more suitable form for seeking aid from a higher power.

Alcaeus furthers his unassuming approach when he makes explicit that his words indeed constitute a prayer, pleading to Hera, "Come, with friendly spirit listen to our prayer, and from these hardships and the pangs of exile deliver us."<sup>2</sup> The phrase "with friendly spirit" reaffirms Alcaeus' apparent humility, though more salient to understanding Alcaeus' views on the self are the conspicuous pronouns: "listen to *our* prayer [...] deliver *us*."<sup>3</sup> The use of communal pronouns/adjectives throughout fr. 129 ("we" in line 13, "ours" in line 16) and the complete

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1 Alc. 129. 1 - 4.

2 Alc. 129. 9 - 12.

3 Alc. 129. 9.

absence of the first-person singular, “I,” provide evidence of Alcaeus’ valuing of the group over the individual. The poet subverts the expectation that prayer is a self-centered practice whereby *one* person meditates on something unique to *himself* and asks a divine power to intervene in *his own* life. In christening his words as “our prayer,” Alcaeus eschews an individualized prayer and offers a *communal* prayer in which the intended recipient of divine aid is “us.” Given the context of fr. 129, one can assume the other beneficiaries of the prayer are Alcaeus’ fellow comrades in politics and society – dejected men of Lesbos whom Alcaeus’ larger ‘self’ encompasses. Alcaeus prays on their behalf because he recognizes and values the way common struggles integrate many individuals into one plural self.

The notion of a plural selfhood is fundamental to Alcaeus’ request in fr. 129 that Pittakos (“the son of Hyrrhas”) receive punishment for violating a pledge of allegiance by which the men once swore when they were allies during (and for a time after) the rebellion against Melanchros. Alcaeus describes this oath as a “solemn sacrifice never to betray a single comrade of ours but either to lie clothed in earth, dead [...] or [...] to deliver the people from their sufferings”<sup>4</sup> Yet Pittakos “trampled his oaths under foot” when he betrayed Alcaeus, cutting ties with quondam allies for his own political purposes.<sup>5</sup> This offense is so grave in the eyes of Alcaeus that it warrants the invocation of a deity for assistance.

The magnitude of Alcaeus’ loathing of Pittakos for violating an oath centered on an individual’s commitment to a group reveals that Alcaeus places a premium on loyalty rooted in selflessness. To describe an oath between men as a “sacrifice” accentuates Alcaeus’ belief that social stability rests on each man’s willingness to renounce some of his own self-importance in order to benefit the masses. According to Alcaeus, a person, upon entering into a group – whether a military force, political party, or an organized society – sacrifices part of his right to act solely for his own benefit, because his actions now have a direct consequence on others. In other words, the self exists in the plural because the needs of an individual are second to those of a group, and one must forgo some of his own perceived needs so that the larger self of which the individual is a part may thrive. Otherwise, unity among and within factions are not to last – Mytilene a case in point.

Alcaeus argues that failure to recognize the mutualism between an individual and his fellow citizens will also result in failure to fulfill, with honor, the ultimatum presented in the oath by which Alcaeus and his men swore: either to *die* (“lie clothed in earth, dead”) or to *overcome the enemy* (“killing [the enemy] to deliver the people from their sufferings”).<sup>6</sup> That both sides of this ultimatum deny an individual of *self-conceit* is perhaps the reason for which the oath is immovable in Alcaeus’ heart. The former side is a humble acceptance of death, reinforced by Alcaeus’ justification that death, if incurred, would be

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4 Alc. 129. 14 - 20.

5 Alc. 129. 23.

6 Alc. 129. 17 - 20.



a deserved (but respectable) one at the hands of an enemy who “got the mastery.”<sup>7</sup> The latter is military excellence refocused as martial altruism: defeating the enemy would be a matter of helping the oppressed, with the soldiers acting as selfless servants of the people (“to deliver the people from their sufferings”).<sup>8</sup> In both cases, the oath parallels Alcaeus’ rhetoric that a decentered, non-discriminatory self is essential to an honorable life. Death is the great equalizer between all men, arrogant or humble, because no one can avoid its arrival; military service equalizes because a fight against a common enemy and for a common purpose can form a common identity between otherwise disparate groups.

Pittakos’ turn from ally to enemy represents a break in this common identity, a severance of the plural self. Given the weight of Pittakos’ offense in the eyes of Alcaeus, one might expect Alcaeus to use his literary space – his position as a poet – to articulate a punishment that *he* personally wants Pittakos to receive. Examples of this imposition of the self are many in Greek lyric, such as Archilochus fr. 38 in which the poet depicts all the physical pain he wants his enemy to endure. But Alcaeus, in a move that decenters himself as the focus of attention, forgoes this opportunity and entrusts the enforcement of justice upon his fallen allies instead, writing “...let the son of Hyrrhas be pursued by *those* men’s avenging Fury.”<sup>9</sup> The fact that Alcaeus is alive (at the time of the poem) means that he has not suffered the greatest consequence from Pittakos’ treachery – the dead have. Alcaeus recognizes this and uses his power as an author to put his grief to good use: By invoking the Fury in a medium as permanent – or, enduring, at least – as written text, Alcaeus imbues the spirits of his fallen Greeks with renewed vitality and, in some sense, immortality. This suggests that for Alcaeus, a man’s duty in an embattled society is to remain loyal to companions dead and alive. Honoring the deceased ensures that the self exists in the plural even when mortality threatens to cut relationships short.

There are limitations to assessing an author’s character based on a single work rather than an oeuvre; one could argue that judgment requires a broader scope. For this reason, the context in which Alcaeus produced fr. 129 is just as useful as the poem’s content. That Alcaeus wrote fr. 129 while he was in exile – a period defined by total detachment from his homeland – strengthens the implications of the statements Alcaeus makes regarding selfhood. One might expect that the isolation of the self, as in the sheer lack of exposure to former companions, associated with living in exile would have led Alcaeus to grow more self-centered; that is, Alcaeus’ prose should reflect a man bearing few concerns about the people with whom he used to live or the state of the land he used to inhabit, as neither would have major consequences on his daily life (except a shift in his favor, such as permission to return to Lesbos). But this is not the case; Alcaeus’ loyalty to his homeland is in full view. For example, when Alcaeus refers to

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7 Alc. 129. 18.

8 Alc. 129. 20.

9 Alc. 38. 13 - 14.

Mytilene as “*our city*” in line 24, he reveals that he still considers Lesbos and its people his true home and his lifelong companions, respectively.<sup>10</sup> That Alcaeus, despite living in exile, exhibits this plural selfhood must be a testament to his values. One can therefore deduce that Alcaeus cherishes interdependence and that that value of his is genuine. In the eyes of Alcaeus, separation from a physical space (Mytilene) does not equate to separation from a moral space.

Through the desires, grievances and emotions he expresses, an author inserts his selfhood into his literature. Fr. 129 is a fine example: Alcaeus, through his conception of fr. 129 as a group prayer, his insistence on a ‘sacrificial’ pledge of allegiance, and his plea for Pittakos to face justice, reveals himself as a man devoted to a plural selfhood, one in which loyal relationships are paramount. A decent society, according to Alcaeus, rests upon the individual’s faithfulness to his peers during *and* after periods of common struggles. In other words, remedying the cleavages within a society requires the ability to perceive the self in relation to others – a gift which Alcaeus offered but did not always receive.

## References

Alcaeus. “Alcaeus.” In *Greek Lyric: An Anthology in Translation*, translated by Andrew M. Miller. Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Company, 1996.

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<sup>10</sup> Alc. 129. 24.

# The Sexuality of Christ in Byzantium: An Examination of Christ's Crucifixion Ico- nography Before and After Iconoclasm

Rosella Liu

## Introduction

Nudity, or “gymnos,” is a word that provokes confrontational responses in the historical and scholastic discussion of Byzantine Art. Because of the profound ramification of Iconoclasm on Byzantine art productions, writers and scholars would often exaggerate and simplify the Greek attitude toward nudity into sheer fear and rejection. Such misrepresentation of Greek perception of nudity likely ensues from Pope Leo VI's comment on a Byzantine mosaic in a Roman church that excludes the lower part of the body as an image that “emphasizes on the divine or higher nature of Christ.” The juxtaposition between the mosaic as an eastern art and its western locality and the papal directive fed into the polemic debate between the Greek and Latin artistry. In *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, the thirteenth century Bishop William Durandus when giving instructions on icons and images, asserted that to remove “occasion of vain thoughts,” the Byzantine artists would avoid any three-dimensional representation of saintly figures and only draw the icons “from the navel upwards.”<sup>1</sup> Even in modern scholarship, art historians and scholars of Christian theology would generalize the reception of nude imageries in Byzantium. In the much-acclaimed work “The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion,” Leo Steinberg calls the naturalistic nudity in Renaissance art a deviation from the “Byzantine garb.”<sup>2</sup>

However, the general perception of nudity as a taboo subject in medi-

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1 William Durandus. *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments : A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum Written by William Durandus*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), III.

2 Steinberg, Leo. *The sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 24. To note, there is also criticism about Leo Steinberg's analysis of the nudity of Christ to be too “cerebral.” For a detailed literary review, please see page 199 of Barbara Zeitler's “Displays of Nudity in Byzantium.”

eval Byzantium and the over-sensualizing of the reception of nude imageries should not overshadow the Byzantine audience's nuanced attitude toward "gymnos." While many scholarships focus on classical nude figures in Byzantine art, those writings made the erroneous claims that the denial of the body was pronounced after Iconoclasm and did not pay exclusive attention to Christ's body's depiction in the eastern arts. By bringing forth a comparative study on several objects produced before and after the Iconoclasm, this paper intends to confront such a gap in the academia and present an analysis of the non-linear development of Byzantine attitude toward Christ's nudity.

In the first section of the paper, to contextualize the scholarly and historical discussions mentioned previously and open the detailed analysis of the Byzantine crucifixion scenes, I will discuss the eastern perception of Christ's body and nudity. Then, I will present two case studies that show Christ's Crucifixion — the seventh-eighth-century Panel painting at Monastery St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, and the eleventh-century mosaic at the monastery of Daphni— for contrasting and comparison. The differences and similarities between these works would show the duality of Christ's nudity, especially the lower part of his body, as both a token of shame and a symbol of his humanity, and exhibits the complex sensory experience that they brought to the Byzantine audience.

## Byzantine Perception of Christ's Body and Christian Nudity

In "The Sexuality of Christ," the scholar Leo Steinberg elucidates the objective differences between Byzantine artists and Renaissance western painters. The scholar claims that, in contrast to the Renaissance convention, the lack of realism in the Byzantine depiction of Christ and the coverage of his body emphasizes the divinity of God. Steinberg further attributes his observation to the overall religious crises in the early medieval era and claims that the Byzantine artists consider that Christ's manhood is sufficiently evident from his filiation with Mary.<sup>3</sup> Although Steinberg successfully captures the early Byzantine art's tendency to cover Christ's body, he simplifies to a great degree the eastern Christianity's contention on the divinity and manhood of Christ and how such dispute was projected onto the depiction of Icons and nude figures.

To discuss the development of Christ's iconography and the exposure of his bodies in Byzantine representation, we need first to acknowledge the "early

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<sup>3</sup> Barbara Zeitler. "Ostentatio Genitalium: Displays of Nudity in Byzantium." In *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the Spring Symposium of Byzantium Studies* (Aldershot ; Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate/Variorum, 1999), 197.

medieval crises” that Steinberg mentions in his argument as the centuries-long Iconoclasm movement condemns the religious images as heretical. Originated from Emperor Leo III’s reign in the late seventh century, the Iconoclasm movement was a response to the mounting political pressures abroad and expenditure on icons accompanied by the destruction of sanctified images and persecution of the supporters of icon veneration. The whole movement reached its epitome under emperor-theologian Constantine V, who legitimized the rejections of icons in the Council of Hieria in 754. Constantine’s Iconoclast argument, preserved as fragments in patriarch Nicephorus’ writings, relies on the intricate differences between “γράφει” (delineates or represents) and “περιγράφει” (delimits or circumscribes).<sup>4</sup> Because of God and Christ’s intrinsic unity, Constantine claims that God’s uncircumscribed nature determines the fact that Christ too cannot be depicted. Moreover, the emperor denies the human reality of the savior and considers his flesh indivisible from Christ’s divine nature.

However, the emperor theologian’s convoluted and elusive argument was vehemently refuted by Theodore, abbot of the monastery of Studios, and Nicephorus, who was regarded as the authoritative voice on the iconophile side of the discourse. In the three *Antirrhēti* against Constantine Copronymus, the patriarch provides a methodic and systematic refutation of the emperor’s theology by pointing out his hypocrisy. Nicephorus was shocked by Constantine’s willful ignorance over the savior’s “appearance, tangibility, three-dimensionality, articulation” — all the properties that “περιγράφει” should be able to illustrate.<sup>5</sup> He further questions the emperor and iconoclasts’ sincerity when venerating the cross: “For how, according to their madness, could he have suffered or been crucified, if he had assumed a body that could not be circumscribed? ... If Christ were not circumscribed, how could he say, ‘They pierced my hands and my feet?’”<sup>6</sup> Through these words, Nicephorus settled an essential moment in the Byzantine discourse on Christ’s divinity and corporeality. The body of the “Salvator Mundi,” besides being the token of his manhood, lays the foundation of the salvific biblical narrative and forms the core of the orthodox Christian belief.

While Christ’s body and manhood were regarded as the evidence of the authenticity of the Christian story, other bodies in Byzantium did not receive any similar treatment alike. Much of the modern scholarship dedicates itself to the depiction of classical nude figures in the early Byzantine period. However, recent scholarship represented by John Hansen’s “Erotic Imagery on Byzantine Caskets” and Anthony Cutler’s “On Byzantine Boxes” examine the secular nude imageries in parallel with their Christian counterpart. Refuting the traditional

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4 John R. Martin, “The Dead Christ On The Cross In Byzantine Art.” In *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1955), 189-196.

5 John R. Martin, “The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art,” 190.

6 Ibid.

stereotype against classical nude imageries as “a rebellion against Christian inhibition,” Hansen first points out the lack of sensuality in these imageries since the Byzantine art rarely exhibits its subjects’ genitalia.<sup>7</sup> Employing the Rape of Europa scene from the Veroli Casket as an example, Hansen notices these erotic imageries featuring classical mythologies carry a comedic effect and reflect the medieval idea of “rape” as the triumph of love over obstacles<sup>8</sup>. Paraphrasing Cuttler’s words, although abducting women was unlawful in the Byzantine society, the classical nudes were likely not regarded as the outlet of suppressed eros or instrument for education but as vessels of romantic fantasies.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, images featuring Christian nudity have complicated undertones. In many medieval scholars’ perceptions, nudity in religious images automatically equates to sin and fallenness. The upfront depiction of naked women, mostly prostitutes, was used as a powerful warning against the medieval audience about the consequence of lust. Although nudity is less explicit in Byzantine religious art, images associated with “gymnos” are often employed for condemnation. In a thirteenth-century manuscript stored in Mount Athos, Byzantine artists recreate the exorcism scene documented in the Gospel of Matthew. In the image, Christ attempts to expel the demon that resides in two naked men’s bodies. The two nude figures, charging at the savior in deranged body language, have disheveled hairs and chains hanging around their wrists and necks. Along with the dancing black demons in the background, the men’s nakedness serves as a visual cue to the Byzantine audience of their possessed mentality, equating nudity with evilness.

While nudity can represent evilness, in some instances in Byzantine religious art, the naked bodies become the indication of innocence and virtue. Besides all the depictions of martyrs being burnt on the stake in semi-nudity, the iconography of St. Basil in the manuscript *Sacra Parallela* provides the modern audience an opportunity to assess Christian nudity through another lens. In the manuscript page, the saint places his right hand in a blessing gesture over the head of a naked woman and raises his left hand open above the clothed woman with a prominent earring of a prostitute. There is an apparent affinity between the saint and the skinny nude figure. The naked woman approaches St. Basil and holds part of his garment while the woman draped in jewelry and luxurious clothes stands apart from the pair. The accompanying text also identifies the naked woman as

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7 John Hansen, “Erotic Imagery on Byzantine Ivory Casket.” In *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the 31st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Brighton; University of Sussex, Routledge, 1997). To note, there is an entirely separate genre of studies on Byzantine ivory alone. Some of the works focusing on the tactility nature of ivory can also be interesting to look at if we are considering how the material contributes to the sensory experience of Christian devotion.

8 Ibid.

9 Anthony Cutler. “On Byzantine Boxes.” *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 42/43 (1985 1984): 32–47.

receiving the blessing and casts the clothed one in a negative light.<sup>10</sup> In the case of *Sacra Parallela*, the chaste woman is exhibited with innocent nudity. Unlike the prurient woman, she does not feel the need to use layers of draperies to cover herself, and her nakedness is a token of her purity and undisguised devotion to God.

The differences in the context and ways of depicting nudity complicate the scholarly opinions of Byzantine sexuality to a great degree. Nevertheless, the nakedness of Christ occupies a unique space within discussions of the meaning of corporeality and further problematizes the argument that the removal of nude imageries is meant to encourage the viewers to focus on more spiritual things.<sup>11</sup> Because of Christ's binary nature in orthodox conceptions, his duality makes the passion a pivotal subject of both Christological and art-historic debate, which the crucifixion iconographies reflect.

### The Non-Linear Progression of Christ's Nudity in Byzantine Iconography

According to scholar John R. Martin, the Byzantine Iconography of Crucifixion can mainly be divided into two conventions.<sup>12</sup> The old convention that arose in the sixth century emphasizes Christ's divinity and his triumph over mortality. Dubbed as *Christus triumphans*, iconographies falling into the old tradition depict the crucified Christ as alive and impassive, with his head slightly inclining. The eyes of the savior are open, and his body is covered in a colobium or a loincloth. In the mid-byzantine period, the new style slowly succeeded the old one, portraying Christ's manhood in an undisguised manner. The Crucified is dead on the cross, with his naked body hanging in a curvy manner and covered with a perizonium. His head hangs lower than the earlier archetype, and drops of blood or water flow out of his wounds. While the exact transitions between the two models are unclear, both conventions have impressive craftsmanship representative of the Christological argument and sensory experience that the artists attempt to convey to their audience.

Prized as the oldest existing icon of Christ's Crucifixion, the panel painting in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, belongs to the older tradition of iconography. In the painting, the artists follow the New Testament narrative, depicting Christ crucified with the two thieves, whose names "Gestas" and "Dimas" are written in the background of the panel. Compared with the two thieves wearing short skirts, the savior in the Mount Sinai panel is dressed in a purple tunic. Although the eyes are

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10 Barbara Zeitler, "Ostentatio Genitalium: Displays of Nudity in Byzantium," 197.

11 Ibid, 198.

12 John R. Martin, "The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art," 189.

closed, the icon's body is upright, with little blood pouring out from the wounds. The savior's firm facial expression, corroborated by Gestas's staring face, gives viewers the impression that Christ is dormant rather than having succumbed to death.

In the panel, the artists give many visual cues that differentiate the savior from the mortals. However, among all the details, the most notable difference is the degree of nudity that they attribute to Christ and the thieves. The purple colobium, which signifies sovereignty, drapes from Christ's shoulder to his feet, covering most of his body without revealing any details of the torsos. On the other hand, the bulky muscles of the thieves are fully exposed to the viewers, with their hairs down, covering part of the shoulder. The reason for covering Christ's body is a question for debate in academia, but most recent scholarship refutes the traditional belief that it is an attempt to suppress sexual gratification. In "Display of Nudity," art historian Barbara Zeitler goes further to suggest that such practice can be viewed as how medieval people cope with shame, which is an emotion predominant in Greek society and culture.<sup>13</sup> Although the emotion is conceived and understood through different lenses throughout history, in the pre-modern era, shame was felt by both the people being seen naked and the people seeing someone else naked.<sup>14</sup> The long purple gown that Christ wears, besides distinguishing him from the mortals, suppresses the corporeal experience in the traditional biblical narrative and protects the faithful from the sense of shame that counters their devotion.

While the colobium elevates Christ's spirituality and divinity, as the Iconophiles argued, the coverage of the savior's body undermines the sensory experience, such as pain and suffering, that the viewers should be able to acknowledge and even feel during their devotion. After the Iconoclasm, as the manhood of Christ was reestablished as the orthodox belief in the Byzantine consciousness, crucifixion iconographies featuring the savior wearing the loincloth started to surface, and the mosaic at Daphni exemplifies the transitional work between the old and post-iconoclasm traditions.

While the sensory environment of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai is murky, there is information helpful for the scholars to understand the sensory experience when giving devotion to the icons in Daphni. Located not far from Delphi, the monastery of Daphni shares a lot of similarities with its sister monastery Hosios Loukas in terms of interior decoration. When walking into the nave of the church, the visitors would first be stunned by the scale of golden mosaics covering most of the interior walls of the church. Signifying "light" and "fire," the color gold is the token of divinity that corroborates the mosaic scheme of the Daphni. By gazing and contemplating the cycles of images featuring saints, angels, and the story of Christ presented in front of them, the faithful were personally connected with the grand scheme of the Christian

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13 Barbara Zeitler, "Ostentatio Genitalium: Displays of Nudity in Byzantium," 199.

14 Ibid.



universe. The Crucifixion scene, lying in one of the interior churches right next to the nave, forms the Christian calendar with other New Testament stories and serves as the recorder of time in the cosmos built by Daphni's mosaics.

In the mosaic, contrasting with the erect position of the savior in Mount Sinai's example, the artists introduce a curve into the body of Christ as it hangs on the cross, emphasizing his corporeality. The wound on Christ's chest pours a shoot of blood, and the punctures on his hands and feet are depicted in greater detail than in the earlier work. Following the new tradition, the savior is no longer clothed in elaborate colobium but a simple skirt, exposing most of his body to the viewers. In the imagery, his head hangs significantly lower than the Mount Sinai panel, making the icon seem powerless and weary. Compared to the earlier depiction, the Daphni version of the icon emphasizes the mortality of Christ and the temporality of the world that he situates in. At the bottom of the mosaic, the artists place shoots of withered flowers and grasses, as if the plants are mourning the passing of the savior. To make the overwhelming sensory experience of death — fear and helplessness — even more apparent, the painter puts a skull under Christ's feet with two bloody ropes hanging above it, reminding the visitors to Daphni about their mortality and the great sacrifice made by the Crucified. In Daphni, Christ's passion is contextualized and attributed to a true sense of crisis. Mary of Magdala, who often appears in earlier Crucifixion works as an impassive and impressionable figure, is shown in the mosaic with a sorrowful and concerned face. Holding one cloth in her left hand, she hesitantly reaches toward the shoot of blood from Christ's chest. Her perplexed facial expression should mirror the Byzantine audience's genuine reaction to the savior's sacrifice and serves as a powerful facial cue in addition to the savior's realistic nudity about his mortality and manhood.

## Conclusion

The Mount Sinai Panel and the Daphni mosaic, conceived in different periods, exhibit two contrasting attitude and sensory experience of Christ's body. The Crucifixion panel at St. Catherine's Monastery is a declaration of the spirit's triumph over the body, and the artists convey the message by concealing Christ's nudity. The Crucifixion mosaic in Daphni, on the other hand, juxtaposes with its glorious golden backdrop and reminds its audience about the mortal world they reside in. The savior's ultimate resurrection is known to every monk and visiting pilgrims in St. Catherine and Daphni; however, his naked body invokes a complex sensory experience and pushes the devotees to contemplate his corporeal suffering and the grave price that the savior paid for their salvation.

Nudity was perceived in Byzantium as the token of carnal sin, purity, and comedy. But the savior's nude icons stand as a monolithic entity that treads the

limbo space between the mortals and the divine. The representation of his body in various traditions is under the scrutiny of scholars and theologians and is proved to be an experience unique to the Byzantine world. In the late eleventh century, when the new archetype of Crucifixion icons — “The Dead Christ on the Cross” — had already become pervasive in the East, the papal Legate Cardinal Humbert condemned the Greeks of being blasphemous by making the icon of the crucified savior “the image of a dying man.” The Cardinal’s words reflect a gap between the eastern and western theological discussions, and his aggressive response to the Byzantine icons tangentially proves the powerful sensory experience that the images hold and the overwhelming emotion that the Christ’s nudity elicit.

## References

Anthony Cutler. "On Byzantine Boxes." *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 42/43 (1985 1984): 32–47.

In this journal, Cutler adds more context to the creation of Byzantine Ivory boxes. He refutes the prevalent conception of ivory caskets as objects commissioned by emperors and elites and further points out that they are mass-produced objects not necessarily confined to well-defined and broadly accepted Christian purposes. The artisans who made the boxes are, in fact, interested in the contemporary world as it is in humor, carnality, and other human concerns, and they exhibit such attitude through their irreverent imageries of mythical stories.

Barbara Zeitler. "Ostentatio Genitalium: Displays of Nudity in Byzantium." In *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the Spring Symposium of Byzantium Studies*, edited by Liz James, 220. Publications / Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Aldershot ; Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate/Variarium, 1999.

William Durandus. *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments : A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum Written by William Durandus*. Princeton; Americana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893.

John Hansen. "Erotic Imagery on Byzantine Ivory Casket." In *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the 31st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997*. Routledge, 1997.

As a direct refutation to calls for an examination of the erotic imageries not from a sensual aspect, Hansen undermines Graeven's suggestion of those erotic scenes as the rebellion against Christian sexual inhibitions, comparable to the erstwhile imagery on Greek vases, by pointing out the lack of sensuality in the objects that Graeven analyzes. Instead, Hansen suggests that the erotic imageries, featuring the classical rape stories and the Adams and Eve, are either inspired by the medieval ideal of rape as a triumph of lover over obstacles or celebrations of spirit over the flesh through physical reunion.

John R. Martin. "The Dead Christ On The Cross In Byzantine Art." In *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* Edited by Kurt Weitzmann with the Assistance of Sirarpie Der Nersessian,



## **Mosaics of Volubilis, Morocco**

*Original photograph by Arushi Parekh, used with permission*

# A Share in the City: Athenian Autochthony, Citizenship, and the Political Family

*Anna Barnett*

Athenian autochthony myths state that the Athenians descended from earth-born kings, with Erechtheus (in some versions, Erichthonius), as the most famous example. In one such myth, Erechtheus, whom Athena begot through the earth, saved Athens by sacrificing his own daughters.<sup>1</sup> The concept of Athenian autochthony was not new in the fifth century—Homer mentions the figure of Erechtheus as an earth-born king,<sup>2</sup>—but it was not until later that these myths seemingly gained rapid popularity in Athenian consciousness. For centuries Athens manipulated these myths to craft its ethnic identity and political ideology, much of which centered on motherhood and indigeneity. As Sara Forsdyke explains, Athenian autochthonous identity centered on “their intimate relation with Athena, who served as foster-mother to their earliest ancestors.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the Athenians were allowed to claim divine parentage without violating the goddess’ virginity. If citizen women, like Athena, held higher status as “pure” or virginal mothers of citizens, it was metic women who then suffered sexual objectification: In *Immigrant Women in Athens*, Rebecca Kennedy expresses frustration with scholars’ tendency to view metic women in opposition to the pure citizen wife as a monolithic group characterized only as “sexually exploitable: the ‘not respectable.’”<sup>4</sup> This paper will investigate how the impact of Athenian autochthony myths on fifth-and-fourth-century citizenship laws created an ideological “political family,” leaving metic women on the margins.

Josine Blok writes, “The genealogy of the Athenians was recurrently under

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1 Rappold, Adam. “Erechtheus.” *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2015). This myth was the subject of a now-lost Euripides tragedy, the *Erechtheus*.

2 Roy, James. “Autochthony in Ancient Greece.” *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford; Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 244.

3 Forsdyke, Sara L. “‘Born from the Earth’: The Political Uses of an Athenian Myth.” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2012, 129

4 Kennedy, Rebecca Futo. *Immigrant Women in Athens: Gender, Ethnicity, and Citizenship in the Classical City*. (Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxford; Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2014), 1-2

construction in the course of the fifth century.”<sup>5</sup> This is when the word *autochthon* (lit. *same + land*) begins to appear in Greek literature.<sup>6</sup> According to Forsdyke, autochthony in fifth-century Athens hinged their common ancestry with the original Athenians, and their continual habitation of Attica. We see the word *autochthon* used to contrast those who have always lived in Athens with foreigners who came from elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Thucydides includes this idea in Pericles’ Funeral Oration, praising the Athenians’ ancestors who “dwelt continuously in this land, generation after generation, and by virtue of their excellence handed it down a free one still today.”<sup>8</sup> Pericles glorifies Athenian democracy with an imperial focus, presenting its excellence as justification for Athens’ dominance on the Greek stage.<sup>9</sup> The crux of the argument, though, is a connection between the excellence of Athens’ ancestry and its present-day superiority, through constant residence in its land. In the 5th century, as autochthony myths rose in prominence as a way of defining Athenian identity and supremacy, it thus became a justification of Athens’ imperial control over the rest of the Greek world.

In 451 BCE, Pericles passed his Citizenship Law, which limited Athenian citizenship to the children of two citizen parents.<sup>10</sup> There is a clear connection between this concept of Athenian land ancestry, and restriction on who can then profit from it: to “have a share in the city”<sup>11</sup> is limited to those with a continual claim to its land. As Kennedy writes, “To be a citizen did not mean to own land, it meant to be part of the land in perpetuity.”<sup>12</sup> The Law’s impetus remains ambiguous; the Aristotelian Constitution merely faults “the large number of citizens.”<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Athens did simply experience a population influx. Yet Kennedy argues that it is impossible to fully understand Pericles’ Citizenship Law without taking into account Athens’ ethnic consciousness. She argues that the Law directly targeted metic women, who previously could share in the city by having citizen children with citizen men: “If the purpose of the law was not to deter large numbers of metic women from entering the city, why pass a law that most impacted them?”<sup>14</sup> Blok agrees that Athens’ increase in population was likely born from mixed marriages

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5 Blok, Josine H. “Perikles’ Citizenship Law: A New Perspective.” *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, vol. 58, no.2, 2009, 152

6 Roy, *Autochthony*, 244.

7 Forsdyke, *Born from the Earth*, 131.

8 “On Dying for Your Country: Pericles’ Funeral Oration.” *How to Think about War*, 2019, pp. 29–74., 2.36

9 *Pericles’ Funeral Oration* 2.37ff.

10 Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 20, *Aristotelian Constitution of the Athenians*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1952.), 26.3

11 Blok, *Perikles’ Citizenship Law*, 144.

12 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women* 6

13 *Aristot. Const. Ath.* 26.3.

14 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 14-16.



between citizen men and female slaves/metics.<sup>15</sup> Thus, was the issue too many citizens, or too many foreigners? According to Kennedy the passage of this law, like the institution of the *metoikia* some years prior, was part of the ongoing push to define (and racialize) Athenian ethnicity and draw boundaries between those who could or could not claim historic ownership of land.<sup>16</sup> Blok sums it up perfectly: the Citizenship Law “drew a line around the political ‘family’ of Athens...”<sup>17</sup>

It is also unclear to what extent the Law actually affected marriage practices, but it “still likely had a major psychological impact and carried a stigma.”<sup>18</sup> According to Kennedy, one place to look for this stigma is fifth-century tragedy:

Tragedy, as an imaginary safe space where the audience frequently negotiated social and political issues, offered the Athenians a vehicle for fantasy and imagining...In some cases, the fantasy is of metic women as an external threat incorporated into Athens as protectors of or contributors to the fertility of the city.... This is the fantasy that eventually manifested itself in repeated courtroom accusations against real metic women of being prostitutes or sexually or socially deviant...<sup>19</sup>

The ostracization of metic women as unproductive non-citizens bled into popular society, and fed into the stigma that metics held the “impure” aspects of female sexuality and fertility. Pre-451, Kennedy argues, we see metic women characters in tragedy who contribute to the citizenry by being wives/mothers of citizens, but after the Citizenship Law’s passage, they are confined to metic spaces; otherwise they threaten the city.<sup>20</sup> I too will examine tragedy, through the lens of autochthony, motherhood and their relationship to xenophobia, as a “reflection upon social and intellectual rationales for the institution [of *metoikia*],”<sup>21</sup> by examining two of Euripides’ post-451 works: the *Ion* and *Medea*. In these plays we see the development of the ‘political family’: the individual family becomes equated to the city. Both plays feature a mother who kills (or attempts to kill) her child(ren): one an Athe-

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15 Blok, *Perikles’ Citizenship Law*, 149.

16 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 5-6.

17 Patterson, Cynthia. “Citizenship and Gender in the Ancient World: The Experience of Athens and Rome.” *Migrations and Mobilities: Citizenship, Borders, and Gender*, edited by Seyla Benhabib and Judith Resnik (New York, New York University Press, 2009), 50.

18 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 27.

19 *Ibid.*, 27. An example of these accusations is the trial of Neaira, which is narrated in the speeches of Demosthenes, although delivered by Apollodorus. Apollodorus charges Neaira with falsely marrying and having a child with a citizen man, in an argument which almost entirely consists of maligning Neaira for her alleged past as a prostitute (*hetaira*). (See “Neaira.” *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. Ed. Howatson, M. C. : Oxford University Press, . Oxford Reference)

20 *Ibid.*, 38.

21 *Ibid.*, 29.

nian citizen and one a non-Greek immigrant. Both plays include a chorus of citizen women and assume the supremacy of Athens due to its autochthonous origins.

The *Ion* is a play about citizenship. Creusa, the Athenian queen, daughter of earth-born Erechtheus, was raped by Apollo years ago, and exposed her infant, Ion. Though she is now married to a non-citizen, Xuthus, they cannot conceive.<sup>22</sup> Ion, saved from death by the gods but ignorant of his parentage, is acutely aware of his status as an outsider to the citizenry. Even when he thinks Xuthus, the king, is his father, he knows that to ascend the throne without Athenian blood means to trespass into citizen spaces: “The earth-born people of glorious Athens are said to be no alien race. I should intrude there marked by two defects, a stranger’s son, myself a bastard...”<sup>23</sup> He also knows that without a citizen mother he will never truly share in the city: “For when a stranger comes into a city of pure blood, though in name a citizen, his mouth remains a slave: he has no right of speech.”<sup>24</sup> The backstory to the *Ion* is a parallel to the Erechtheus myth; when Creusa exposed Ion she “kept an ancient custom begun in Athens when Athene placed by Erechtheus, son of Earth, two snakes as guardians...”<sup>25</sup> and we find out that she left him to die in Cecrops’ cave, the place where Erechtheus’ daughters died.<sup>26</sup> Euripides reframes the idea that child sacrifice is noble if done to save the city: when Ion asks Creusa if “the other story” is true, that Erechtheus sacrificed his daughters, she replies: “He had the courage. They were killed for Athens.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed, when Creusa and the chorus think that Ion is a foreigner, it is the “worst shame of all” that a foreign slave should usurp the Athenian royal family.<sup>28</sup> Creusa continues the tradition of sacrificing her child for the good of the city; the old man urges her: “And so you must now act a woman’s part: Kill them, your husband and his son... unless you act your life is lost.”<sup>29</sup> He even says “when we wish to harm our enemies, there is no law which can prevent.”<sup>30</sup> Ion threatens Creusa’s family, and therefore Athens itself. This threat of invasion dissipates only once the truth emerges and Athena stops the violence between mother and son. The goddess invokes autochthony to justify Ion’s (and Athens’) claim to power: “Since he is descended from Erechtheus, he has the right to rule my land.”<sup>31</sup> Euripides clearly manipulates

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22 Euripides, and Ronald Frederick Willets. “Ion.” *The Complete Greek Tragedies: Euripides III*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958), 178–255, lines 62-7.

23 Eur. *Ion*. 589-92.

24 Ibid., 672-5.

25 Ibid., 20-24.

26 Ibid., 1398-1400.

27 Ibid., 275-80.

28 Ibid., 836-41.

29 Ibid., 843-47.

30 Ibid., 1046-7.

31 Ibid., 1573-5.



autochthony's hold on Athenian ethnocentrism and its racialization of pure blood.

Euripides' earlier tragedy, the *Medea*, also deals with xenophobic anxieties. Medea is a non-Greek immigrant in Corinth, furious with her husband, Jason, for leaving her and marrying the king's daughter. In her wrath, she vows to "see him and his new bride ground to destruction, and their whole house with them."<sup>32</sup> Medea the family-destroyer is thus the city-destroyer; since Jason has just married into the royal family of Corinth, these deaths represent not only the death of the citizen family but the death of the city itself. Medea frequently laments her lack of native city and family in the same breath,<sup>33</sup> and she, like *Ion*, is very aware that as an immigrant, she is an outcast in citizen-spaces.

In a speech towards the chorus of citizen women, Medea thematically connects her marital troubles with her ostracization as a metic. She knows that "[their] story and [hers] are not the same"<sup>34</sup>; a woman's life is dependent on the quality of her husband, and is unbearable if he is a bad one. Citizen women, however, have at least their immediate family and their political family (their city) to protect them. Medea has neither.<sup>35</sup> The chorus, too, knows their lot is more preferable: they also thematically link the stability of the home with stability of citizenship:

May dread Aphrodite never cast contentious wrath and insatiate quarreling upon me and madden my heart with love for a stranger's bed! But may she honor marriages that are peaceful and wisely determine whom we are to wed! O fatherland, O house, may I never be bereft of my city, never have a life of helplessness, a cruel life, most pitiable of spaces; otherwise they threaten the city.<sup>36</sup>

Medea, as a metic, is not allowed a share in the city. Therefore, the murder is not a noble act of salvation for the city, but one of destruction. Unlike in the *Ion*, filicide does break the city's laws,<sup>37</sup> and rather than to "act a woman's part," to commit the murder would make her "most wretched of women."<sup>38</sup> She cannot claim Corinth as her own, and this makes her a threat to both her immediate family and surrounding political family. The play then ends with her traveling to Athens.

Kennedy argues that Euripides mitigates anxieties about metic presence in Athens, and ultimately does not present Medea as a threat. She notes that Medea was a longtime resident of Corinth without issue (until the murder), that

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32 Euripides. *Cyclops. Alcestris. Medea*. Edited and translated by David Kovacs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 12, 1994), *Medea*, 163-4.

33 Eur. *Medea*. 166-7, cf. 252-56

34 Ibid., 252.

35 Ibid., 235-43, 252-66.

36 Ibid., 38.

37 Ibid., 811-13, cf. *Ion* 1046-7.

38 Ibid., 818, cf. *Ion* 843.

she will arrive in Athens as a benefactor, having promised to cure King Aegeus of his childlessness, and that there is no indication she intends to take up permanent residence there. As long as she remains in metic spaces, she will pose no threat.<sup>39</sup> However, I would argue that this is not the case. I see no reason to believe Medea when she promises to procure Aegeus children; given her tendency to lie to men (notably Creon and Jason), it is more likely than not that she is lying.<sup>40</sup> I would also argue that by using her magic to grant Aegeus children, she is still invading citizen spaces. Even if she does not physically give birth, she would still beget royal citizen children, something a metic is not allowed to do. She also makes Aegeus promise to never banish her from Athens.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the chorus offers this warning to Medea, and to the play's audience:

From ancient times the sons of Erechtheus have been favored; they are children of the blessed gods sprung from a holy land never pillaged by the enemy [...] How then shall this city of holy rivers or this land that escorts its gods in procession lodge you, the killer of your children, stained with their blood, in the company of her citizens?<sup>42</sup>

Euripides certainly plays with the idea of autochthony as root of Athens' supremacy, and exploits his audience's fears that a foreign presence in Athens threatens that supremacy, but Kennedy goes too far in saying that he mitigates their fears. Medea's filicide destroys the family and the city, and Euripides capitalizes on just what the audience of Athenians think will happen once Medea reaches their shores.

The scope and impact of Pericles' Citizenship Law changed drastically between 430 and 403 BCE because of population concerns following the plague and the Peloponnesian War (especially the disastrous Sicilian Expedition).<sup>43</sup> Pericles himself, since he had a metic wife, broke his own law by obtaining citizenship for his son, "in order that the name and lineage of his house might not altogether expire through lack of succession."<sup>44</sup> Athens codified exceptions to the Citizenship Law in order to protect the inheritance of families who lost their citizen male heirs in 430/429.<sup>45</sup> In 403/402, however, immediately after the defeat of the Thirty Tyrants and the restoration of democracy, Athens reenacted the citizenship law through two decrees: the Decree of Aristophon, which stated that "everyone who was not born of a woman who was a citizen should be account-

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39 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 50-5.

40 Euripides *Medea* 709-18, cf. 293-342, 868-975.

41 Ibid., 749-51.

42 Ibid., 824-50.

43 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women* 6-7, 17.

44 Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press; London, William Heinmann Ltd. 1916. 3.) Perseus Digital Library. *Life of Pericles*, 37.2.

45 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 19.

ed a bastard,<sup>46</sup> and the Decree of Nikomenes, which stated that “nobody...was to share in citizenship unless both parents could be proven to be citizens.”<sup>47</sup>

The focus of Athenian autochthony myths shifted in the early fourth century away from shared land, back to shared ancestry: Athenians’ equality of birth and equality under the law.<sup>48</sup> As Blok argues, it is in this century that we find sources depicting the Athenians as physically born from earth. Now we see autochthony myths propping up democracy at Athens and reestablishing its political excellence in the wake of the Thirty. Fourth-century funeral orations provide great examples. Lysias’ Funeral Oration clearly connects Athenians’ autochthonous origins to its politics: “[Athenians] were born of the soil, and possessed in one and the same country their mother and their fatherland...they were the first and the only people in that time...to establish a democracy...and used law for honoring the good and punishing the evil...”<sup>49</sup> Demosthenes also draws this connection in his oration, referring to the Athenians as “indigenous” (*autochthones*), and claiming that citizens are Athens’ biological children while immigrants are adopted.<sup>50</sup>

Another fascinating source is Plato’s *Menexenus*, which parodies funeral orations, especially Pericles’, while expressing genuine patriotism and satirizing the orators’ rhetoric.<sup>51</sup> Plato claims that it was actually Aspasia, Pericles’ metic wife, who composed all his orations,<sup>52</sup> and he goes on to recite one of “her” speeches. It repeats the autochthony myths to a grandiose degree: the Athenians “sprung from the soil living and dwelling in their own fatherland; and nurtured also by no stepmother...but by that mother-country wherein they dwelt.”<sup>53</sup> The land is literally Athens’ mother.<sup>54</sup> Forsdyke argues that the *Menexenus* draws a connection between *isogonia* (equality of birth) and *isonomia* (equality under the

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46 “Athenaeus, Deipnosophists.” *Topostext*, (Piraeus, Greece; Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, 13.38.

47 Stronk, Jan P. 2016. “Eumelos (77)” In *Jacoby Online. Brill’s New Jacoby - Second Edition, Part II*, edited by Ian Worthington. Brill: Leiden.

48 Forsdyke, *Born from the Earth*, 136.

49 Lysias, *Funeral Oration*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1930.), Perseus Digital Library. 2.17-19.

50 Demosthenes. *Orations, Volume VII: Orations 60-61: Funeral Speech. Erotic Essay. Exordia. Letters*. Translated by N. W. De Witt, N. J. De Witt. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 374, 1949), *Funeral Speech*, 60.4.

51 Pl. *Timaeus. Critias. Cleitophon. Menexenus. Epistles*. Translated by R. G. Bury. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 234, 1929), *Menexenus*, Introduction.

52 Pl. *Menexenus*. 236b.

53 *Ibid.*, 237b-c.

54 *Ibid.*, 237e

law) to emphasize how orations prop up democracy with autochthony.<sup>55</sup> I would argue that Plato takes the parody a step further; he claims Aspasia wrote that although some think Athens has a democracy, it in fact has an aristocracy, but it is the Athenians' equality of birth that makes all its men the best.<sup>56</sup> This is key to understanding the parody; Plato satirizes not only orations' manipulation of autochthony, but even idealization of democracy. It is no surprise that restoration of the Citizenship Law was concurrent with the restoration of democracy; once again the political family had to be demarcated. It seems that in the fourth century intermarriage between citizens and metics was officially banned, whereas before it was perhaps only discouraged.<sup>57</sup> There could be no "stepmothers" in the city.

This new 4th-century application of autochthony, which placed less emphasis on empire, as in the 5th century, and more on internal politics, coincided with the restoration of Athenian democracy and limits on citizenship. Scholars have argued both that Pericles' Citizenship Law was a culmination of the ancient myths, and others that the myth's resurgence in Athenian society was rather an *effect* of the Citizenship Law.<sup>58</sup> I propose the process was more cyclical; throughout the fifth and fourth centuries, the ideology of Athenian autochthony (especially indigeneity and citizen motherhood) and its legal applications fed on and bolstered each other. This left metic women on the margins of society, vulnerable to sexual exploitation and unable to participate in Athens' political family.

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55 Forsdyke, *Born from the Earth*, 136.

56 Plato, *Menexenus*, 238d-239a.

57 Kennedy, *Immigrant Women*, 7.

58 Blok, *Perikles' Citizenship Law*, 153-4.

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# *Carmina Nulla Canam: Perspectives on Loss in Eclogue 1*

Isaiah Goldsmith

Vergil's *Eclogues* present an idealized vision of a bucolic landscape, one of songs, shepherds, and meadows. Though much of the work is fictional in nature, *Eclogue 1* explicitly addresses the issue of land confiscations and the grief they bring. *Eclogue 1* is thus a story of loss and those whom it impacts: Meliboeus, who has been dispossessed of his land, and Tityrus, who has retained his. The ending of *Eclogue 1* in particular speaks to the pain of the land confiscations and focuses on how the shepherds react to it. Vergil lays out two distinct responses to the confiscations, one characterized by hope that devolves into despair and one defined by escapism that transforms into acceptance with an eye towards Roman interference, this second response also reflecting Vergil's intention in crafting *Eclogue 1*.

The hope-to-despair reaction to the land confiscations in *Eclogue 1* emerges near the end of the poem from Meliboeus, the shepherd who has lost his land. Before this section, Meliboeus has spent little time describing his own situation or future. Instead, he has focused on Tityrus' story, in awe of how the other man has been able to maintain possession of his land. *Non equidem invideo; miror magis*,<sup>1</sup> he says near the beginning of the poem, a statement of curiosity and interest to which Tityrus is more than happy to respond. Later in the poem, he twice calls Tityrus *fortunate senex*,<sup>2</sup> an acknowledgment of the other man's superior fortune.

When Meliboeus addresses his own situation in his final speech, although he is unhappy with his fate, his tone initially holds a hollow hopefulness carried over from hearing of Tityrus' good fortune; Meliboeus knows he is not "fortunate," but a small piece of him remains optimistic. Near the start of his final speech Meliboeus asks:

en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis,  
pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen  
post aliquot, mea regna videns, mirabor aristas?<sup>3</sup>

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1 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 11

2 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 46, 1. 51

3 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 67-69

It is clear from the *en* and the two *post* clauses that Meliboeus understands and laments his present situation; he knows that his fate and the fate of his *regna* are inevitable. Nevertheless, Meliboeus naively hopes that, if he is able to return, his *tuguri* will still be standing *longo post tempore*. Of course, this is an unlikely possibility given that the building's roof is *congestum caespite*, but this sentiment displays Meliboeus' hope, eliciting pity from the reader. Furthermore, he uses the phrase *mea regna videns* regarding his return. As *videns* goes temporally with *mirabor*, a verb in the future tense, Meliboeus is implying that even after the many years of being away, there is a chance that he will still be able to return to *mea regna*: that despite his absence, the *regna* will still be *mea*, not owned by anyone else. Such sentiments demonstrate that, although he acknowledges his fate, at the beginning of his speech Meliboeus still holds some modicum of restrained optimism.

This optimism is rebuffed when Meliboeus utters his next lines, *impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit / barbarus has segetes*,<sup>4</sup> statements which actualize Meliboeus' understanding of the future of his land. Vergil does not choose to write *habebit* is in the subjunctive, leaving room for doubt; he places the verb in the future indicative tense, cold and objective in its purpose, stating clearly that a *miles* or *barbarus* will take control of Meliboeus' land. The word dampens Meliboeus' optimism, and the fact that his land will be looked after by *impius...miles*, someone not worthy of the pastoral mantle, only compounds his hopelessness.

The next lines reinforce the tragedy of Meliboeus' fate: *en quo discordia civis / produxit miseros: his nos consevimus agros*. Beyond the direct address of political issues seen in few other places in the *Eclogues*, the most salient features of this statement are *quo* and "his." The *quo* signifies a directionality and situational progression which Meliboeus had not previously expressed. Though he had mentioned travels to far flung places, such movement came with the possibility of return, that he might once again see *mea regna*. *Quo* is a final movement away for the *miseros*, one without any promise of return. It, in essence, moves Meliboeus away from his land. Fittingly, "his" shifts the character of the land away from Meliboeus. Acknowledging that he has been tending to his fields not for himself or for his herds but for an unnamed, *impius* brute crushes Meliboeus and extinguishes any final hope of salvation still present in his mind. His land is no longer characterized by gentle flocks and peaceful streams but rather is tainted by the violence and impiety of the men who will inhabit it. Meliboeus has been dragged away from his pastoral world while, simultaneously, it has been dragged away from him. In this separation, optimism, too, departs.

The rest of Meliboeus' speech is tragic as the shepherd accepts the reality of his situation and rejects the staples of a pastoral life. Meliboeus sarcastically orders himself back to planting crops, an activity which now seems pathetically quaint in the face of what is to come, suggesting that tending to the land

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4 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 70-71



has lost its meaning. Additionally, Meliboeus both orders his flock away and renounces song, saying *carmina nulla canam*.<sup>5</sup> The significance of this moment cannot be overstated. Herding and singing are the two most quintessential elements of pastoral life in the *Eclogues*; in rejecting them, Meliboeus has fully abandoned his lifestyle. The speech concludes the first response to grief in *Eclogue* 1. It ends with Meliboeus in a state of despair, having acknowledged the tragedy of his situation and having pushed away the staples of his bucolic life, an enormous shift from his restrained optimism at the beginning of the section.

Tityrus represents the second reaction to loss in *Eclogue* 1, his mentality shifting from one of escapism to one of acceptance and acknowledgement of Roman interference, a progression also represented in Vergil's perspective on bucolic life in *Eclogue* 1. Tityrus, though he witnesses the tragedy of the land confiscations and sees Meliboeus lose his land, does not himself experience such griefs. Tityrus states early in the poem that *deus nobis haec otia fecit*,<sup>6</sup> and, when asked about the identity of this *deus*, responds that it is *Urbem quam dicunt Romam*.<sup>7</sup> Such statements serve both to establish Tityrus' mental state, a fortunate *senex* who has retained his land, and to connect him with Rome and its power. Similarly, Vergil kept possession of his lands through connections to the Consul Pollio (and, by extension, to Rome), and thus the poet creates a parallel between himself and Tityrus. These Roman connections contrast Tityrus and Vergil with the unlucky Meliboeus, who received no such help.

The divergence between Tityrus' mental state and Meliboeus' becomes clear during the former's final speech when, instead of descending into misery, Tityrus attempts to console his friend using escapist pastoral language, before accepting the reality of their situation. Tityrus begins his speech with:

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem  
fronde super viridi: sunt nobis mitia poma,  
castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis.<sup>8</sup>

Though Tityrus invites Meliboeus to rest with him *fronde super viridi*, there is an understanding that this respite is temporary. *Hanc... noctem* removes any shred of ambiguity; this is not a permanent offer that will allow Meliboeus to remain in the countryside forever nor a stay of confiscation. It is, however, an opportunity for Meliboeus to experience, if only for one more night, the magic of the countryside. Nature will provide a bucolic feast, a final celebration of the countryside, before Meliboeus must depart from it forever. Similarly, in composing *Eclogue* 1, Vergil creates an ephemeral bucolic world, one full of rich details that exist to

5 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 77

6 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 6

7 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 19

8 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 79-81

remind readers of the fleeting joys of the country. Vergil cannot undo the land confiscations, but he can attempt to replicate the idyllic pastoral world which preceded them, just as Meliboeus tries to do for Tityrus with his invitation. Both Tityrus and Vergil offer temporary escape from loss, constrained in duration but enduring in possibility, windows into an idealized vision of a bygone pastoral world.

Tityrus' final lines of the section, the ending of *Eclogue 1*, are not so escapist. He begins by saying *et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant*,<sup>9</sup> a line which alludes to other moments in the poem. First, *summa...villarum culmina* relates back to Meliboeus' description of his own *pauperis...tuguri* with its poorly constructed *culmen*, directly contrasting the shepherd's humble abode with the tall farmhouses that will live on. Further, *fumant* is previously used in 1.43 in association with praise of Octavian. The fact that the enduring farmhouses, which would have included Vergil's, are described with *culmina fumant* connects them with Octavian, again suggesting that those who escaped from confiscation did not do so through pure luck, but rather were aided by political interference. Here Vergil again connects himself to Tityrus who received similar help, implicitly acknowledging political factors that allowed them to keep their land.

The final line of the poem, *maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae*,<sup>10</sup> accepts the death of some piece of the pastoral world which Meliboeus, Tityrus, and Vergil grew to know and love. In one sense this statement could be physical, as the Alps border the Po Valley, the location of Cremona and Mantua, to the north and west. As a literal interpretation of the line, shadows of night would have slipped down onto the pastoral countryside from these mountains. The Po Valley is also, however, bordered to the south by the Apennine Mountains, south of which lies Rome. In a more metaphorical sense, Vergil could yet again be referencing Roman interference in the countryside, implying that the night which has come for the pastoral world is not a natural one, but rather one arising from Rome. The shadows of politics and civil strife, anathema to the peace of the countryside, have come from the capital and corrupted the land, just as the *impius...miles* and *barbarus*.

In any case, there is a sense of finality to the words, an acceptance of the present situation, a sentiment not previously articulated by either shepherd. Tityrus and Vergil had both earlier employed the language of escapism to delay or cope with the destruction of a pastoral world. Now they are open and accepting; they know the *umbrae* are at hand and they accept the reality of the situation, casting away their previous escapism. Tityrus ends his speech, Vergil ends the poem, and together they acknowledge the end of a particular era of pastoral life. This is the conclusion of the second paradigm of response to loss, an acknowledgment of the reality of the situation and Rome's hand in it, following an attempt at escapism.

Vergil's *Eclogue 1* is a tale of loss and impact which explores the emo-

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9 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 82

10 Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 83

tional effects of land confiscations on Meliboeus, who loses his land, and Tityrus, who retains his. Two distinct emotional responses emerge from the final passage of the text. Meliboeus, who at first is cautiously optimistic, grows hopeless and casts away the pastoral in his misery. Tityrus attempts to comfort his friend by crafting an escapist scene before acknowledging the true conditions of the situation and the Roman interference that has helped cause them. Vergil, too, follows Tityrus' model of grieving, first attempting escapism before concluding *Eclogue 1* with a statement of tragic acceptance.

## Part 2: Translation

### Meliboeus:

en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis,  
 pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen  
 post aliquot, mea regna videns, mirabor aristas?  
 impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit, 70  
 barbarus has segetes. en quo discordia civis  
 produxit miseros: his nos consevimus agros.  
 insere nunc, Meliboee, piro, pone ordine vitis.  
 ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae.  
 non ego vos posthac viridi proiectus in antro 75  
 dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo;  
 carmina nulla canam; non me pascente, capellae,  
 florentem cytisum et salices carpetis amaras.

### Tityrus:

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteris requiescere noctem  
 fronde super viridi: sunt nobis mitia poma, 80  
 castanae molles et pressi copia lactis;  
 et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant  
 maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

### Meliboeus:

Oh, will I ever, many years passed, looking upon my domains, my ancestral boundaries, the roof of my poor cottage, put together with sod, after such time, marvel at my crops?  
 The wicked soldier will have these tended fallow lands, the barbarians 70  
 these crops. O, where discord has led the miserable citizens: we have tended to the fields for them. Now, Meliboeus, plant pears, put vines in a row. Go, once happy herd! Go my she-goats! Hereafter from a distance I

shall not, lying in a greencavern, see you hanging down from the over- 75  
grown cliff; I shall sing no more songs; no more, she-goats, with me  
herding, will you graze on the flower of scrub plants or bitter willows.

**Tityrus:**

Yet here with me you could have rested for this night upon the green fo- 80  
liage: for us there are gentle apples, soft chestnuts, and an abundance of  
pressed cheese; and now at a distance the highest roofs of the farmhous-  
es smoke, and the greater shadows fall from the high mountains.

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# Speakers, Interpreters, and the Prophetic Office: Pathways of Communication in the Works of Philo of Alexandria and Saint Paul the Apostle

*Helen Zhou*

The Judeo-Christian faiths can be characterized by the importance they place on speech and language, which are inextricably associated with the nature of God.<sup>1</sup> In particular, hierarchical models of communication and information transfer are delineated by the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria in his treatise *de Vita Mosis* as well as by his early Christian contemporary, Saint Paul the Apostle, in his first epistle to the Corinthians.<sup>2</sup> Philo, influenced by his Hellenistic background, emphasizes the aspiration toward a virtuous life in a narrative characterized by historical examples, while Paul places a greater didactic focus on the development of the Christian church through conversion. However, both writers are ultimately united by their overarching stance on the purpose of language, as the means by which the virtuous man in his prophetic office may, with perfect clarity and retention of meaning, transmit divine instruction for the benefit of a broader audience.

In *de Vita Mosis*, a biographical treatise on the life of Moses that provides an expository introduction to the covenant between God and the Jewish people, Philo provides an extensive model for proper communication, characterizing Moses as the ideal speaker throughout the entire work. He states: “In his desire to live to the soul alone and not to the body, [Moses] made a special practice of

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1 cf. Deuteronomy 32:45-47; Psalms 33:4-6; John 1:1-3, 14. Speech in the Bible is inextricably linked with the concept of *logos*, the “Word” or “Reason” of God, which also appears in Greek philosophy; however, a discussion of *logos* is beyond the scope of this paper, which deals primarily with ideal and non-ideal models of communication.

2 Comparative analyses of the works of Philo and Paul are natural given common features of both writers’ backgrounds: they both lived in centers of the Jewish Diaspora (Alexandria and Tarsus, respectively) in the first century AD. Both were highly educated in the Hellenistic and Jewish traditions and drew upon the Septuagint in their work. Both were prominent figures and notable teachers of theology and philosophy within their communities.

frugal contentment, and had an unparalleled scorn for a life of luxury. He exemplified his philosophical creed by his daily actions. His words expressed his feelings, and his actions accorded with his words, so that speech and life were in harmony.”<sup>3</sup> Here, Philo describes Moses’s exemplary behavior from a purely philosophical point of view, portraying the alignment of his feelings, words, and actions as demonstrative of the highly Platonic and Stoic ideals of living to the soul and scorning luxury. Thus, Philo believes that the properly-executed language of a virtuous man, whether religious or secular, must serve to clearly transmit his thoughts into words and his words into deeds, without any adornment or deceit—only in this case will his speech and his life truly exist in harmony.

This emphasis on the clarity of language is continued, and further clarified, in Book II of *de Vita Mosis*, in which Philo states: “For the rational principle in nature is true, and sets forth all things clearly, and, in the wise man, being a copy of the other, has as its bounden duty to honor truth with absolute freedom from falsehood, and not keep dark through jealousy anything the disclosure of which will benefit those who hear its lesson.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, not only does Philo maintain the importance of speaking with complete honesty and disclosure, as stated previously, but here he introduces additional aspects of what constitutes proper speech. Foremost, there is the implication that language should not only be reflected in the actions of the speaker themselves, but must also communicate ideas of value to others, for their edification. Furthermore, the capacity of the wise man to employ proper speech for the betterment of others is not merely an ability, but a moral duty. From this, we see the basic structure of the model of communication that Philo presents throughout *de Vita Mosis* begin to take shape, in which the wise man must verbally transmit the knowledge gleaned from nature—or, as we will see later, God—to a larger audience.

Elsewhere in *Mos. 2*, Philo departs from this secular analysis of proper and improper speech in a much more detailed, religiously-oriented portrayal of the hierarchical structure of ideal communication, expanding on what exactly this duty of the ideal speaker entails. He states that Moses, despite his limitations as a “mortal creature, [to whom] countless things both human and divine are wrapped in obscurity,” is able to surpass these constraints by “obtain[ing] prophecy also, in order that through the providence of God he might discover what by reasoning he could not grasp.”<sup>5</sup> As Philo summarizes, “prophecy finds its way to what the mind fails to reach.”<sup>6</sup> Moses, Philo’s incomparable standard of virtue, does not merely receive education from the reasoning principle in nature, but receives instruction communicated directly from God in the

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3 *Mos.* 1.29.

4 *Mos.* 2.128.

5 *Mos.* 2.6.

6 *Ibid.*

form of prophecy. This serves as an introduction to the central role that prophecy plays in Philo's hierarchy of language—as the most fundamental, divine form of communication, it is a means by which information beyond the grasp of man reaches the prophet, from whom it might then be transmitted to others.

Indeed, the instruction that Moses receives from God in the form of prophecy exerts a profound impact on his competence as a governor. Philo outlines “four adjuncts to the truly perfect ruler,” including “kingship, the faculty of legislation, priesthood[,] and prophecy, so that in his capacity of legislator he may command what should be done and forbid what should not be done, as priest dispose not only things human but things divine, as prophet declare by inspiration what cannot be apprehended by reason.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, the inspiration the prophet receives from God is to be verbally declared—through his own commands and laws, the ideal ruler must communicate the divine ordinances otherwise inaccessible to his subjects. Prophetic speech is not merely backed by the authority of a mortal ruler, but can be seen as the literal word of God as well, transmitted by the prophet as His mouthpiece.

Having already proven Moses to be the “best of kings, of lawgivers and of high priests,” three of the four offices of the ideal ruler, Philo declares that he will “go on to shew in conclusion that [Moses] was a prophet of the highest quality,” and thus a ruler of the highest quality, through the use of historical example.<sup>8</sup> Philo states:

[A] half-bred person, having a quarrel with someone of the nation that has vision and knowledge, losing in his anger all control over himself, and also urged by fondness for Egyptian atheism, extended his impiety from earth to heaven, and with his soul and tongue and all the organism of speech alike accursed, foul, abominable, in the superabundance of his manifold wickedness cursed Him.<sup>9</sup>

Even without Philo's subsequent description of Moses's involvement in this situation, we can already see the model of ideal speech clarified through the use of contrast. If proper language is that which precisely translates reason into action and serves to honor God's will, improper language as illustrated here is the complete opposite—that which divorces one's words from the rational mind and flagrantly disrespects the authority of God out of anger and impiety.

Moreover, Philo's account of Moses's response serves as a counterpoint to this example of how speech might be corrupted to promote wickedness, instead demonstrating how the virtuous man may utilize his exclusive line of communication with God to inform his actions as a legislator and a ruler, the most perfect application of language. Upon being confronted with the crime of the half-bred

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7 *Mos.* 2.187.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Mos.* 2.196.

person, an impiety so severe that “to devise an adequate punishment [...] was beyond human powers,” Moses follows the necessary protocol for when mortal reasoning fails and turns to his superior in the hierarchy of communication: God.<sup>10</sup> Philo states, “[Moses] implored God, to Whose mercy he appealed [...] to shew what should be done to the author of this impious and unholy crime, so monstrous and unheard-of. God commanded that he should be stoned.”<sup>11</sup> From this, we can clearly infer Philo’s model of proper communication—in situations of complexity beyond the judgment of man, the ideal ruler should ask for God’s guidance, and transmit this divine prophecy, which he himself has received from God, to others. Indeed, because he is afforded the ability to communicate with God and man alike, serving as an intermediary or messenger between the divine and the mundane, the prophet-king must act as God’s arbiter of proper and improper language among the people. Just as he promotes piety of word and deed by example, he must equally punish instances of inappropriate speech in accordance with God’s will.

Upon receiving God’s instruction as a prophet, Moses then operates in his capacity as a lawgiver to enact the prescribed punishment of stoning, therefore translating God’s word directly into action. Furthermore, even beyond this one-time situation, Moses moreover ensures that God’s will will be obeyed in all future instances of such a crime: “When this impious malefactor had paid the penalty, a new ordinance was drawn up [...]: Whoever curses God, let him bear the guilt of his sin, but he that nameth the name of the Lord let him die”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the word of God, directly accessible only to those prophets who have been granted a special line of communication with Him, is translated here by Moses into a written law guiding all of the Israelites, a perfect example of the use of language for the dissemination of divine ordinance. This achievement merits direct approbation from Philo: “Well hast thou said, thou wisest of men, who alone hast drunk deep of the untempered wine of wisdom”<sup>13</sup> By commending Moses specifically based on what he has said in his laws, rather than what he has done, Philo reveals just how closely proper speech is linked with wisdom and virtue.

Furthermore, this narrative serves as an example of how God’s word may be preserved beyond a mortal lifetime in the form of legislation—the law prohibiting the naming of the Lord that Philo quotes above is in fact taken directly from Leviticus 24:15.<sup>14</sup> Thus, we can clearly see the practical implications of prophecy, whose divine origins lend it an eternal quality that transcends the reign

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10 *Mos.* 2.198.

11 *Mos.* 2.201.

12 *Mos.* 2.202-3.

13 *Mos.* 2.204.

14 “The Lord said to Moses, saying: Take the blasphemer outside the camp; and let all who were within hearing lay their hands on his head, and let the whole congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying: Anyone who curses God shall bear the sin” (*New Revised Standard Version*, Leviticus 24:13-15).



of any single ruler or the span of any single lifetime. Like God Himself, God's word is immortal and immutable, and because the prophetic office lends man the ability to convey divine ordinances without depreciation, any legislation derived from prophecy is equally eternal. Nor is Moses's capacity as a divinely-instructed prophet and legislator limited to any singular law. In fact, Philo directly references Moses's authorship of the Torah as a whole: "All things written in the sacred books are oracles delivered through Moses."<sup>15</sup> In doing so, Philo demonstrates yet another way in which Moses is a truly perfect speaker, whose prophecies preserve God's meaning to such a high degree that they are designated as sacred. Thus, to Philo, the written word is uniquely significant as a way to disseminate the teachings imparted upon the prophet by God to generations upon generations of subjects, transcending the temporal constraints of oral communication.

In *de Vita Mosis*, Philo also discusses the origin of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Torah, presenting a second example of how written language may enable the communication of God's word to a wider audience. He states that "the Greek words used corresponded literally with the Chaldean, exactly suited to the things they indicated," and thus it follows that these two versions of the Torah are "one and the same, both in matter and words," with neither version a more accurate representation of God's commandments than the other.<sup>16</sup> Ideal language to Philo is therefore language which does not compromise the meaning or the significance of the message it represents—just as we have previously seen a seamless transmission of meaning from thought to action and from God to men, here we see this same perfection of translation between Hebrew and Greek. As before, when this clear conveyance of meaning was mediated by a prophet, Philo describes the Septuagint as created not by mere translators but "prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses."<sup>17</sup> He thus makes it abundantly clear that these scribes are acting in Moses's example, translating the Mosaic oracles for a Hellenized audience just as Moses himself communicated those same divine commandments to his Israelite subjects.

These translators of the Septuagint are similarly aided by God, receiving divine inspiration from Him: "[They took] the sacred books, stretched them out towards heaven with the hands that held them, asking of God that they might not fail in their purpose."<sup>18</sup> And He assented to their prayers, to the end

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15 *Mos.* 2.188-91. In this elaboration on the various origins of the oracles contained within the Hebrew Bible, Philo provides additional examples of how his hierarchy of communication from God to the prophet and from the prophet to his people can be adapted to explain the creation of all of divine law.

16 *Mos.* 2.38, 41.

17 *Mos.* 2.41.

18 This association of the sacred books of the Torah with Heaven further reinforces their divine quality, as a written manifestation of God's own commands.

that greater part, or even the whole, of the human race might be profited and led to a better life by continuing to observe such wise and truly admirable ordinances.”<sup>19</sup> Here, Philo states explicitly that God bestows prophets with inspiration not for the benefit of the prophet alone, but so that His words and commands might be transmitted as law to improve life for all people, a remarkably egalitarian aim. This is one of the most straightforward examples of Philo’s chain of ideal communication, in which the word of God travels unchanged and undiminished from God himself, to the prophet, to the people at large.

Moreover, not only does God lend the translators his blessing, but he directly speaks to them: “They became as it were possessed, and, under inspiration, wrote, not each several scribe something different, but the same word for word, as though dictated to each by an invisible prompter.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, in his concept of ideal language, Philo is not referring to some ambiguous, cryptic mechanism of information transfer, but of literal speech and writing—just as God speaks to his chosen prophets, those prophets must then fulfill their duty as the mouthpieces of God by speaking to their own subjects and the whole of the human race. This is yet another instance in which clarity is associated with ideal language, since Philo emphasizes that the dictation of the aforementioned invisible prompter, God, is recorded verbatim by each scribe, rather than producing slightly different translations as one might expect. Ultimately, in Philo’s historical depiction of the prophetic office in *de Vita Mosis*, held foremost by Moses but also by the translators of the Septuagint, we see that the clarity inherent in proper language is twofold. Not only does speech serve as a perfect intermediary between rational thought and virtuous action from a secular perspective, but, through the lens of the Jewish faith, it is a means by which the prophet can channel God’s commands, which originate in some metaphysical realm inaccessible to the earthly mind, into a physical form, intelligible to general masses as the laws of the Torah.

We will now analyze Saint Paul the Apostle’s first epistle to the Corinthians, which aimed to instruct his early converts on various issues that had emerged within the Christian church. At face value, it differs greatly from Philo’s *de Vita Mosis* in its structure and its purpose: instead of presenting his model of communication through a biographical treatise, as Philo does, Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians is of a didactic nature, guiding his proselytes on how to best communicate God’s will and edify the church. Despite this, 1 Cor. 14 presents an extremely similar model of the ideal hierarchy of communication as seen in Philo’s *de Vita Mosis*. This chapter opens with a direct command by Paul to his converts: “Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy.”<sup>21</sup> This gift of the prophetic office, bestowed upon the virtuous—and here, loving—man

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19 *Mos.* 2.36.

20 *Mos.* 2.37.

21 1 Cor. 14:1.

by God is indeed the same as that which is described in *de Vita Mosis* by Philo.

As the primary focus of his epistle, Paul contrasts the altruistic goodness of prophecy with the more flawed, self-centered ability to speak in tongues, a practice which Paul sought to discourage: “For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.”<sup>22</sup> In Paul’s work, we once again see that clear, intelligible speech, particularly in the form of prophecy, is superior to speech that is incomprehensible. This is because speaking in tongues does not follow the hierarchical model of productive communication idealized by both Philo and Paul—although it is well-intentioned and comes from a place of piety, it is a linguistic dead end, definable as speech only in the basic sense of uttering noise and not in its ultimate goal of conveying meaning to others.

In comparison, Paul clarifies the benefits of prophecy, stating: “Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, while both speaking in tongues and delivering prophecy have positive effects that fortify man’s relationship with God, this benefit is oriented towards the self when speaking in tongues and oriented towards others, and particularly the church as a whole, when delivering prophecy. He further distinguishes these two forms of speech in the context of conversion, which would have been especially relevant since the Corinthians were proselytes themselves:

Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all and called to account by all. After the secrets of the unbeliever’s heart are disclosed, that person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, “God is really among you.”<sup>24</sup>

Here, Paul refers to the same model of communication as Philo, in which God’s teachings are disseminated to a wider audience via the prophet as an intermediary. However, rather than presenting the end goal of this hierarchy in a primarily moral and legal context, as Philo does when he refers to the good life of virtue led by those who follow divine law, Paul outlines the ecclesiastical benefits of prophecy, which he sees as the ultimate way of proving God’s existence to unbelievers. Importantly, speech itself serves as proof of conversion—the proselyte’s faith is revealed by his verbal declaration that “God is really among you.”

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22 1 Cor. 14:2-3.

23 1 Cor. 14:4-5.

24 1 Cor. 14:22-5.

Indeed, true to the didactic nature of his epistle, Paul goes on to detail the proper application of speech to an ecclesiastical setting, beginning with the one scenario in which speaking in tongues is permissible: “Let all things be done for building up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church.”<sup>25</sup> In the absence of an interpreter to provide much needed clarity of meaning, no speech at all is preferable to esoteric speech. Furthermore, the reiterated emphasis on building up the church provides a general framework for how the Corinthians might judge for themselves which forms of speech are proper and which are improper, the former being those which edify the church and the latter being those which do nothing for the strength of the church, even actively harming it.

Paul continues with the proper procedure for prophecy: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.”<sup>26</sup> This highly ordered model provides another layer to the framework given by Philo—in addition to proper speech being that which helps others “learn and be encouraged,” thus propagating virtue and religion among the masses, Paul indicates that adherence to the model of ideal communication can actually grant others the gift of prophecy. He suggests that “all” of his converts among the Corinthians have the capacity of communicating directly with God as prophets themselves, with the added implication that they might eventually convert others and exponentially amplify the word of God among the human race.

Ultimately, we can view 1 Corinthians as a prophetic text in and of itself, in which Paul as the dual prophet and lawgiver imparts upon the Corinthians those lessons which he himself has already learned from God. Paul explicitly states this, lending authority to his instructions: “Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord.”<sup>27</sup> He characterizes the didactic lessons contained in his epistle as not merely his own opinions, but the “command of the Lord” Himself, put into epistolary form without any corruption or mutation of God’s meaning. Paul further warns: “Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, we once again see the true prophet as an arbiter of proper and improper speech. Clearly, the act of speaking in tongues, as pre-

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25 1 Cor. 14:26-8.

26 1 Cor. 14:29-31.

27 1 Cor. 14:37.

28 At the time of the composition of 1 Corinthians, a schism had developed in the early Christian community at Corinth between the followers of Paul and those of Apollos, a rival preacher, among others. Thus, Paul’s statement has a hidden purpose of warning proselytes against Apollos, whose teachings do not reflect God’s word. 1 Cor. 14:38

sented in 1 Corinthians 14, is not nearly as horrible as the act of naming the Lord outlined in *de Vita Mosis*, and ought to be discouraged only in favor of the ideal of prophecy. It follows that the punishment that Paul delineates here is milder, not death by stoning but merely a lack of “recognition.” We therefore see Paul serve as the messenger and enforcer of God’s word on Earth in real time, as he passes appropriate judgment on the quality of speech and promotes ideal use of language in his communications with the Corinthian converts.

We previously established that Moses’s role as a prophet and teacher of divine law extends not only to his subjects during his lifetime but to all of mankind through the written record of the Torah. The same can be said for Paul, since 1 Corinthians, along with the other Pauline epistles, has been canonized as part of the New Testament and are consequently considered to be sacred. Therefore, just as Philo is able to retrospectively assess Moses’s teachings as a historian and Jew subject to the laws of the Torah, we in the present day can evaluate the influence of Paul’s prophecies, which have indeed played an integral role in the spread of Christianity. Thus, the significance of *de Vita Mosis* and 1 Corinthians as commentaries on the proper use of language actually extends beyond the text of the works themselves, with further evidence supporting the hierarchy of ideal communication provided by the continued endurance of the Judeo-Christian faiths.

While the Jewish author Philo of Alexandria interprets the prophetic office through a historical lens in his *de Vita Mosis*, paralleling the historical focus of the Torah, Saint Paul the Apostle addresses this same topic of prophecy in his first epistle to the Corinthians with the motivation of expanding the Christian church, contributing to the emphasis that the New Testament as a whole places on conversion. Nevertheless, both authors ultimately eschew confusing, esoteric language in favor of direct speech, which clearly transmits thoughts into deeds and God’s will into the actions of men. In both cases, this occurs via a prophet who, upon receiving divine instruction on matters otherwise inaccessible to the human mind, must disseminate God’s teachings for the benefit of mankind. Thus, when viewed together, Philo and Paul construct a shared model of language that spans the divide between Judaism and Christianity, presenting the hierarchical conveyance of divine meaning—from God to prophets to men—as a universal pathway of communication.

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# When Is Classical Indian Thought “Philosophy” ?

*Catherine Nelli*

Intellectual argumentation does not fall under a single disciplinary designation. A theory about the nature of time might be categorized under philosophy as a metaphysical argument, or it could fall into theoretical physics. A single person, like Søren Kierkegaard, can simultaneously be considered both a theologian and a philosopher. One can watch a play and make an aesthetic argument considered either philosophical or literary. And is political philosophy more philosophy, or more politics? The question of intellectual categorization—particularly of what is called philosophy—has for centuries been brought to bear on the intellectual arguments of the classical schools of Indian thought, in both colonial and post-colonial contexts. Some of the major Hindu schools of classical Indian thought are Nyāya, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika, and Mīmāṃsā. Other traditions of classical Indian thought include Buddhism, Jainism, and Vyākaraṇa. Whether it is appropriate to identify these traditions as “philosophy” depends on the method and reason behind doing so. This paper will first summarize arguments about the application of the term “philosophy” to the writings of classical Indian thinkers, and why this is not an appropriate method. It will then explore two methods of conceiving of classical Indian thought traditions as philosophy. The first method, which is insufficient, is the stream of European reception which began in the nineteenth-century and assumed Indian thinkers were striving to use the same methods as Europeans but doing so poorly. The second, which this paper argues is the strongest method of calling classical Indian thought “philosophy,” is conceiving of it as distinct from, but in dialogue with, other philosophical traditions, which is useful in contemporary American universities.

There is an inherent nonsensicalness of retroactively applying a European term that emerged in a separate context to classical Indian traditions. In the essay “Darsana, Anviksiki, Philosophy,” the philosopher and Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass argues that even though *darśana* gets translated as “philosophy” in modern Indian languages, “[a]mong western historians of Indian philosophy, the terminological and conceptual correlation between ‘philosophy’ and *darsana* is not normally accepted. Even those historians who are willing to concede that there is, or has been, philosophy in India, often maintain that there is no indig-



definientious Indian word or concept corresponding to what we call ‘philosophy.’”<sup>1</sup> While scholars such as Jacobi argued that a different term, *ānvīkṣikī*, might be translated as philosophy because it was used by classical authors like Kautilya to refer to several philosophical traditions, Halbfass argues that “regardless of the conceptual correspondences between *darsana* or *anviksiki* and ‘philosophy,’ neither of these concepts has played a role in India which would be historically comparable to the role of ‘philosophy’ in Europe.”<sup>2</sup> A method based on finding a one-to-one correspondence between what Europeans were calling philosophy and what Indians were producing, and asking whether they organized their thought systems under a single umbrella commensurate with the word “philosophy,” is an insufficient method of designating classical Indian thought as philosophy.

However, because of centuries of European colonization, a contemporary “process of globalization takes place in which non-European traditions not only adopt European philosophical concepts and teachings, but also reinterpret and reconceive their own ways of thinking *as* philosophy.”<sup>3</sup> Reinterpreting the categorization of traditions is not unique to this context—Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle reinterpreted Pre-Socratic intellectual argumentation as philosophy too.<sup>4</sup> In *Buddhism as Philosophy*, the philosopher Mark Siderits defines philosophy as “the systematic investigation of questions in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology (as well as several related fields). It involves using analysis and argumentation in systematic and reflective ways.”<sup>5</sup> Under this definition, it becomes broadly appropriate to describe Indian intellectual argumentation as “philosophy.” One can neatly divide Indian thinkers into distinct schools of philosophy and pinpoint arguments made by each school under the above stated branches of philosophy. One can evaluate epistemological questions of knowledge sources in Nyāya (“The knowledge sources are perception, inference, analogy, and testimony”<sup>6</sup>) and compare this system and its supportive reasoning to the Buddhist school Yogācāra-Sautrāntika’s claim that there are only two means of knowledge: perception and inference.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, classical schools of Indian “philosophy” have a long history of argumentation and rebuttal between schools of thought, which can be examined as philosophical dialogue. However, the issue of *how* classical Indian thought gets conceived of as philosophy—whether as a comparison to European philosophy, or as distinct from European philosophical traditions but in a potential-

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1 Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 263–4.

2 Ibid, 286.

3 Ibid, 263.

4 Ibid, 285.

5 Siderits, 6.

6 *NyāSū* 1.1.3, trans. Dasti and Phillips, *The Nyāya-sūtras*, 17.

7 Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2021), 323.

ly fruitful dialogue with them—is crucial to the philosophical discipline’s value.

In “Introduction: Indian Logic and the Colonization of Reason,” philosopher Jonardon Ganeri argues that European scholars in the nineteenth-century critiqued Nyāya logic based on the rules of the Greek syllogism after the Orientalist and mathematician H. T. Colebrook presented his ‘discoveries’ of Indian rationalist thought to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1924, during which he referred to Nyāya logic as a syllogism.<sup>8</sup> Critics saw the five-step logical process of Nyāya as “a clumsy, barnacled version of its proper, Aristotelian form.”<sup>9</sup> Many Orientalists in this century framed Indian intellectual thought through the lens of their own traditions, asserting that in seeking to reach the same ends, Indian argumentation was a worse version of the Greek philosophy the Europeans claimed to inherit. This was a necessary rationalizing move, as “the assumption that the West, and the West alone, had developed a science of reason was a fundamental axiom in the justification of the colonial enterprise as a civilizational process.”<sup>10</sup>

This method of comparative philosophy is insufficient, since “either Indian logic is not recognized as logic in the western sense at all; or, if it is, then it inevitably appears impoverished and underdeveloped by western standards.”<sup>11</sup> Adopting Indian philosophical arguments into a European framework is not an appropriate way to evaluate classical Indian thought as philosophy. Rather, one must approach classical Indian thought as distinct from, even if similar to, European philosophical traditions. It is necessary to “reclaim for Indian logic its own distinctive domain of problems and applications, to see how it asks questions not clearly formulated elsewhere, and in what way it seeks to solve the problem it sets for itself.”<sup>12</sup> This framework Ganeri lays out is crucial to how universities in America should approach the contributions of Indian philosophers—which they ought to do more.

It’s valuable to study alternative philosophical traditions because “[p]hilosophy is not a discipline carried on according to rules and assumptions fixed once and for all. On the contrary, it has always involved an attempt to examine and call into question ideas and commitments that are otherwise taken for granted.”<sup>13</sup> American university philosophy departments should pay more attention to Indian philosophical arguments because it not only allows students to interact with different methods of argumentation or arguments that could be made, but also because engaging in comparative philosophy as a dialogue allows scholars to evaluate their own theoretical commitments and those of the

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8 Jonardon Ganeri, “Introduction: Indian Logic and the Colonization of Reason,” in *Indian Logic: A Reader*. (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2001), 5.

9 Ibid, 14.

10 Ibid, 4

11 Ibid, 21.

12 Ibid.

13 M. Rosen, quoted in Ganeri, “Introduction, 21.”

tradition in which they are steeped. Halbfass argues that comparative philosophy is a difficult endeavor—and indeed, any attempt to define classical Indian thought as “philosophy” necessarily involves comparative methodology, as one is applying a non-Indian term to a range of Indian intellectual systems. Halbfass states that “Western partners in the comparative enterprise and the East West “dialogue” have to be aware of their historical background and of some long standing biases in the European approach to non-European traditions—as well as of an inherent bias and one sidedness in the ‘comparative’ approach as such.”<sup>14</sup> A critical analysis of one’s own position is crucial to one’s engagement with classical Indian philosophy in an American university, and to engagement in philosophy writ large. Engaging in comparative philosophy is beneficial to interrogating positionality, as “comparative philosophy is philosophy insofar as it aims at self-understanding. It has to be ready to bring its own standpoint, and the conditions and the horizon of comparison itself, into the process of comparison which thus assumes the reflexive, self-referring dimension which constitutes philosophy.”<sup>15</sup> Engaging more scholars and students at American universities in comparative philosophy defined as such is beneficial to their self-understanding.

It’s useful to designate classical Indian intellectual argumentation as philosophy, not to subsume it into a European hierarchy, nor to argue that classical Indian thinkers had a similar concept that they applied in similar ways, but rather to engage in discourse about a broader spectrum of philosophical possibilities and to analyze how the field of “philosophy” came to represent different European and non-European traditions, and how one might engage in this discourse going forward.

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<sup>14</sup> Halbfass, *India and Europe*, 433.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## Herodotus' Post-Battle Vignettes: Architectural Signposts and the Fronting of the Author

*Colin Olson*

Herodotus, in recounting the major battles undertaken by a united Greek coalition against the Persian army of Xerxes and, finally, that of Mardonius, often takes a rather encompassing view as the conflict unfolds: he alerts the audience to the size of the various contingents, their relative positioning, and the terrain upon which the battle will take place (among other things) before describing the actions of the various armies in a more or less chronological fashion. Causality is fronted as the Persian victory at Thermopylae is linked to the eventual use of the Anopaia path, as Themistokles decides to call the Persians into the straits of Salamis, and as the battle of Plataea sees both sides flirt with dangerous omens. Here the story flows and Herodotus establishes a narrative typology as appropriate and expected for the chronicling of armed engagements.

Just as Herodotus formulates a repeatable method for the literary reproduction of a battle, so too does the historian utilize a particular narrative form to draw such battles to a close: whereas the actual war scenes might be taken in almost panoptically, the end of the fighting is marked by the introduction of relatively “zoomed-in,” anecdotal stories, often about individuals of somewhat lesser repute or figures altogether previously un-introduced. It is as if Herodotus has switched his camera’s lens and focus. The effect is, at times, almost violent as the story quickly transitions from cataloging the death of thousands in mere sentences to then laboring over the particular deeds or sayings of particular characters in focus. While such episodes might, at the outset, appear almost as digressions, they nevertheless work to affirm the human dimension of the conflict narrated, and, more importantly, contribute to the broader development of Herodotus’ aims and themes, especially as they relate to the battle just-described.

Such value aside, the anecdotal typology of Herodotus’ post-battle narration plays a more fundamental, structural role within the *Histories*. Indeed, with regular moments of focalizing or focus on a particular character taking place after battle-narrative, Herodotus establishes a pattern to-be-followed and a post-battle thematic register. Here, the rapid “zooming-in” takes on the form of architectural signposting, alerting the audience to the fact that a battle has been completed and,

at the same time, breaking from the established forward-march of time used in the battle scenes themselves. Such an interpretation naturally has purchase on the degree of the command which Herodotus exercises over his material and thus on the “orality” of the work as a whole. Moreover, with Herodotus’ narrative ending soon after the battle of Mykale, the notion of a post-battle typology likewise offers relevant insight into the intentionality of the work’s ending. Ultimately, Herodotus might be seen to create a predictable narratological pattern governing the relationship between his chronicles of the conflicts within the invasion of Xerxes and their corresponding immediate aftermath(s); the typology for the post-battle anecdotal and person focus thus has structural importance along with its concurrent strengthening of Herodotus’ broader thematic explorations.

Following his events-based chronicling of the Battle of Thermopylae and the treachery of Ephialtes, who, leading a Persian force along the Anopaia Path, effectively kills all of the Hellenes guarding the narrow entrance to southern Greece, and within his account of the outstanding war-dead, Herodotus opts for a rather individualized anecdote, relating the ἀριστεία of a Spartan named Dienekes:

τὸν τὸδε φασι εἰπεῖν τὸ ἔπος πρὶν ἢ συμμῖξαι σφέας τοῖσι Μήδοισι, πυθόμενον πρὸς τευ τῶν Τρηχινίων ὡς ἐπεὰν οἱ βάρβαροι ἀπίωσι τὰ τοξεύματα, τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθεος τῶν ὀιστῶν ἀποκρύπτουσι· τοσοῦτο πλήθος αὐτῶν εἶναι. τὸν δὲ οὐκ ἐκπλαγέντα τούτοις εἰπεῖν ἐν ἀλογίῃ ποιούμενον τὸ Μήδων πλήθος, ὡς πάντα σφι ἀγαθὰ ὁ Τρηχίνιος ξείνος ἀγγέλλοι, εἰ ἀποκρυπτόντων τῶν Μήδων τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ σκιῇ ἔσοιτο πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἡ μάχη καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἡλίῳ.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the bravest of them all (it is said) was Dienekes, a Spartan, of whom a certain saying is reported: before they joined battle with the Medes, it was told Dienekes by a certain Trachinian that the enemies were so many, that when they shot with their bows the sun was hidden by the multitude of arrows; whereby being no whit dismayed, but making light of the multitude of the Medes, ‘Our friend from Trachis,’ quoth he, ‘brings us right good news, for if the Medes hide the sun we shall fight them in the shade and not in the sunshine.’<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, such a detectable change in narrative scale—where the historian shifts from speaking about the movement of troops and the formulation of strategy from a “bird’s eye” perspective to a personal scene focalized by an individual (and one bound to the earth and looking upward, at that)—might serve to reaffirm the humanity of the conflict, to ward off an audience member’s sense of remove, and to structurally mark an end to the play-by-play commentary offered.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Herodotus’ exposition on the figure of Dienekes

1 Hdt. VII. 226

2 Godley trans. of Hdt. VII. 226

3 Here is a rather large-scale version of Brock’s “signposting” as used by Herodotus; the change in narrative gaze corresponds here with a change in subject

might be seen as serving and contributing to the historian's fundamental narrative aims: perhaps Dienekes' attitude ought to be taken as an *αἰτία* for the ever-logical Herodotus, explaining how the Spartans were able to persist so valiantly at Thermopylae. Furthermore, the warrior's perspective might likewise represent the culmination of Herodotus' commentary on the superiority of Spartan fighters, related in the main through the figure of the Medized Demaratos.<sup>4</sup>

Herodotus returns anecdotally to the militant discipline of the Spartans yet again as, having finished his exposition on the monuments commemorating Thermopylae's losses, Herodotus zooms in on the Spartiate characters of Eurytos and Aristodemos. With Eurytos overcoming his eye ailment to ultimately fight and die at the pass and with Aristodemos instead choosing to abstain from the conflict, the Spartans are shown to act upon a quite severe value system: a returning Aristodemos becomes a social pariah, gaining a shameful nickname, being deprived of his contrymen's fire as well as of their conversation, and standing in stark contrast to the venerated heroes who held their ground and perished according to Spartan orders.<sup>5</sup> Pelling sees such a passage as intertextual and "looking back," so to speak, with Iliadic *μῆνις* governing the interaction between Aristodemos and his native *πόλις*.<sup>6</sup> The parallel situation of Eurytos, in the mind of Herodotus, is what brings such punishment upon Aristodemos, with the proper conduct of a true Spartan warrior in immediate contrast against Aristodemos' own decision to remain at Alpenos; the Herodotean caricature of Sparta and Spartans as doing everything within their power to carry out the task at hand is what ultimately comes crashing down upon cowardly Aristodemos.

Aside from yet again emphasizing the human scale of the important engagement and reiterating the cause of the battle's dramatic nature, Herodotus also uses his brief commentary on the situations of Eurytos and Aristodemos to structurally connect the battles of Thermopylae and Plataea, alluding to brave deeds to-be-performed by the Spartan outcast against Mardonius' army: "ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἐν Πλαταιῆσι μάχῃ ἀνέλαβε πᾶσαν τὴν ἐπενειχθεῖσαν αἰτίην."<sup>7</sup> Here, Sparta's two most glorious battles are bound not only on account of their Lacedaemonian protagonists, but also via the shared character of Aristodemos; there is a certain balance achieved as, with Thermopylae representing the social downfall of the cowardly Spartiate, Plataea's re-enfranchisement of the warrior seemingly (although perhaps not actually) reverses his losses and thus relates to the achievement of Spartan victory at Plataea and the overwhelming loss at Thermopylae.

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matter, time dilation, and focus. (Brock (2003), 6-8)

4 For Demaratos' warning to Xerxes regarding the quality of Spartan soldiers, see Hdt. VII. 102-104.

5 Hdt. VII. 229-231.

6 C. B. R. Pelling, *Herodotus and the Question Why* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 224.

7 Hdt. VII. 231.

Of course, Thermopylae might also be seen as bound to the sea engagement at Artemision both chronologically (as Herodotus suggests their virtually contemporaneous nature) and structurally (as each battle is fought over a “pass.”)<sup>8</sup>

Herodotus’ affirmation of his own agency as author via the rather aggressive changes in narrative scale during his chronicling of the aftermath of the Battle of Thermopylae seems somewhat dramatic in comparison with his treatment of events following the Battle of Artemision. Here, Themistokles is focalized as Herodotus relates several clever moves on the part of the leading Athenian: on the one hand, Themistokles suggests the slaughter of Euboean flocks to both aid the Greek contingent and to ensure that the Persians do not gain such a valuable resource.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the son of Neokles exhibits his cleverness in carving a message to the Ionians, either meant to encourage their revolt from Xerxes’ force or else to cause the king to doubt their loyalty.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, such episodes must contribute to the representation of Themistokles as particularly conniving and must likewise work to reinforce his narrative position as a notable protagonist. While such a focus on an individual might, at first, seem to parallel the ἀριστεία of Dienekes or the reported contrasting choices of the ailing Eurytos and Aristodemos, nevertheless important differences undermine a conception of Herodotus using a violent shift in narrative scale at this instance to the degree as was used to conclude the account of Thermopylae and as will be used in the detailing of the aftermath of various other conflicts.

For one, the exposition on Themistokles’ strategies works to further flesh out a character nonetheless introduced prior to the episode at hand and one already a recipient of much authorial attention. Themistokles’ familial background has already been introduced, his character has already been problematized, and his identity as inordinately clever has already been a prominent focus.<sup>11</sup> An audience might expect for a general to be centered on the heels of a battle, and, surely, by the time of Artemision within Herodotus’ narrative, no general would have been more expected than Themistokles. This must stand in contrast to the episodes regarding Dienekes, Eurytos, and Aristodemos, all of whom appear for the first time at Thermopylae’s conclusion and all of whom receive the vast majority (if not all) of their characterization in the respective passages. Whereas Herodotus uses these three figures to draw an end to his tale of the Battle of Thermopylae, on the other hand, the focus on Themistokles does little to conclude the Battle of Artemision. Indeed, Herodotus, upon relaying the two relevant plans of the Athenian admiral, then proceeds directly to the withdrawal of the Greek fleet, the accompanying

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8 Hdt. VIII. 15

9 Hdt. VIII. 19

10 Hdt. VIII. 22

11 Hdt. VII. 143; see Hdt. VIII. 4-5 for Themistokles accepting a Euboean bribe to fight at Artemision and unfairly redistributing the funds as further bribes; see Hdt. VII. 143 for Themistokles’ unique understanding of a crucially important Delphic oracle.



Persian disbelief, the curated battlefield at Thermopylae which Xerxes presents to his navy, and the disastrous rivalry between the Thessalians and Phocians which leads to the ravaging of Phocis.<sup>12</sup> There is little by way of such a cultivated sense of retrospection as the vignettes of the three aforementioned Spartiates create, interrupting Herodotus' typical forward-looking modality.<sup>13</sup> Time continues to march forward, and an undercurrent of large-scale action colors the lead up to Salamis.

Whereas digressions such as Herodotus' relating of the oracle which predicted to the Euboeans the destruction of their own flock during some form of Persian invasion might work to move away from the particular tone and register used to describe the Battle of Artemision itself, nevertheless, such moments receive comparatively little attention and are framed by more events-based, forward-looking narrative.<sup>14</sup> Thus, insofar as the aftermath of the Battle of Artemision is *not*, at least to the same extent, followed by a dramatic and characteristic narrative turn on the part of Herodotus and insofar as it is *not* correspondingly characterized by a rather personal and surprising anecdote which subverts the linear procession of events, Herodotus—at least in some ways—frames the conflict as being of a secondary nature, militarily indecisive and offering utility in its creation of tension before a truly marquee engagement, namely, the Battle of Salamis.<sup>15</sup> That a sense of continuity and progression is present with respect to the relationship between the Battle of Artemision and the Battle of Salamis might be seen via Herodotus' description of the Greek navy's movements ahead of the conflict off of the coast of Attica: “ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ ἀπ’ Ἀρτεμισίου ἐς Σαλαμίνα κατέσχον τὰς νέας, συνέρρεε καὶ ὁ λοιπὸς πυνθανόμενος ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ναυτικὸς στρατὸς ἐκ Τροίζηνος· ἐς γὰρ Πάγωνα τὸν Τροϊζηνίων λιμένα προεῖρητο συλλέγεσθαι. συνελέχθησάν τε δὴ πολλῶ πλεῦνες νέες ἢ ἐπ’ Ἀρτεμισίῳ ἐναυμάχεον καὶ ἀπὸ πολίων πλεούνων.” (Hdt. VIII. 42. i) The Battle of Salamis is, fundamentally, greater in scale than the Battle of Artemision, and the presence of many of the same ships provides the impression that Artemision was a mere precursor to the all-important engagement off the coast of Attica. Herodotus' signposting (or lack thereof) thus allows for reflexive, qualitative assertions to be made regarding the author's managing of tone over the course of Xerxes' depicted invasion.

In many ways, the Battle of Salamis might be seen as the defining Greco-Persian struggle within Herodotus' *Histories*, particularly with respect to Xerxes' invasion of Greece. Thus, as mentioned above, Herodotus uses otherwise important engagements such as the Battle of Artemision as narrative instruments with which to frame and build up to the critical encounter. After a series of large-

12 Hdt. VIII. 21-33.

13 Roger Brock, “Authorial Voice and Narrative Management in Herodotus” in *Herodotus and his World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 4.

14 Hdt. VIII. 20

15 Hdt. VIII. 16.

scale, “bird’s-eye” narrative gazes<sup>16</sup> in which Herodotus details the relevant decision making, troops, and actions which culminate in and are a part of the Battle of Salamis, the Halicarnassian, in the mode exercised in ending his cataloging of the Battle of Thermopylae, offers an episodic tale of a rather unknown individual. Here, Polykritos son of Krios takes center stage, and it is his successful seizure of a Sidonian ship which is recapitulated in vivid detail and which serves as a neat microcosmic symbol for the broader and total Greek victory.<sup>17</sup>

On the one hand, like the story of Dienekes, the tale of Polykritos serves as a structural marker for the end of battle-narrative, alerting the audience to the rounding off of a scene typology and thus, to put it somewhat crudely, functioning as a sort of architectural palette cleanser within the broader account of Xerxes’ invasion. On the other hand, the tale of Polykritos and his taunting of Themistokles serves more broadly to add depth to persistent thematic developments present throughout the Herodotean narrative: here, the Greeks are able to achieve almost other-worldly deeds as a function of their united war effort while nevertheless being persistently characterized by their infighting, mutual distrust, and agonistic individualism. The scene thus bears resemblance to the failure of the various Athenian and Spartan delegations sent to Sicily, Argos, and Crete, among other places, in an effort to drum up Greek support for a war against Xerxes; the embassies fail as Greek cooperation is undermined by haughtiness and a misguided focus on serving as ἡγεμόν.<sup>18</sup> That being said, a truly violent narrative turn away from the battle might be more appropriately ascribed to Herodotus’ account of the Corinthian Adeimantos. After all, there are striking parallels between the commentary offered on Artemisia and on Polykritos—thematically, the similar nature of the latter passage to the former might undermine its role as a textual marker signifying the end of Herodotus’ account of the battle as the ἀπιστεία of Artemisia occurs in the heat of the action.

After remarking upon the apportionment of praise for the most valiant of the Greek contingent at Salamis, Herodotus chooses to recount the Athenian perspective on the actions of the Corinthian navy under Adeimantos during the Battle of Salamis. Here, as the forward-marching chronology of the battle-narrative is halted and subverted, with Herodotus, upon the conclusion of the battle, returning to the middle of the conflict to describe Corinthian maneuvers, the passage at hand bears particular similarity to the function of the tale of Eurytos and Aristodemos. At the risk of sounding pedantic, the battle might only be externalized and retrospectively returned to in such a piece-meal way with the underlying assumption that the battle has indeed concluded. The anecdot-

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16 The exception being the exposition on the actions of Artemisia at Hdt. VIII. 87. Note, however, that even the figure of Artemisia is ultimately viewed from Xerxes’ elevated throne at Hdt. VIII. 88.

17 Hdt. VIII. 92.

18 Hdt. VII. 148-171.

al nature of the passage, framed in particular by the operative phrase “λέγουσι Ἀθηναῖοι,” serves to mark a shift in Herodotus' perspective; the historian's role as a selective author with agency is fronted, and the audience is thus removed from a battle-oriented narrative mode which feels natural, organic, and monolithic.<sup>19</sup> Like the tale of Eurytos and Aristodemos, and particularly like the tale of Polykritos, such a noticeable change in literary perspective comes with a concurrent development with respect to the thematic projects of the author. Here again, the Greeks, nominally united, are able to triumph against impossible odds despite the treacherous nature of their countrymen. That such a passage might be read in so literary a mode is invited by Herodotus himself who, in framing this particular condemnation of Adeimantos as derivative of Athenian propaganda, suggests that its factual underpinnings are suspect to say the least: indeed, it is “ἡ ἄλλη Ἑλλάς” which opposes the Athenian account.<sup>20</sup> (Hdt. VIII. 94. iv)

The dubious truth content of the rumor about Adeimantos and the Corinthians at Salamis might function to link the battle of Herodotus' focus with—from the audience's perspective, that is—relatively contemporary events, as, in the 430s, a descendant of Adeimantos was executed by Athens on account of the Athenian conflict with Corinth.<sup>21</sup> As with the account of Thermopylae, balance is achieved while the brilliance of Themistokles and the Greek victory at Salamis is thus framed on both sides by the distasteful behavior of an Adeimantos who is self-serving and overly pessimistic.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Adeimantos might suggest that Themistokles, with Athens burning at the hands of Xerxes' men, ought not to be able to legitimately address and advise the coalition of Greek leaders, here it is ironically Adeimantos himself who is left out from the victorious collective, only arriving at the Greek camp with the battle already settled (“ἐπ' ἐξεργασμένοι”).<sup>23</sup>

Herodotus takes an extremely panoptic approach on the eve of the Battle of Plataea, going so far as to tally up the numbers of men for the respective contingents. In due proportion, the vignettes offered at the end of the battle are particularly intimate, undermine the chronological flow of the section, and are especially drawn out. As is typical, such vignettes appear in conjunction with a description of the post-battle debate around the valor and brave deeds of various individuals and units.<sup>24</sup> The first individual to be engaged with narratively on the heels of Plataea is Kallikrates, a beautiful Spartan warrior. The story of the young man does much by way of challenging the natural progression of events as, in con-

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19 Hdt. VIII. 94. i.

20 Hdt. VIII. 94. iv.

21 A.M. Bowie (ed.), *Herodotus: Histories Book VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 182.

22 See Hdt. VIII. 61 for Adeimantos' suggestion that Themistokles, lacking a city, should not speak in counsel.

23 Hdt. VIII. 94. iv.

24 Hdt. IX. 71.

trast to the continuous actions and temporally-oriented nature of the Herodotean account of the Battle of Plataea, the death of Kallikrates is said to have occurred before the outbreak of the main engagement while pre-battle auguries were being consulted.<sup>25</sup> The self-consciously reflexive nature of the text signifies a new mode of inquiry, with the battle account having been drawn to a close. Here, as after the description of the Battle of Thermopylae, the rather personal introduction of a particular character and the near-immediate, tragic death of that same individual serve to add an otherwise lacking degree of *πάθος* to the description. Herodotus might insert tragic speech (here rendered in *oratio obliqua*), might frame the death as heroic, and might leave the legacy of the particular focalized character as hanging and anecdotal in order to have a human dimension of the battle play off of his almost cold, methodical rendering of the fighting itself.

Despite the seemingly arbitrary nature of the decision to focus on Kallikrates in particular, nevertheless, the wounded sentinel offers thematic utility to the broader narrative: Kallikrates' death, insofar as it is brought about impersonally and preemptively, allows for Herodotus to further play with his characterization of Spartan valor. Having served amongst the Greeks is not enough for the guard, but Kallikrates expresses an almost Iliadic desire for individual fame in a struggle against the Persian foe; his worth, *ἄξιον*, is something demonstrable, proven only through lived experience. The Spartans are men of action, and, contrary to Mardonius' pre-battle taunts, are more than willing to test their mettle on the battlefield.<sup>26</sup> As Kallikrates' story might serve to augment the Herodotean picture of the Spartans and to retroactively add both epic and personal flair to the chronicle of Plataea, so too might the story of the Athenian Sophanes, despite its relative intimacy and small scale, work to effectively characterize the Athenians and to connect the war against Xerxes with the historical and future conflicts which plagued and were to plague Greece.

Immediately upon completing the description of Kallikrates and his tragic death, Herodotus turns to the valiant character of Sophanes the Dekeleian. Sophanes and his deme are at once situated in a much broader context, straying far from the immediate temporal confines of the battle which the warrior just partook in. On the one hand, Dekeleia is fronted as a place of historical import, with Herodotus offering the mythical tale of Helen's capture by Theseus and the willingness of Dekelos (or, perhaps, the Dekeleians) to return the woman to Sparta.<sup>27</sup> Here, on a thematic note, perhaps the rapacity of the Athenians serves as a warning of sorts to Herodotus' audience, well aware of the detriments of Athenian aggression and imperialism. On the other hand, mention of Dekeleia allows for Herodotus to go beyond the chronological bounds of Xerxes' invasion in discussing the ways in

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25 Hdt. IX. 72.

26 See Hdt. IX. 97. ii for Kallikrates and his desire to display his *ἄξιον*; see Hdt. IX. 48 for Mardonius' mocking of the Spartans.

27 Hdt. IX. 73.

which the deme was revered by the Spartans when they would ultimately come into conflict with the Athenians (a valuable *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Histories* insofar as Herodotus' writing must have proceeded the "Dekeleian War").<sup>28</sup> Characteristic of his post-war episodes, Herodotus dramatically distances himself from the temporally oriented account of the Battle of Plataea itself.

Sophones the individual likewise offers Herodotus thematic utility insofar as, representative to a certain extent of Athens and the Athenian contribution to the war, any characterization of the man might be read against a broader commentary on Athenian *mores* and temperament. The Athenian from Dekeleia, no matter which of the two accounts offered by Herodotus is taken as true, is tethered tightly to the symbol of an anchor. It is telling that Herodotus' representative Athenian should be bound so intimately with maritime symbology, and the overall effect of the characterization is to frame the Athenians as inextricably connected to their mobile and crushing naval force; such a perspective must look forward to the Delian League and the forced contribution on the part of various Greek communities to the ascendancy of an Athenian domination at sea. Thus, as figures such as Deinekes, Eurytos, Aristodemos, and Kallikrates might offer Herodotus a chance to outline the characteristics of Spartan warriors against the full backdrop of the war's most decisive battles, the character of Sophones similarly facilitates an opportunity for the author to espouse qualitative insight on the character of Athens personified. Of course, such an opportunity occurs in conjunction with the reaffirmation of Herodotus' post-battle narrative typology as the author continues to experiment with time dilations, manipulations, and limitations on the heels of important engagements, and as the intimacy of the scenes described forms a predictable and stark contrast set against the forward-march of Herodotus' more events-based commentary on the battles themselves.

As the *Histories* come to an end, Herodotus walks his audience through the events of the Battle of Mykale. The figure of Masistes, the brother of Xerxes, emerges as a character with whom Herodotus might practice his now-familiar tactic of following the battle narrative with an intimate and anecdotal story. Here, the story is more drawn out than all those preceding, and the effect is a parable of sorts which reads much like a folktale.<sup>29</sup> With Xerxes having fallen in love first with Masistes' wife and then with Masistes' daughter, he is tricked (more or less) and is compelled to give to the latter his newly-woven robe which, of course, alerts everyone quite conspicuously to the fact that Amastris' power is being undermined. Amastris demands the daughter of Masistes as her wish-to-be-granted during the festival known as the "τυκτά" and sees to it that she is horribly disfigured.<sup>30</sup> Xerxes, obeying his wife's command, thus enters into an argument with his brother which ultimately leads to the king committing frat-

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28 Hdt. IX. 73.

29 Hdt. IX. 108-113.

30 Hdt. IX. 110. ii.

ricide. The effect is—just as Herodotus characterizes the Athenians and Spartans with post-battle vignettes—to add depth to the representation of the Persian King and, to a lesser extent, the Persians globally. Xerxes’ fatal flaw of wanting what he cannot have is manifested in the self-mutilation of the Persian royal house; just as the king would not feel satisfied with his seizure of Athens alone, so too does this indiscretion lead to a chain of events which paints him in quite a poor light.<sup>31</sup> With Xerxes, as king and absolute authority, effectively the agent behind all Persian actions, this then might be negatively viewed as the epitome of Herodotus’ Persian character and its moral complications.

Appended to the discussion of Masistes and the wickedness of Xerxes is the villainy of the Athenians themselves, brutally killing the Persian provincial commander Artayktes who held out against Greek capture at Sestos: “The general Xanthippus nails the Persian Artayktes to an upright plank overlooking the Hellespont, then has the dying man’s son stoned to death before his eyes. The Athenians are the masters now, but their methods are disconcertingly similar to those of the Persians before them.”<sup>32</sup> In more ways than mere proximity is the tale of Artayktes connected to the conflict of Xerxes and Masistes as, similar to the irresistible commands of Masistes’ daughter and Amastris, Artayktes is said to have fooled Xerxes into allowing him to rob the sacred grave of Protesilaus.<sup>33</sup> Like other instances of Herodotus’ various post-battle analepses which represent the narrative’s continuation through calculated retrospection, the anecdote on Artayktes “...looks both backwards and forwards...” insofar as it is suggestive of the first signs of the ugliness of Athenian imperialism and as it gestures to the first manifestation of the messiness and suffering of the Trojan War with Protesilaus centered.<sup>34</sup> This episode, the last of Herodotus’ post-battle “zoomed-in” scenes, takes the pattern to its practical extreme, signifying the end of the account writ-large and at the same time claiming an ability to look beyond the externalized events of the past with an extra-textual nod to the events of the author’s present moment. Aside from the aptness of the moral message to close Herodotus’ work,<sup>35</sup> a structural reading of the final scenes of the *Histories* lends credence to the interpretation that the capture of Sestos does, indeed, represent a natural and intentional end to the narrative: Herodotus uses the set-piece typology with which he draws battles to a close to, in a similar way, neatly conclude his work as a whole.<sup>36</sup>

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31 See Hdt. VIII. 68a for Xerxes being dissatisfied with his seizure of Athens.

32 Pelling, *Herodotus and the Question Why*, 214.

33 Hdt. IX. 116.

34 Deborah Boedeker, “Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus’ *Histories*” in *Herodotus: Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Pelling, *Herodotus and the Question Why*, 215.

35 Heinrich Bischoff, “Sinn Des Letzten Kapitels” in *Herodot: Eine Auswahl Aus Der Neueren Forschung* (Munich: Beck), 670-676.

36 See Boedeker, “Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus’ *Histories*”, 360; for a

Herodotus makes repeated use of a particular set-piece narrative construction, namely, the interruption of generally chronologically-oriented battle sequences with vivid personal vignettes of thematic import; the author is thus able to offer architectural signposts to his audience regarding the progress of the Greco-Perian conflict at large and the interplay of individual and collective forces on the outcome of the war. Such a segmentation and pattern must be, as suggested by Brock, derivative of a highly sophisticated understanding of the source material, and must also be taken as an authorial stamp on the testimony collected from others: Herodotus is able to fashion the narrative into a mold of his choosing (despite its seemingly disparate originators) and is, on the one hand, "...perfectly capable of writing in a fully periodic manner when he chooses...[yet, on the other, is not] constrained by his subject matter."<sup>37</sup> By this act of genre-construction, Herodotus thus gamifies his account, setting up a series of expectations to-be-adhered-to on the part of the audience only to play with and iterate upon those created patterns.<sup>38</sup>

The various analepses which occur routinely as Herodotus rounds off a description of a particularly significant battle are part and parcel of the contemporary view of the composer as an "oral" historian,<sup>39</sup> yet orally transmitted though his sources may be (indeed, it would seem ambitious to suggest some sort of substantial library of literary material which Herodotus might work off of during the mid fifth century), such a label in my view underplays the author's control over his material: the "orality" of Herodotus is nothing if not calculated and contrived as his semi-rigid superstructure (at least for the account of Xerxes' invasion) stands in contrast to his infamous "digressions" and his Homeric mimicry. Here, to momentarily occupy the gaze of a 19th century Homeric "analyst," there is to be seen a fundamentally *written* aspect of the *Histories* and a fundamental architectural break from the Homeric *corpus*. Of course Herodotus' sources are "oral," and of course folktales form the backbone of much of the work (particularly the material on events before the mid 6th century), yet the superstructure imposed on the work serves not as place-markers for any bard or *auctor* to

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discussion on the end of Herodotus' work and its intentionality.

37 Roger Brock, "Authorial Voice and Narrative Management in Herodotus" in *Herodotus and His World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 12-13.

38 Nino Luraghi, "Meta-Historiē: Method and Genre in the *Histories*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 85.

39 Alan Griffiths, "Stories and Storytelling in the *Histories*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 133 and 137; Griffiths, accounting for the various narrative modes of the Halicarnassian, claims that the original oral transmission of Herodotus' *corpus* "...emerges not so much from his own statements...as from the nature of the stories themselves, which bear all the tell-tale signs of narratives which have passed from mouth to ear to mouth again." (137)



systematically move through a large body of material from memory, but rather as indicators to-be-received by the audience, aiding in the *consumption* of the story rather than in the composition. Thus the relationship between author and audience is self-consciously constructed, detectable in the patterning consistently used by Herodotus to signify that a battle has, within the world of the narrative, concluded.

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# How the Enslaved Philosophers Broke Their Chains Before Being Free

*Kristen Quesada*

## Introduction

What connects the ancient philosophers Phaedo of Elis, Diogenes the Cynic, and Epictetus with the modern philosophers Olaudah Equiano, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, and Frederick Douglass? Slavery—though few likely know, given the separation that history lends to the ancient philosophers between their philosophies and biographies and the historical burial of the names of Equiano and Cugoano. For the purposes of this paper, I have categorized them all as “slave philosophers”—not to detract from their roles as philosophers on their own standing, but rather to identify the formative role slavery played in shaping their brands of philosophy. When studying the ancient philosophers, we tend to view them as larger than life, considering their philosophies as separate from their biographies. Yet, when we hear the name Frederick Douglass, we often make the opposite mistake of exclusively viewing him as his slavery, with his philosophy acting as merely part of his biography. Both of these perspectives are disingenuous to the contributions of these philosophers and devalue the role of their slave experiences, either by making it the sole focus or by removing it from the equation entirely. While it may appear reductive to pair philosophers separated by nearly two millennia solely on the basis of their experiences with slavery, these slave philosophers all dealt with understanding one’s purpose in the world and on seeking freedom within it. This shared focus serves the greater purpose of better understanding slavery as a whole, offering insight through the lens of the slave’s world philosophy.

Although I’ve identified six slave philosophers, I will primarily focus on Diogenes, Epictetus, and the three aforementioned modern slave philosophers to best understand philosophy’s underlying role in slavery. I am excluding complex analysis of Phaedo of Elis due to a lack of a credible biography concerning his enslavement and very limited access to his direct philosophy, which only exists as fragments of his works and allusions in Plato’s *Phaedo*.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, I

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<sup>1</sup> George Boys-Stones, “Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the Soul,” *Phronesis* 49, no. 1 (2004): 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852804773617389>.

am omitting Anton Wilhelm Amo due to dubious evidence of his actual slave status.<sup>2</sup> As of Herman Nieboer, an early anthropologist of slavery.<sup>3</sup> While groups such as serfs and peasants endured extreme hardship and a questionable relationship to freedom, they nonetheless retained their status as human beings in the eyes of both their masters and societies—a right not afforded to history’s slaves.

However, this list of slave philosophers elicits another question: why do scholars not know of philosophers who endured enslavement between the second and seventeenth centuries? History points to the rise and fall of slave societies. Though many societies have permitted slavery across the millennia, the expression “slave society” specifically indicates societies that became economically or socially dependent on slave labor as a central institution. The historically recognized slave societies include Ancient Greece and Rome and the three main New World slave systems: Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States South.<sup>4</sup> Each chosen philosopher respectively lines up with one of these slave societies, addressing the effects of systematized slavery on slave philosophy within differing contexts. The fall of the Western Roman Empire coincided with the slow decline in the importance of slavery as the new, smaller European states of the early post-Classical period transitioned into non-slave societies which still possessed individual slaves, but not in as widespread a manner as in the societies of their Greco-Roman predecessors.<sup>5</sup> By the Renaissance, slavery had faded from the forefront with the advent of Humanism, the Renaissance-fueling philosophy which reconciled Early Modern thought with Classical ideas and perpetuated a new era of societal growth and progress. Not two centuries later, the originally progress-inducing reconciliation of Classical philosophy with Christian dogma provided a basis for the sixteenth-century debates about Spain’s treatment of the conquered New World Peoples and again lent argument to the American South, citing the cultural chauvinism and pro-slavery philosophies of the Greco-Roman era.

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2 William Abraham, “The Life and Times of Anton Wilhelm Amo,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 7, (1964): 60–81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41405765>.

3 Herman J. Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches* (The Hague, 1900), 7.

4 Peter Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery* (Newark: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 20.

5 Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 509.

## Ancient Influence on Early Modern Slave Societies

European-based societies' persistent admiration for Classical culture opened the gateway to reconciling with the dehumanizing institution of slavery, breathing into it an air of respectability by association. In James Henry Hammond's infamous pro-slavery "Cotton is King" speech to Congress in 1858, he credits slaves to be "the very mud-sill of society" as "a race inferior to [the South's] own," "found by the common consent of mankind" in accordance with Cicero's proclamation of it being "*lex naturae est*" – Nature's law.<sup>6</sup> Not only does this call back to the appropriation of Classical culture to serve Southern pro-slavery propaganda, but it importantly demonstrates the conception of slavery as holding Southern antebellum society together, as Hammond further alludes throughout his speech regarding economics, politics, and the entire social structure the South had predicated for the White man. Slavery met continued national approbation from non-slaveholders, grimly echoing the nature of Athens and Rome "to exploit slave labor to such an extent that they belong to the small group of slave societies known to human history," driven by "economic forces, unrestrained by moral compunctions about slavery."<sup>7</sup> However, having social and economic structures equivalent to those of the Greco-Roman period still fails to explain what allowed for the reconciliation of the Christian and Enlightenment-based modern period with slavery.

At a time in which scholars, theologians, and philosophers all invoked equality as central to mainstream attitudes, racism permitted justifications of slavery to fit into the modern vision of citizenship that was predicated on a nominative equality. Whereas the Greeks and Romans enabled those of social out-groups, predominantly foreigners, to improve their status by assimilation, racism provided no method of escape. One could not simply learn the language of the enslavers well enough or convert to the dominant religion; this marked a radical shift in the concept of slavery. The American public's sanctioning of slavery seems to again have reflected the Roman ideal, for even though there remained great economic disparities between Roman citizens, Rome openly conferred citizenship upon free individuals, even to manumitted slaves, granting full civic rights and privileges. Contrarily, the United States Supreme Court reinforced the distinction between White and Black in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision, declaring that Black people, whether free or enslaved, were not citizens but "a separate class of persons."<sup>8</sup> Thus, while the Roman distinction rested between

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6 James H. Hammond, "Speech of Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina, On the Admission of Kansas, Under the Lecompton Constitution" (speech, Senate of the United States, Washington, DC, March 4, 1858). <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/Manuscripts/cottonisking.html>.

7 Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*, 65.

8 *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 19 How. 393 (1856), <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep060393a/>.

slave and free, the modern was between White and Black – in both, slaves stood for the “other” against which all citizens could define themselves as a unity.

## Enlightenment Debates on Freedom

While political and economic motivations were at the core of the new wave of slavery, the support of purported scientific theory offered a more palatable justification. Scholars date the invention of race to the early modern period, roughly coinciding with the rise of the Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century and leaving no doubt as to why Europeans began to racialize others.<sup>9</sup> The murky new concept of race, based solely on skin color and racial “purity,” brought about questions on how to quantify the racial hierarchy, with even social activists like Bartolomé de Las Casas tearing down African peoples to increase the humanity of the indigenous people of the New World.<sup>10</sup> Then, to conform slavery to their rhetoric of freedom and equality, Enlightenment *philosophes* cited theories that falsely rationalized the inferiority of Africans through “science” based around climate and geographical location.<sup>11</sup> When speaking on the issues of slavery in his contemporary America, Thomas Jefferson himself was at a loss to how to reconcile with the differentiation between the freed modern slave and the emancipated Roman slave, for the Roman, “when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us [Americans], when freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”<sup>12</sup> This quote exemplifies the existence of new racial dimensions of American slavery, as compared to Greek and Roman counterparts. Jefferson acknowledges the racial complexity of slavery as an “unknown to history,” yet leaves his sentiments at that, choosing to uphold the status quo as many of his Enlightenment counterparts did in a time distinctly crucial to the course of human freedom.

While both the Classical and Modern philosophers would frequently cite slavery of man, rarely was this language actively addressing the physical bondage of other humans, instead being used to contextualize their own arguments for a freer freedom than they already possessed, with Enlightenment rhetoric spurring revolutions across the Americas and Europe. The words of Jean-Jacques Rous-

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9 Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

10 Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, trans. Stafford Poole (Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), 28.

11 Justin E. H. Smith, “The Specter of Polygenesis” in *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015).

12 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Harlow, England: Penguin Publishing Group, 1998), 154.

seau continue to echo through the ages: “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.” Yet, Rousseau is not referring to bodily slavery, despite the growing contemporary practice of putting men in physical chains. tury Irish abolitionist James Field Stanfield appealed from his own experience as a sailor aboard a slave ship that “one real view—one minute absolutely spent in the slave rooms on the middle passage, would do more for the cause of humanity, than the pen of a Robertson, or the whole collective eloquence of the British senate.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, “real enlightenment began not with a Scottish philosopher or a member of Parliament,”<sup>14</sup> but rather in a man’s tangible intermingling with the true horrors of stolen freedom. When the esteemed philosophers of history spoke on freedom, it was with a perspective incompatible with the lived experience of slaves, expressly because while they spoke of freedom in the abstract and for the common man, they simultaneously ignored the real lack of freedom still standing. This ignorance of concurrent injustice perpetuated from within the ivory tower highlights the importance of learning what a life of true freedom looks like from those who experienced the most distinct lack of it – ergo, from the slave philosophers themselves.

## The Slave Philosophers of History

The first two slave philosophers of focus played foundational roles in the development of Cynicism and Stoicism, with the former greatly influencing the latter.<sup>15</sup> Diogenes the Cynic,<sup>16</sup> active in the third century BCE, spent most of his life in Athens and Corinth, where he lived free following his enslavement and famously died by self-suffocation.<sup>17</sup> He devoted his free life to corporealizing his philosophy of Cynicism through his daily actions. Achieving an almost animal-like sense of freedom by subverting the institutions of government, politics, a family, work, and the general everyday activities of most people, Diogenes earned the moniker “Diogenes the dog,” consequently dubbing his philosophical subscribers the “Cynics,” the Greek word for “dog.”<sup>18</sup> But, this rejection of society was not an abandon-

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13 James Field Stanfield, *Observations on a Guinea Voyage. In a Series of Letters Addressed to the Rev. Thomas Clarkson* (London: printed by James Phillips, George-Yard, Lombard-Street, 1788), 30.

14 Marcus Buford Rediker, “Chapter Five: James Field Stanfield and the Floating Dungeon” in *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007).

15 Epictetus, “Discourses” in *Discourses, Fragments, Handbook*, trans. Robin Hard (Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.22; Luis E. Navia, *Diogenes the Cynic: The War Against the World* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2005), 17, 72.

16 Also known as Diogenes of Sinope.

17 Navia, *Diogenes the Cynic: The War Against the World*, 10.

18 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, ed. James Miller, trans.

ment of humanity; on the contrary, it was a philosophical position that identified the ills persistent in the human condition across time and showed others a way that could alleviate those burdens, with Diogenes viewing himself as an emissary to his fellow humans, parallel to the way Epictetus did nearly four centuries later.

The aforementioned *philosophes* did not deem Cynicism a worthy philosophy, viewing Diogenes as more of a spectacle than a philosopher, “for [the Cynics] possessed but little philosophy, and did not bring what they had into a scientific system, [...] and they deserve fully the name of dogs; for the dog is a shameless animal,” in the words of Hegel.<sup>19</sup> Diderot held an equally disparaging view, declaring, “One must be born a Cynic even to understand Cynicism.”<sup>20</sup> However, this is exactly why this philosophy resonates with the slave. The slave is born into a world of cruel circumstance, with the slave trade either ripping him from his home or birthing him into a life of bondage. As such, the slave is born a Cynic, evident both through slave suicide statistics and the memoirs of the modern slave philosophers.<sup>21</sup> Owing to this pessimistic world view, Cynic followers would often commit suicide as Diogenes himself did, delivering themselves from the troubles of the world and vice versa.<sup>22</sup> It is documented that slaves frequently experienced suicidal ideations, particularly the newly arrived, with many “[taking] an opportunity of jumping overboard into the sea” en route to the New World, seeking “refuge in death from those evils which render their lives intolerable.”<sup>23</sup> This account succinctly exhibits why the Cynic view was unsustainable when living under slavery, for it not only allowed but also encouraged one to succumb to his severe daily oppression whereas the Stoic position posits a greater purpose in enduring the trials of the world. Epictetus’ charge to his fellows who wish “to be delivered at last from these chains that are fastened to us and weigh us down” by taking their own lives is to, for the present, “re-sign yourselves to remaining in this post in which [God] has stationed you.”<sup>24</sup>

While Diogenes spent his mid-life enslavement as a tutor for a relatively kind master, Epictetus was born into slavery circa 50 CE under Epaphroditus, an abusive master who was accounted to have twisted Epictetus’ leg to the point

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Pamela Mensch (Oxford University Press, 2018), 6.33, 6.60.

19 Georg W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lector House, 2020), 1:479.

20 Denis Diderot, “Cynique” in *Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire Raisonne des Sciences, des Artes et des Metiers* (Stuttgart: Fromman, 1966), 4:599.

21 Richard Bell, “Slave Suicide, Abolition and the Problem of Resistance,” *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no. 4 (2012): 525-549.

22 Navia, 99.

23 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa* (Dodo Press, 2007), 73.

24 Epictetus, “Discourses” in *Discourses, Fragments, Handbook*, trans. Robin Hard (Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.9.12-17.



of breaking, crippling him for life.<sup>25</sup> His master gave him permission to study philosophy under Musonius Rufus, which is where he first encountered Stoicism and developed his views.<sup>26</sup> Though we have no complete narrative of Epictetus' enslavement as we do of the modern slave philosophers, his story nonetheless closely resembles theirs despite being separated by nearly two millennia: enduring cruel treatment under a ubiquitous system of slavery, seeking knowledge and acquiring freedom, and going on to share their philosophy with the world. In the mid-eighteenth century, Olaudah Equiano was kidnapped by slave traders while a child in present-day Nigeria and sold as a slave to a British naval officer in the Caribbean. While a slave, Equiano converted to Christianity, had his birth name stripped by his first master and was sold twice before purchasing his freedom at 21, which he later used to become involved with the abolitionist movement.<sup>27</sup> Frederick Douglass was famously born into slavery in antebellum Maryland, bearing his condition under three different masters until he escaped to freedom in 1838, during which he published his acclaimed autobiography fifteen years before the Civil War as part of his antislavery efforts.<sup>28</sup> Quobna Ottobah Cugoano was kidnapped and sold into slavery at thirteen, slaving in the West Indies chain gangs before being freed in England, where he became a staunch abolitionist and refuted pro-slavery arguments in his *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*.<sup>29</sup>

### Ancient Stoicism as the Slave's Philosophy

It is important to note that the Stoics did not believe in natural slavery; however, given the Stoic emphasis on accepting the natural social order as part of the uncontrollable, the philosophy consequently works around slavery as an institution provided its longstanding prevalence in the ancient world.<sup>30</sup> With this perspective, Epictetus seems to downplay the gravity of legal slavery as he equally believes free men to be slaves to new masters if internal measures are not taken, often citing food, money, health, ambition, sex, and social sta-

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25 Origen, "Book VII: Chapter 53," in *Contra Celsum*, trans. Frederick Crombie (Buffalo, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04167.htm>; Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.16.20.

26 Epictetus, 1.9.29.

27 Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, 73.

28 Frederick Douglass, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" in *The Portable Frederick Douglass*, ed. John Stauffer and Henry L. Gates (Penguin Publishing Group, 2016).

29 Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*, ed. Vincent Carretta (Penguin Publishing Group, 1999).

30 Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*, 207.



tus as potential tyrants.<sup>31</sup> Thus, since “slavery” is unavoidable in life, the overall objective becomes reducing the personal suffering that accompanies it. Today, we may think this is a reductive stance, trivializing the effects of systemic slavery. When discussing Epictetus’ philosophical stance on slavery, Peter Hunt attempts to explain away Epictetus’ comments as having been potentially softened by his student’s transcription, a case of self-censorship in view of his aristocratic Hammond, James H. “Speech of Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina, primary audience, or deliberate ambiguity.<sup>32</sup> I disagree with this perspective; properly navigating freedom was a real issue post-emancipation for slaves, with even the modern slave philosophers taking this view.

Frederick Douglass draws a distinction between being a slave “in form” and a slave “in fact.”<sup>33</sup> According to Douglass, being a slave in form refers simply to being in a current situation of codified physical bondage; being a slave in fact, however, refers to being a slave to oneself and one’s circumstances outside of bondage, à la Epictetus. Douglass’ wording equating “fact” to one’s psychological state echoes Stoic beliefs on achieving freedom regardless of present condition. Nonetheless, Douglass’ paradigm dictates that a person is only truly free if well-insulated by both protective laws and social norms.<sup>34</sup> This ties back to the previously discussed contexts of slavery in the different eras; whereas a freed slave in Epictetus’ time now had only to worry about freeing himself “in fact,” the modern freed slave had to worry about both states. When debating how to reach freedom, Equiano remarks that “hitherto I had thought only slavery dreadful; but the state of a free negro appeared to me now equally so at least, and in some respects even worse, for they live in constant alarm for their liberty.”<sup>35</sup> As such, even when achieving physical freedom from bondage, an ex-slave was still not truly free under the law. Therefore, developing a personal philosophy to help reach inner freedom prior to external freedom was all the more crucial, which is what the slave philosophers did: “and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact.”<sup>36</sup> As it happened, the personal philosophies the modern slave philosophers adopted naturally aligned with Stoicism.

Just as Cynicism led to the development of Stoicism in the philosophical world,

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31 Epictetus, *Discourses*, 4.1.33-38.

32 Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*, 201; Epictetus’ *Discourses* were transcribed records of his teaching written by his pupil Arrian – we have no extant writings from Epictetus himself; Epictetus, “Introduction” in *Discourses, Fragments, Handbook*, viii.

33 Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 64.

34 David J. Watkins, “Slavery and Freedom in Theory and Practice” in *Political Theory* 44, no. 6 (2016): 864, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591716643564>.

35 Equiano, 86.

36 Douglass, 64.

the modern slave's innate Cynicism often developed into a form of unbranded Stoicism. The Cynic perspective is one of deep-seated pessimism concerning the state of humanity, consequently rejecting fallible human institutions and believing that virtue is the only worthy thing to pursue. Epictetus took it a step further, premising his philosophy on accepting these very same human institutions and working within them in order to achieve personal freedom, free from external influences by way of cultivated virtue. A modern Stoic, Ryan Holiday, imagines it likely that "more slaves would have found inspiration and comfort in Stoicism had [they] been exposed to it."<sup>37</sup> To this, I would counter that slaves were inherently exposed to it, as I have found from the modern slave philosophers that the Stoic attitudes and Stoic virtue were naturally cultivated through the trials which tempered the slave throughout his life in combination with Christianity's predominance in modern slave societies. Based on these findings, certain criteria are necessary for a philosophy to be naturally compatible with the slave: the philosophy must be grounded in unequivocal human equality as supported by a belief in a God and, through this, must safeguard his divinely-given reason against the evils of his circumstance.

Intrinsically in opposition to the nature of the slave trade, a slave philosophy must first be premised on an unequivocal equality of man, with an all-encompassing meaning of "human."<sup>38</sup> Stoicism fulfills this first metric of equality, considering it a truth "that we're all first and foremost children of God" and identifying with being "a citizen of the universe" beyond any worldly classifications.<sup>39</sup> Equiano's qualm with the slave trade, beyond the fact that it "violates that first natural right of mankind, equality and independency," is the following:

...[It] gives one man a dominion over his fellows which God could never intend! For it raises the owner to a state as far above man as it depresses the slave below it; and, with all the presumption of human pride, sets a distinction between them, immeasurable in extent, and endless in duration.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Ryan Holiday, "Observation by Olaudah Equiano," Reddit, posted December 1, 2014, [https://www.reddit.com/r/Stoicism/comments/2nrrp3/observation\\_by\\_olaudah\\_equiano/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Stoicism/comments/2nrrp3/observation_by_olaudah_equiano/).

38 Meaning there ought to be no biologically-based distinctions between humans in terms of equality, as were present in many past philosophies; Aristotle argued there are some people who are naturally suited for slavery; Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1254b16-21; Many early modern philosophers took a pseudo-scientific approach to relegate non-White races; see Smith, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy*.

39 Epictetus, 1.3.1, 1.9.1; Diogenes promotes the same ideal in Cynicism, calling himself "a citizen of the world"; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, 6.63.

40 Equiano, 76.

Under the Stoic lens, Epictetus accordingly finds slavery contrary to both reason and nature because of this established shared kinship and rationality with the gods. It is thus intolerable for a slave to live under a philosophy that deems him less than human.

Also central to Stoic philosophy is the belief in a creator.<sup>41</sup> Given the emphasis on relenting to the indifferent, this release is made possible by having and trusting a benevolent God so far above us “as our maker, our father, and our protector [...] to deliver us from fear and suffering.”<sup>42</sup> This belief in a higher power was thus crucial in the natural Stoic course of slave philosophy in the time of Christianity. Equiano’s narrative provides essential insight into why this conviction is significant, demonstrating a growth in his Stoic philosophy throughout the course of his journey corresponding to his growth in Christian faith. Decades into his enslavement and after his conversion to Christianity, he records feeling “an astonishing change; the burden of sin, the gaping jaws of hell, and the fears of death, that weighed me down before, now lost their horror; indeed I thought death would now be the best earthly friend I ever had.”<sup>43</sup> This view is nearly untraceable earlier in his account prior to his true conversion, most contrasted to when he wishes for death for a much different reason, to “soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs.”<sup>44</sup>

Christianity becoming inextricably intertwined with modern slave culture makes sense beyond simple cultural assimilation. There is a sense of greater divine purpose in life to the Stoics, with everyone playing an essential, God-given role, which is mirrored in Christianity. As such, the clearest difference between the Cynic and the Stoic is their belief, or lack thereof, in a God, accordingly tantamount to why Stoicism emerged as the untitled slave philosophy of the modern era instead of pure Cynicism. But, trusting that there is a higher hand present in these things is not simply to facilitate the worn-out idea that “everything happens for a reason” so that the intolerable seems more tolerable. Instead, this belief elevates the slave beyond any earthly label, for none can truly be his master considering “Zeus has set me free. Do you really suppose that he would allow his own son to be turned into a slave? You’re master of my carcass, take that.”<sup>45</sup> Addressing the previous criterion that a slave philosophy must establish human equality, this is universally accomplished through belief in a higher power, making this another essential facet of slave philosophy.

Finally, a slave philosophy must seek to protect a man’s true nature against his debasement through slavery. Epictetus places great emphasis on reason linking humans to the divine; thus, anything unreasonable to man is contrary to his

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41 Epictetus, 1.6.

42 Epictetus, 1.9.4-7.

43 Equiano, 148.

44 Equiano, 27.

45 Epictetus, 1.19.7-9.

nature.<sup>46</sup> In his *Discourses*, Epictetus makes the case that everyone has a different nature and must judge what is endurable according to what is subjectively unreasonable to them. To explore this, he takes the scenario of one slave holding out a chamber pot for his master “simply in view of the fact that, if he fails to do so, he’ll get a beating and no food, but will suffer no rough or painful treatment if he does hold it.” He compares this slave to another to whom “it won’t just seem intolerable to hold out a pot himself, but even to allow someone else to do so for him.” Epictetus does not judge anyone for this difference, “for different people sell themselves at different prices.”<sup>47</sup> But, he strongly holds that people must not go against their divinely-imbued reason, even if they happen to be a slave, for “otherwise you will have destroyed what is human in you.”<sup>48</sup> Slavery was all Douglass had known from birth, and yet he had an unquenchable desire for untasted freedom and equality; even as a child, he could not comprehend why he was deprived of the most basic privileges afforded to his white counterparts.<sup>49</sup> Epictetus would call it proof in itself that slavery is neither natural nor right when a child, ignorant of all else, instinctively feels slavery to be contrary to reason.

As God has been established as a necessary part of both slave philosophy and Stoicism, divine law must then be viewed as the standard for reason, which explains why Epictetus grounds his philosophy on the fact that man is uniquely rational through his divine connection. Yet, he acknowledges the gravest scenario in which this may be ripped from him: “if [reason] is preserved and kept well fortified, and if one’s self-respect, and fidelity, and intelligence are kept unimpaired, then the human being himself is safeguarded; but if any of these are destroyed or taken by storm, then he himself is destroyed.”<sup>50</sup> All of the slave philosophers posited that slavery corrupts the soul of both the master and the slave, since this symbiotic relationship is premised upon using force against one’s fellow man to remove his independence and with it his sense of reason.<sup>51</sup> Cugoano laments the tarnished purity of the divine relationship when the same “insidious merchants and pirates that gladden their oars with the carnage and captivity of men, and the vile negociators [sic] and enslavers of the human species” dictate society’s laws so that they may take another man’s reason with impunity.<sup>52</sup> Equiano similarly

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46 Epictetus, 1.9.12-17.

47 Epictetus, 1.2.8-11.

48 Epictetus, 2.9.2-3.

49 Douglass, 15, 24, 35.

50 Epictetus, 1.28.21.

51 Even Seneca, a foundational Stoic philosopher and slaveholder himself, rejected natural slavery and enjoined slaveholders to treat their slaves kindly, as slavery inherently brings out the worst in the master; Lucius A. Seneca, “Letter XLVII,” in *Letters from a Stoic*, trans. Robin Campbell (Penguin Publishing Group, 1969), 90-96.

52 Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*, 46.

remarks upon the corrupting power of slavery as affecting the slave, stating that “when you make men slaves you deprive them of half their virtue, you set them in your own conduct an example of fraud, rapine, elty, and compel them to live with you in a state of war; and yet you complain that they are not honest or faithful.”<sup>53</sup> Douglass describes understanding his path to freedom as when he recognized that knowledge and education were his most dangerous weapons as a slave, since, per his master, learning “would forever unfit him to be a slave,” to which Epictetus would agree, “For according to the philosophers, we don’t allow any but the educated to be free, or rather, the gods don’t allow it.”<sup>54</sup> Education reinforces the connection to reason, which is why the root of slavery lies in severing this connection

## Conclusion

The common thread across the world’s history of slavery is that man took reason into his own hands and accordingly wrought destruction on the human spirit for all parties, dimming the light of his fellow men when he had no divine, natural, scientific, or moral sanction. Any of the great philosophers would deem this situation as an objective evil. And yet, when human prejudice and avarice are thrown into the mix, justification appears from all of these angles. The Stoic first recognizes this fact and then acts to remove those factors to the best of his ability in pursuit of a better way of living. Slaves face the hardest task of retaining their uniquely human capacity for reason amid the perpetual “storm” and “state of war” seeking to rip it from them.<sup>55</sup> Only through willfully reclaiming these integral pieces of Stoic philosophy were the slave philosophers able to achieve internal freedom and precipitate their journeys to physical freedom.

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53 Equiano, 77.

54 Douglass, 37; Epictetus, 2.1.24-25.

55 Epictetus, 1.28.21.

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# What Did Meletus Actually Say?

*Jimmy Symonds*

## Background to the Trial and Historical Context

In 399 BCE, the Athenian Philosopher Socrates was indicted by a private citizen for impiety and corrupting the youth. Meletus, the private prosecutor, acted as ὁ Βουλομενος (he who chooses to act) and brought his charges before a public archon responsible for religious crimes, who summoned both Meletus and Socrates to the Athenian agora and interrogated them. The archon remanded the case to an Athenian people's court of 501 male, citizen judges over the age of thirty. This court then heard the speech of the prosecutor Meletus, where he presumably laid out in greater detail his accusation of the specific laws broken, and then explained the evidence for Socrates having broken these laws. Unfortunately, we have no surviving accounts of Meletus's exact speech. Socrates then gave his defense for which we have surviving two secondary accounts by Plato and Xenophon. After the speech of Socrates, the judges voted whether to convict Socrates and, according to Plato, a majority by thirty votes chose to convict him. After this vote, both Meletus and Socrates were able to propose their punishments. Meletus proposed death, whereas Socrates proposed a "penalty" of a fine and the ability to take free meals at the Prytaneum, an Athenian public dining hall. The judges voted in favor of death and Socrates was imprisoned and, after a delay, was required to ingest hemlock.

Meletus's charge against Socrates, according to Plato's account, was a γραφή ἀσέβειας, or a public indictment for impiety. While we do not have the Athenian law defining impiety, it had been applied to crimes such as the mutilation of the herms and the profanation of the mysteries in 415 BCE. Plato's Socrates quotes Meletus's charge as the following: "Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and of not believing in the gods whom the city believes, but in other new spiritual things."<sup>1</sup> This wording implies that Socrates has replaced Athenian gods with his own. By including the charge of "corrupting the youth," Meletus also implies Socrates's perversion of his followers is impious at its core.

The political landscape of Athens in the era preceding the trial was turbulent. Having lost the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE, Athens came under the rule of the Thirty Tyrants. Their rule was characterized by arbitrary power and violence. Though many officials of the democracy fled, Socrates remained in the city,

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Apology*, 24b.

acting as he always did.<sup>2</sup> Members of the Thirty had been students of Socrates, such as Critias. After the Thirty were overthrown and democracy was restored in 403 BCE, Athens was in shambles. The city has suffered losses in its citizenry and financials and there was widespread desire to prosecute those agents of the Thirty that had terrorized the citizens. However, an amnesty prevented all but the Thirty themselves from being tried for crimes during their reign. This trial against Socrates takes place four years after the democracy is restored.

*Based on the facts laid out above, I now begin a reconstruction of what Meletus might have said. The Speech of Meletus begins with a general statement of the charges and the aims of the prosecution*

Men of Athens, I appear before you today to explain the crimes of Socrates that I have brought before you honorable and pious jurors. I hope that you will listen and agree that this man has endeavored to undermine the gods that we honor daily in our great city. Socrates has refused to demonstrate his belief in our gods and has wielded his strange spiritual creations to attack the innocent minds of our city's youth. For too long, we have known that this villain has flourished his clever persuasions to ridicule and deceive this city. For too long, we have allowed him to trick and coerce in our public spaces and make a mockery of our gods and citizens. I make this case before you today for your sake, for this city's sake. Athens has seen too much turmoil. You, men of Athens, have seen too much strife for me to allow this man to continue to destroy this democracy. It behooves you, honorable judges, to eradicate this pestilence from our agora, and rid yourself of further damage to the democracy, only recently healed by your own blood.

*Meletus addresses the charge of impiety*

Men of Athens, have we not known of Socrates's impiety for many years? Let me remind you, this man has claimed to serve this city and to support its people. However, how many here can say that they have seen him attend those festivals and communals that we hold so dear? Can you say that you have seen him in attendance? - a vocal mixture of assent and dissent amongst the judges - I have not, Men of Athens! And neither have you. There is a simple reason for this: he does not believe in them! Just as he ridicules our citizens in the agora, inspiring doubt and dissent, he also doubts those gods we worship and the traditions by which we worship them.

But, honorable judges, this is not enough. I grant you that his absence at religious gatherings does not make his atheism definite, considering how peculiar the man is regardless. If he confined his impiety to his own perverted mind, perhaps

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<sup>2</sup> Josiah Ober, "The Trial of Socrates as a Political Trial: Explaining 399 BCE" in *Political Trials in Theory and History*, ed. Jens Meierhenrich and Devin O. Pendas (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 65–87.

I would not be speaking before you today. Tragically, Socrates has confected his own deities and has elevated them above our own. He has profaned our gods on a scale no less reprehensible than those villains that mutilated our Herms all those years ago. Do any of you need to ask what fictitious deities I refer to? No. None of you are at all confused about what I reference. This is because there is no man more willing to tell you of his heretical concoctions than Socrates himself! I am of course speaking of his dreaded daimonion. He claims that this spirit speaks to him and to him alone and that it gives him council. No doubt he would claim that it is this spirit that has compelled him to avoid the public offices of this city and to belittle our poets, craftsmen, and politicians in public rather than in the courtroom.

You have seen him, honorable judges, spouting this filth in public to our sons - using the supposed counsel of his divinity to trick and coerce our youth into thinking that his conduct is righteous. In fact, I needn't even make a speech before you today, for you all know the impiety of which I speak. If his crimes weren't public knowledge, then Aristophanes' play would have died miserably years ago instead of achieving the success it did through depicting his absurdity. Though we could laugh at him then in that raucous comedy, Athens has changed, and I implore you men of Athens to divorce from your minds any notion of comedic triviality this day.

*Meletus then continues to describe how much the men of Athens have heard of this ridiculous spirit, and how much they come to resent Socrates for using it as a justification for his conduct. He may have brought in witnesses, but Meletus did not likely have much more evidence for the danger that this divinity poses than what his audience already knows. He then moves on to the second charge of corrupting the youth*

What, I ask you, has been the result of this impiety? Those closest to this villain have suffered from his skillful argumentation the most. His victims have been your sons, children like the son of Anytus. His contempt for our democracy has seeped into the minds of our youth over his decade-long endeavor to poison the young minds of this city. How can we explain the treason of our once beloved Alcibiades? How can his disdain for Athens be explained except by the perversions of the man who undermined this city, questioning our democracy and gods? Socrates kept him close and impressed upon Alcibiades his own subversive tendencies through his ability to make the weaker argument seem stronger, as you all know he is capable. He causes the sons of Athens to see enemies in the very city that has made and nourished them. How many of your loved ones have been lost to the actions of that traitor Alcibiades? How can you, men of Athens, in good faith, allow Socrates to corrupt another future agent of Athenian cataclysm?

We cannot allow that villain to continue to lurk in the agora, charging fees for treasonous ideas. Now, honorable judges, know that I respect the amnesty just as much as you all do. I would not attempt to prosecute based on crimes connected to the Thirty's reign. However, I would not be a patriot if I did not direct your attention towards the most egregious consequence of this villain's

heretical perversions. I, of course, speak of his most villainous student, none other than Critias, the tyrants' despotic leader - Calm down, calm down! - *The judges are in uproar after Meletus attempts to try Socrates based on crimes that might be covered by the Amnesty* - Forgive me Gentleman! I have overstepped...

*Meletus may then have continued to mention specific Athenian men who have been corrupted by Socrates, but more likely broadened his prosecution to avoid controversy over amnesty violation. He finishes his speech with a general plea for the judges to do what is right*

As I conclude my speech, men of Athens, I must say that I bring these charges not out of vendetta, or any personal desire to see this man's demise, but rather from an obligation to the health of our fragile democracy. The streets of Athens have known the rhetoric of Socrates for decades. While we have struggled for this city, Socrates has stood in perpetual attendance, and perceptual constancy, ridiculing our customs and introducing ideas that poison it. He looks down on us, men of Athens, thinking himself superior while never offering to truly help. As we fought to preserve our city against Sparta, he stood in public, attracting innocent minds to his perversions. When the Thirty Tyrants exercised brutal rule, he stood in public, questioning our democracy. And, after our city had clawed its way back from extinction, he stood there still. As we, men of Athens, have endeavored to change for the sake of our city, Socrates has not thought himself under the same obligation.

I am not ignorant of the risks I have taken on, the penalty incurred if you honorable judges do not see the same disastrous impiety and corruption that I do. However, such is my confidence that you just and patriotic men will understand Athens' future has no place for Socrates. Help this city pave the path for redemption in this corrupted maze we find ourselves in. I yield my remaining time to Anytus and Lycon.

*After the speech of Socrates and the vote of the judges, Meletus speaks one more time to recommend death as the penalty.*

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# The Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic

*Sophia Decherney*

The Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic was created in the fourth century C.E. in the Lower Galilee of Roman Judea (modern-day Israel).<sup>1</sup> The mosaic, discovered by the excavation team at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC Chapel Hill) and Dr. Jodi Magness, a Classical and Biblical archaeologist and professor of Religious Studies at UNC Chapel Hill, comprises dozens of floor panels with vivid pigments, sparse Hebraic writing, and careful depictions of Biblical stories. While mosaics were common in the Roman Empire, this mosaic is exceptional: it is the sole extant example of a fourth-century C.E. Jewish mosaic from Roman Judea. Its rarity is partly due to the circumstances of the Jewish community at the time, as Jewish establishments faced financial decline during Christianity's rise in the Roman Empire. The Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic was an unusual feature for synagogues of its time because it not only involved significant expenses but also depicts heroes of Biblical stories during a period where the works of active Jewish artists tended to be anti-iconoclastic.<sup>2</sup>

Through exploring case studies of both Jewish and non-Jewish mosaics, this paper examines the influences of Roman art on the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic and the ways in which Jewish artists redefined Roman styles, themes, and iconography to incorporate their own narratives. The first case study will compare the "Jonah panel" of the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic (Fig. 1) with the Aquileia Basilica's Jonah mosaic (Fig. 2) and focus on their depictions of Jonah being thrown into the sea. The second case study will analyze the Roman depiction of elephants as tamed labor animals and the Jewish depiction of elephants as instruments of war in the Huqoq Synagogue's "Elephant panel" (Fig 3) and the late third-century C.E. Roman mosaic "Veii Elephant Loaded onto a Ship" (Fig.4). The final case study will compare the Huqoq Synagogue's "Samson panel" (Fig. 5) with a contemporary mosaic depiction of Samson in the Khirbet Hamam synagogue in modern-day Syria (Fig. 6), as both mosaics revise and incorporate typical Roman mosaic styles. Through these examples, this paper will prove that, although unusual in subject matter, the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic engages with themes, ico-

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1 Karen Britt and Ra'anana Boustán, "Artistic Influences in Synagogue Mosaics: Putting the Huqoq Synagogue in Context," *The BAS Library, Biblical Archaeology Society Online Archive*, April 24, 2019, <https://www.baslibrary.org/Biblical-archaeology-review/45/3/3>

2 Ibid.



nography, and styles from its contemporaries and reinvents Roman mosaics to express Jewish narratives and inspire an acculturated Jewish identity in its audience.

The Aquileia Basilica mosaics are located in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy and were created at the beginning of the fourth century. In stark contrast to Huqoq which was a low-income, all-Jewish town, this region was one of the largest, wealthiest, and most culturally diverse cities in the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> The two mosaics are constructed from square tesserae, the most common Roman material for mosaics in that period. This mosaic features the moment at which Jonah is thrown to the big fish, rendered here as a giant, spiraling monster. The fish surrounding Jonah's boat in the Aquileia Basilica mosaic (Fig. 2) are distinguished by their sheer size as well as by the tremendous diversity of artistically differentiated species.<sup>4</sup> The fish design in this mosaic utilizes the uniformly square tesserae in shades of reds, blues, and grays with particular attention to small tesserae for highly detailed large eyes.<sup>5</sup>

The Huqoq version (Fig. 1) replicates many of these features, but accents innovative alterations that highlight the Jonah story in a Jewish context. For example, while it uses roughly square tesserae, there are more variations to fit the space, which suggests that it might have been created for an existing structure rather than initially planned as a part of the synagogue's architecture. It also keeps the traditional Roman scheme of reds, blues, and grays, even using clear river stones to illustrate more variations. While the Huqoq Mosaic does not have as many fish, likely due to its more limited space and resources, its smaller size does represent a more crowded sea, with each fish completely differentiated, and includes other marine species like eels and octopi in order to highlight the diversity of the sea. While the fish themselves also look similar stylistically to the Aquileia Basilica, particularly in the depiction of the eyes, the Huqoq fish convey more movement and interaction, perhaps reflecting the Jewish *mid-rash*, or oral tradition, of the fish fighting over the privilege to help G-d punish Jonah. The creatures bordering the Jonah panel are also Roman in iconography and style. As Professor Magness said of her discovery, "one of the distinguishing features of the Huqoq Mosaics is the incorporation of numerous classical (Greco-Roman) elements, such as *putti*, winged personifications of the seasons, and—in the Jonah scene—harpies."<sup>6</sup>

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3 "Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia, Italy," World Heritage Journeys of Europe, National Geographic, Accessed November 5, 2022, <https://visitworldheritage.com/en/eu/archaeological-area-and-the-patriarchal-basilica-of-aquileia-italy/f903e5e3-90b8-43e1-8202-b09815a9da9a>.

4 Umberto Pappalardo, Rosaria Ciardiello, and Luciano Pedicini, *Greek and Roman Mosaics*, (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 2012), 19.

5 "Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia."

6 "Huqoq 2017: Mosaics of Jonah and the Whale, the Tower of Babel and More," Biblical Archaeology Society, Biblical Archaeology Society Online Ar-

At the same time, while the Jonah panel strives to replicate Roman themes, styles, and iconography, it chooses to focus not on the moment at which Jonah is cast into the sea—the most prevalent scene of the story in early Christian art—but instead on the moment where Jonah is being eaten. It also unusually depicts Jonah’s fish being eaten by another fish, which is eaten by another fish.<sup>7</sup> This notable change reflects different translations of the Jonah story: whereas the Greek version translates to “sea monster,” the Hebrew version is translated to “big fish,” explaining why the Aquileia version portrays a creature matching Pliny’s description a sea monster with its “face and ears of a man,” “blue eyes,” “tail ending in a sting” and “particular fond[ness] for human flesh.”<sup>8</sup> It also represents a different focal message. The Jewish tradition, rather than emphasizing Jonah’s punishment, tends to emphasize the story’s illustration of “*t’shuvah*,” or opportunities to redress a wrong as a community. Here, by depicting the fish swallowing Jonah as each his fate by being eaten itself, the mosaic emphasizes the value of “*t’shuvah*” by having Jonah’s attacker undergo the same fate that it caused in Jonah. In this way, while many elements in the Huqoq “Jonah panel” attempt to replicate Roman mosaics, the Jewish narratives of the Jonah story are inserted and spotlighted in the altered representation.

The next set of panels, which includes elephants in war settings, are the “Elephant panel” (Fig. 3) that showcase a deliberate revision of Roman culture and contrast the positive characterization of elephants in Roman artwork. Notably, an unusual aspect of the Huqoq “Elephant panel” is that the elephant scene flows seamlessly with the surrounding Biblical stories.<sup>9</sup> Floor mosaics in the late third and fourth centuries were mainly carpet-type mosaics that appeared as a part of a movement toward having mosaics interact with architecture.<sup>10</sup> This trend meant that, unlike in the case of Huqoq, Roman mosaics usually included some sort of tile frame.<sup>11</sup> Fourth-century Roman mosaics were also usually categorized by tropes such as geometric patterns and stylized vegetation, none of which appear in Huqoq.<sup>12</sup> Having these two features missing from the Huqoq mosaic creates a more free-form feeling than its Roman counterpart. Additionally, mosaic themes in the Roman empire were usually chosen to match the setting, so portraying

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chive, April 19, 2019.

7 Ibid.

8 Lawrence, 6, Gebhart, Tim, “Beasts in Pliny’s ‘Natural History,’” *Medium*, Exploring History, 12 May 2021, <https://medium.com/exploring-history/meet-six-of-the-beasts-in-plinys-natural-history-55753fbf9e72>.

9 Ralph Elis, “The Huqoq Elephant Mosaic Explained,” *The Times Of Israel*, December 27, 2018, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-huqoq-elephant-mosaic-explained/>.

10 Pappalardo, Ciardiello, and Pedicini, 53

11 Ibid, 82.

12 Ibid, 58.

an elephant outside of the context of a trading port or war memorial was highly unusual.<sup>13</sup>

The Veii Elephant Mosaic (Fig. 4), dated to the late third or fourth century, is a mosaic from Veii—an Etruscan City and major trade center for the Roman Empire—which makes the subject matter of an elephant being shipped to Rome more expected than in the Huqoq version. While both mosaics show elephants intended for use in war, the Veii elephant is depicted as far less threatening—it is subdued and rendered on a much smaller scale than the elephants in the Huqoq version. Furthermore, the Veii elephant wears no armor, has a female structure, and is restrained with thin ropes. While both mosaics use a mixture of tesserae and granite, the shading on the Veii Elephant is significantly lighter, which portrays the elephant as less fearsome and more benign.<sup>14</sup>

In the Huqoq version, while the strategies of depicting the trunk, tusks, and tail are nearly identical to that of Veii, this is where the similarities end. While it is hard to place this mosaic as a Biblical story, there are two possibilities that scholars consider: Antiochus IV from the Book of the Maccabees—the story of a group of Jewish rebels fighting to reclaim their temple—or Emperor Nero from the Talmudic story of Bar Kamza—the rabbi who led the tattered remnants of Judaism after his revolt failed (Fig. 3). While the king has Roman armor, a royal diadem headband, long ginger hair, a trimmed beard, a straight nose, and a purple cloak characteristic of Roman royalty, it is possible that the scene is still meant instead to depict the Greek ruler Antiochus and only uses Roman iconography of kingship because it would have been familiar to the viewers of the mosaic.<sup>15</sup> Both stories, Maccabees and Bar Kamza, are instances of Jewish rebellion against a strong conqueror. The two elephants in the “Elephant panel” are portrayed as aggressive, overloaded with the iconography of war: shields, armor, weaponry, and more. While the elephants’ build and each of the items they bear are indeed typical of the Roman style, this combination is highly uncommon in Roman mosaics. Yet the Jewish artisans’ portrayals of elephants as aggressors is unsurprising, as elephants were greatly feared by Jews and seen as representations of the Romans’ conquering forces.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, despite utilizing Roman iconography, the Huqoq mosaic’s unconventional depiction of the elephant at war allows the Jewish artists to represent elephants as enemies, contradicting the more popular depiction of elephants as valuable tools of both war and trade.

Huqoq, however, was not alone in reinventing Roman tropes to fit Jewish

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>14</sup> Raddato, Carole, “Roman Mosaic Showing the Transport of an Elephant,” *World History Encyclopedia*, Last modified June 11, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Elis, “The Huqoq Elephant Mosaic Explained.”

<sup>16</sup> Karen Britt and Ra’anan S. Boustán, *The Elephant Mosaic Panel in the Synagogue at Huqoq: Official Publication and Initial Interpretations*, Portsmouth, Rhode Island: Journal of Roman Archaeology, LLC, 2017.

narratives, as illustrated by the similarities between Hoquq's "Samson panel" (Fig. 5) and the Samson mosaic in the late third-century C.E. Khirbet Hamam Synagogue (Wadi) (Fig. 6). These are the only buildings from the Roman period to include stories from Samson in their mosaics. One feature that differentiates the Hoquq and Khirbet Hamam from typical Roman design is the choice to arrange their respective Biblical scenes in the aisles of the sanctuary as well as in the nave, thus drawing attention to the stories in a more balanced way.<sup>17</sup> Another departure from typical Roman design is a lack of perspective that was intended, in some places, to flatten three-dimensional space, although the artists do use perspective elsewhere. This flattening effect allows Samson, known for having exceptional strength, to appear enormous compared to the other figures.<sup>18</sup> Both synagogues also utilize the technique of emblematic imagery, a stylistic innovation of the Hellenistic period, in their depictions, with the result that illustrations of the central Samson figure allow for minimal modeling of his face or hands, making his face round and youthful with delineated locks of hair.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, while the Wadi mosaic presents a significantly more dynamic scene of Samson, with the characters having vivid facial expressions and interacting with each other, the Huqoq artisan chooses to focus on one scene with fewer figures. This choice allows the Huqoq mosaic to capture more scenes from Samson's life, while the Wadi mosaic focuses on the telling of a few dramatic stories.<sup>20</sup> These choices are likely a response to the settings of the respective synagogues. The Wadi synagogue received more travelers whose attention they might have wanted to capture quickly, while Huqoq had a more regular audience who might have been interested in viewing a greater variety of scenes.

Though both the Huqoq and Wadi synagogues' mosaics depict an unusual subject matter, they rely heavily on Greco-Roman mosaics as models. That they did so is not surprising since mosaic, as an art form, is, in itself, Hellenistic and was not made in Judea before it was conquered by the Greek Empire.<sup>21</sup> Hellenistic culture, as the majority culture, also set the standard for what would be considered "elite" art, and so many Jewish artisans strove to replicate Greco-Roman techniques. Although many Jewish people held isolationist views in the third and fourth centuries, assimilation was less discouraged than it was in previous periods. In fact, one of the leading Amoraic rabbis, Rabbi Yohanan (180-279 CE), proclaimed Hellenistic artistic and cultural objects non-idolatrous, opening

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17 Elena Gittleman, "Judging Samson: The Synagogue Floor Mosaics of Horvat Huqoq and Khirbet Wadi Hamam," Academia.edu, Southern Methodist University, November 3, 2015, 3.

18 Ibid, 99.

19 Ibid, 300.

20 Gittleman, 98-99.

21 Gittleman, 89.

Jewish artisans to reworking these objects for Jewish spaces.<sup>22</sup> Rabbi Yohanan even encouraged Jewish artisans to ensure they remained within an unspecified category of culturally permissible artworks. As Jewish artisan guilds were virtually non-existent, many Jewish artists received Greek apprenticeships.<sup>23</sup> By incorporating the stylistic techniques of their colonizers, Jewish artisans could offer legitimacy to their mosaics and assert themselves as participants in elite Hellenistic culture while still asserting the strength and uniqueness of their shared cultural history.<sup>24</sup>

Although the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic is unusual in subject matter, its engagement with themes, iconography, and styles from the majority culture while incorporating Jewish narratives was not uncommon for the fourth-century Jewish artistic community. In the “Jonah panel,” the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic borrows from Roman Christian depictions of Jonah, such as in the Aquileia Basilica, and makes important changes to include Jewish oral traditions not shared with Christianity. In the “Elephant panel,” the Huqoq Synagogue Mosaic combines classic elephant images with the iconography of war to alter the representation of elephants as unthreatening domesticated animals, as they appear in the Veii Elephant mosaic, and to bring the elephant further in line with Jewish traditions. In the two mosaics of Samson in the Huqoq “Samson panel” and the Wadi Synagogue, Jewish artists utilize the symbolic facial features of Greco-Roman heroes to tell a story of Jewish strength. In each of these case studies, Jewish artists reinvent the traditions of Greco-Roman mosaics in order to legitimize and revolutionize the stories they assert about themselves and their heritage.

The Huqoq mosaics were created at a time when the Jewish community was struggling with its identity. They were losing members to both Christianity and the general lure and pressure of assimilation. In response, Jewish art needed to respond to the standards Roman art had set in order to assert their equality to Roman artisans and prevent losing people to assimilation.<sup>25</sup> In the Greco-Roman period, Jewish “minority art” was a visual reminder of their minority status. So Jews, among other minorities in the Roman Empire, used art to reclaim their culture in a way that was palatable to the majority.<sup>26</sup> Jewish literature from this time characterizes Jewish artists as rebuilding the Lost Temple and, in doing so, raises the status of artisans in the Jewish community compared to the Roman attitudes toward artisans.<sup>27</sup> At this time, with the rise of Christianity, a shift occurred in Jewish attitudes toward iconography. Jewish leaders’ concerns

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22 Gittleman, 282.

23 Gittleman, 95.

24 Gittleman, 98.

25 Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64.

26 *Ibid*, 57, 65.

27 *Ibid*, 66.

changed from idolatry (including all visual representations of people) to the new threat of Christian conversion.<sup>28</sup> This shift encouraged artisans to portray Biblical figures instead of shying away from representations in order to compete with Christianity.<sup>29</sup> While most synagogues remained humble rooms in congregants' homes, those that were decorated fell in line with the majority culture.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ibid, 69.

29 Ibid, 82.

30 Ibid, 88.

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**Figure 1:** Mosaic of Jonah from the Huqoq Synagogue  
Source: “Huqoq 2017: Mosaics of Jonah and the Whale, the Tower of Babel and More.” Biblical Archaeology Society. Biblical Archaeology Society Online Archive, April 19, 2019. <https://www.Biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/huqoq-mosaics-jonah-and-the-whale-the-tower-of-babel/>.



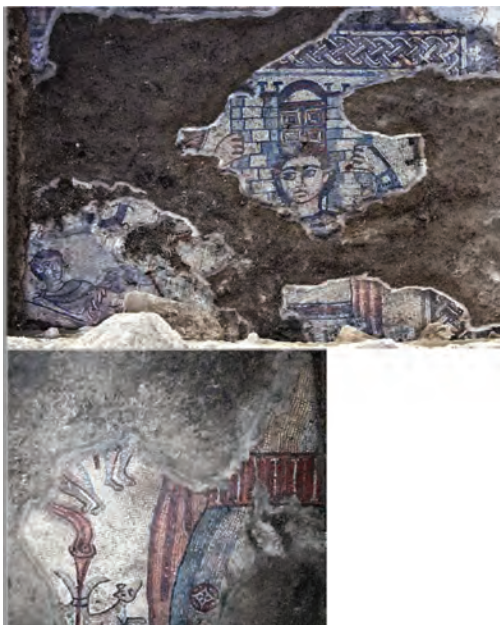
**Figure 2:** Mosaic of Jonah from the Basilica of Aquileia  
Source: “Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia, Italy.” World Heritage Journeys of Europe. National Geographic. Accessed November 5, 2022. <https://visitworldheritage.com/en/eu/archaeological-area-and-the-patriarchal-basilica-of-aquileia-italy/f903e5e3-90b8-43e1-8202-b09815a9da9a>.



**Figure 3:** Elephant Mosaic from the Huqoq Synagogue  
Source: Elis, Ralph. "The Huqoq Elephant Mosaic Explained." *The Times Of Israel*, December 27, 2018. <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-huqoq-elephant-mosaic-explained/>.



**Figure 4:** Roman Mosaic Showing the Transport of an Elephant



**Figure 5:** Samson Mosaic from the Huqoq Synagogue  
 Source: Gittleman, Elena. "Judging Samson: The Synagogue Floor Mosaics of Horvat Huqoq and Khirbet Wadi Hamam." MA thesis, Southern Methodist University , November 3, 2015. [https://www.academia.edu/17660327/Judging\\_Samson\\_The\\_Synagogue\\_Floor\\_Mosaics\\_of\\_Horvat\\_Huqoq\\_and\\_Khirbet\\_Wadi\\_Hama](https://www.academia.edu/17660327/Judging_Samson_The_Synagogue_Floor_Mosaics_of_Horvat_Huqoq_and_Khirbet_Wadi_Hama)



**Figure 6:** Samson Mosaic from Khirbet Wadi Hamam  
 Source: Gittleman, Elena. "Judging Samson: The Synagogue Floor Mosaics of Horvat Huqoq and Khirbet Wadi Hamam." Academia.edu. Southern Methodist University , November 3, 2015. [https://www.academia.edu/17660327/Judging\\_Samson\\_The\\_Synagogue\\_Floor\\_Mosaics\\_of\\_Horvat\\_Huqoq\\_and\\_Khirbet\\_Wadi\\_Hamam](https://www.academia.edu/17660327/Judging_Samson_The_Synagogue_Floor_Mosaics_of_Horvat_Huqoq_and_Khirbet_Wadi_Hamam)



## Riddle and Virgil's Third *Eclogue* in Alcuin of York's *Carmen V*

John Michaud

Alcuin's *Carmen 5*, written to Richulf, is a prime example of the author's fascination with ambiguity and the ancient Latin tradition. The poem functions as a thank-you note in response to a gift of a comb which Richulf gave Alcuin. While the reason for writing the poem is simple, Alcuin, true to form, does not pass up the opportunity to engage his former student in a scholarly exercise. Through the use of diction, meter, and nickname, *Carmen 5* evokes *Idylls 6* of Theocritus and, more importantly, *Eclogue 3* of Virgil. In the form that the poem takes, a riddle, Alcuin calls upon the general, long-standing, Anglo-Saxon tradition of riddling and the specific, riddle-based content of the third *Eclogue*.

The genre of riddle seems to do a couple of things for Alcuin and his body of work. Through this style, Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon himself, is able to connect with a local and familiar tradition that dates back to Aldhelm's *Aenigmata* in the seventh century. Alcuin also uses riddling in a pedagogical manner. This is perhaps best exemplified in *Carmen 63*, a series of short poems that play with rearrangement and subtraction of letters from an original word to form new ones. These poems require the reader to have an extensive Latin vocabulary in mind, in addition to the puzzle-solving skills needed to decipher the original word from a short clue, often in synonyms, about its meaning. This was most likely one of the ways in which Alcuin taught Latin to pupils and kept their problem-solving skills sharp. These riddles are in a similar vein to the *Propositiones ad Acuendos Iuvenes* (Problems to Sharpen the Youth), a set of mathematical puzzles Alcuin gave his students. It makes good sense, then, that Alcuin would use the genre of riddling, especially when writing to one of his former students.

Alcuin uses the riddle and its various connections as a means to link his writing to the ancient tradition. While a riddle makes sense for the reasons above, it also provides a way for Alcuin to evoke his most favored Latin author, Virgil. In the third *Eclogue*, Virgil does some riddling of his own through the shepherds Damoetas—who lends his name to Richulf in Alcuin's work—and Menalcas. The name Damoetas comes from Theocritus' sixth *Idyll*, in which Damoetas and Daphnis engage in a singing contest. Virgil borrows the rough structure and name of one figure from this bucolic for the third poem of his own pastoral collection. The third *Eclogue* is a constant back and forth between the con-

testants with the rare interjection from the judge and third shepherd, Palaemon.

While it is only the last few couplets of the Virgil that relate to riddle, the start of the poem is of some personal interest as it relates to Alcuin's work. There is often a sense of unintended irony in Alcuin's poems, most notably in *Carmen* 46 when he warns Friducinus of people he describes as *verbosa persona* (wordy people). Alcuin means this sincerely and is not referring to himself, despite his own lack of brevity at times. The start of the third *Eclogue* feels similar to this. In Menalcas' stanza beginning on line 25, he insults the abilities of Damoetas in a humorous and inventive way. (*Cantando tu illum? aut umquam tibi fistula cera / iuncta fuit? non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas / stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?* | You beat that one in singing? And did you ever have a wax-joined pipe? Was it not you, at the crossroads, you numbskull, who used to butcher a miserable tune on screeching stalks?) It is almost certainly unintentional, as Alcuin would never think of his poems as so blunt an insult as this, but the modern reader cannot help but see the parallel between Menalcas' quip and Alcuin's frequent rebukes of his friends in his other poems.

In the same spirit of connection to outside riddling, it is important that Damoetas and Menalcas are competing for a set of beautifully crafted cups from the other. The prize is not money or prestige, but one of art that can be used and admired. I think Alcuin viewed his poems in a similar manner, in that they are interacted with and appreciated by his audience who "win" them from him with their friendship. It is not a perfect comparison as Alcuin enjoys writing to his friends and is not losing a contest or being made to write to them, but the general sense that the two shepherds appreciate the cups just as Alcuin's friends appreciate hearing from him is present. In Virgil's poem, the longest and second longest stanzas (when divided by a change in speaker), lines 32-43 and lines 44-48, are mostly descriptions of the cups – mini ekphrases, if you will. Virgil gives time and attention to the arts in this section and mentions Orpheus, a symbol of literary and poetic art, as a figure on one of the cups. This segment shows, again, the ways in which the third eclogue, through riddle, opens a great number of connections for Alcuin to make between his own poetry and that of Virgil's.

Returning to the riddling framework that Alcuin sets for his reader, it is clear why the third *Eclogue* in particular was chosen as an allusion for his own *Carmen* 5: the final couplet that each of the shepherds delivers is a riddle. Damoetas offers first: *Dic quibus in terris — et eris mihi magnus Apollo — / tris pateat caeli spatium non amplius ulnas*. (Tell me in what land — and you will be great Apollo to me — the extent of Heaven lies open no more than three arms wide) Menalcas responds: *Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum / nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto*. (Tell me in what land, inscribed with royal names, flowers grow, and you alone will have Phyllis)

Both of these riddles have two possible answers. Damoetas' can be Rome, in reference to Archimedes, or Rhodes, in reference to Posidonius. Each of these men constructed models of the stars and planets in those respective places, hence



the whole of heaven's extent being visible in just three arm's lengths. Menalcas' riddle refers to the hyacinth flower, which is said to be initialed with AI AI. This marking can refer to two different things in separate stories. When Ajax commits suicide, a red flower springs up from his blood. The AI AI marking refers to the first letters of his name: *Ai* (from the Greek Αἴας). Here, the answer to the question of *quibus in terris* is Rhoiteion, where Ajax died. Alternatively, the answer could be from the myth of the death of Hyacinthus, when Apollo created the flower marked with his grief (AI AI as an onomatopoeic wail of lament) about the accidental death of his lover. In this case, the answer is Lacedaemon, through which the Eurotas, where Hyacinth dies, flows. The point of these riddles is that no matter which answer the respondent gives, the questioner can say they are wrong and claim the other answer as the true one. The importance of two contradictory meanings being simultaneously true is fundamental to Alcuin's writing.

Alcuin's interest in riddling, like much of his writing, seems to stem from the concept of ambiguity. There are countless examples of him using a word that has both a secular and a sacred meaning, and he intends both at the same time. *Carmen* 8 to Samuel was built around the dual identity of Samuel as an abbot of Echternacht and archbishop of Sens. The concept of duality is always front and center in Alcuin's mind since it is such a key tenet of Christianity, with God and Christ being two-in-one and one-in-two. Dual meaning and dual identity is therefore a crucial aspect to the thought and writings of those in the Carolingian Court. This helps explain why riddles, especially like ones in *Carmen* 5, that appear one way but have a secondary, disguised meaning or the dual-answered riddles in *Eclogue* 3, are used by Alcuin in correspondence and pedagogy.

Interest in the dual also helps us understand why nicknames are used so much in the Carolingian Court, with some members having more than one alias that changes based on the context in which it appears. A subtle form of riddling, nicknames allow for a figure to be more than one person. In a similar way that Christ is both himself and God, the addressee can be both himself and a literary or historical figure and embody the meaning of both at once. This practice also allows the author to say more about a person in fewer words, in order to keep the poem brief and full of meaning. The best example of this nicknaming scheme is the extensive renaming of figures of the royal family in *Carmen* 12. In the case of *Carmen* 5, the alias Damoetas allows Alcuin to put the full weight of Virgil's pastoral project behind his letter of gratitude and complement his student by comparing him to the well-known Damoetas. Reading into the naming scheme further, the depth of Alcuin's sincerity is apparent. If Richulf is Damoetas, then Alcuin must be the other major figure from the myth, Menalcas. *Eclogue* 3 starts with Menalcas making fun of Damoetas' flock and singing abilities, yet by the end of the poem, the independent Palaemon judges them equals. It is high praise to call his student his equal, especially in the art of poetry. Additionally, there are three figures in the poem, just as there are three components to the trinity. Furthermore, Palaemon acts as the judge, just as Christ does

at one's death and resurrection upon his return. Alcuin and Richulf are set as equals in language and skill as scholars and also as holy men in the eyes of God.

In terms of the actual words and construction of *Carmen 5*, there is less to say than its connections to riddling, *Eclogue 3*, and ambiguity as a staple in Alcuin's work. It is a fairly simple poem in the Latin. Despite this, there are important parts to note, especially as they relate to doubling. For instance, line 1 consists of six words. The middle four begin with the letters "N" then "S" then "N" then "S" again. Similarly, line 6 reads *nec caro, nec fuges. Fructus nec vina bibentum*. The repetition of initial "N's" appears again, this time with "F's", and forms a duality within a trinity, a two letter combination appearing three times in a line. The ending of the line mentions drinking wine, a potential reference to the blood of Christ and sacramental wine. The word *dentibus* appears twice, first in line 4 and again in line 7. *Bestia* holds emphatic positions as the opening and penultimate words, and the "B" returns in the middle of the poem at the start of line 4: *Bis ternis decies sed dentibus horruit illa*. Since we know the "beast" is a comb given to Alcuin by Richulf, this emphatic consonant brings us back to the riddle when we hear it. Also of note in that line is that Alcuin does not say the beast has sixty teeth, but instead twice three (times) ten. Using *bis* allows Alcuin to remind the reader of the *bestia* and again stress the importance of two and dual identity and meaning in the word for twice or doubly. This calls back to the nicknaming of Richulf as Damoetas as well as the aforementioned relationships between Christ and God and Alcuin and Richulf. The emphasis on pairs in the architecture and diction of the poem only strengthens the importance of dual-meanings and ambiguity introduced through the allusion to *Eclogue 3*.

The reasons that explain why Alcuin wrote riddles paint a complete picture of what he thought about in his everyday life. They help inform our understanding of his writing process and reinforce the philosophical, exegetical, and theological ideas that encompass his corpus. Seen through the traditional means of riddling in *Carmen 5* and *Carmen 63* and the less explicit, subtle techniques of nicknaming and allusion, ambiguity and duality are cornerstones of Alcuin's works, the scholarly scene in the Carolingian Court, and the conversation in and around Christianity.



## *Pro Caelio*, Personification, and Poetic Quotations

David Del Terzo

Marcus Tullius Cicero's *Pro Caelio* concerns the culminating defense of his former student, Marcus Caelius. Cicero, the renowned Roman lawyer, defends his client from five separate charges varying in type and gravity. The prosecution, comprised of Lucius Sempronius Atratinus, Publius Claudius, and Lucius Herennius Balbus, has charged Marcus Caelius with 1) instigating public disturbances in Naples, 2) attacking the Alexandrians at Puteoli, 3) damaging property of Palla, 4) acquiring gold for the attempted murder of Dio of Alexandria whilst attempting to poison Clodia, a quite amorous individual, and 5) murdering Dio.<sup>1</sup> Cicero's speech largely deals with a rebuttal of the final two charges, given their significance, and an attack on the inaccuracy and deception of the prosecution's case—together, an attempt to convince the jury of Marcus Caelius' innocence. A recurring theme within Cicero's plight is the revelation that the prosecution's case also is one of spite due to the various characters involved (both on the legal bench and the testimonial stand).

Cicero's repeated insertion of personification and poetic quotations in *Pro Caelio* naturally follows from the utility of rhetoric in a courtroom. Both rhetorical ploys achieve two goals: to defend Marcus Caelius, the client, and to impugn a central accuser, Clodia. Cicero manipulates personification to advocate for Marcus Caelius' character; to divulge Clodia's inferior, dishonest, and nefarious character (both directly and indirectly); and to position truth on the defense's side and error on the prosecution's side. Similarly, Cicero's inserted poetic quotations work to clear the name of Marcus Caelius and define the prime accusers as fraudulent.

Cicero's first notable form of personification concerns the defendant. When addressing the prosecution's assault upon Marcus Caelius' character in Section 9 of his speech, Cicero personifies his client's *aetas*. Cicero claims that as far as Marcus Caelius' age (or youth) was able to give *locum* for any suspicions, it was fortified by his *pudore* and his father's *diligentia disciplina*.<sup>2</sup> Such personification aids Cicero in two ways. First, the existence of Marcus Caelius' youth as an animate form—with it acting as a subject that could *dare* and was

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1 R. G. Austin, *Cicero: Pro M. Caelio Oratio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

2 Cic. *Cael.* 9.

*munita*—supports Cicero’s assertion of his client’s decent character.<sup>3</sup> Marcus Caelius, like his period of life, is spirited and defensible. Second, by presenting his client’s juvenescence as a separate being, Cicero can further detach Marcus Caelius from the false accusations. Even though he believes his client to be innocent, this personification steers any perceived guilt upon Marcus Caelius’ youth, a distinct entity, rather than directly on Marcus Caelius himself.

Again in defense of Marcus Caelius’ juvenile pleasures, Cicero personifies an attribute in Section 43. Referencing the lives of *patrum maiorumque*, Cicero proclaims that since their *adulescentiae cupiditates defervissent* — desires of youth had come to full boil, the *virtutes* of such individuals *firmata iam aetate exstiterunt*—now stepped forth strong.<sup>4</sup> First, Cicero aligns Marcus Caelius with the *summi homines et clarissimi cives*—the greatest men and the most illustrious citizens, implying that his client can reach such a status.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, however, is the personification of the men’s virtues, wherein such moral behavior actively emerged and held its ground, like a soldier proving his worth on the battlefield. Although previously a personified feature worked to disassociate Marcus Caelius from a part of his life, Cicero’s personification of *virtutes* here elevates his client’s integrity. Cicero associates the virtues of respected men with his client. Transitivity, as their virtues belong to him, Marcus Caelius benefits from their reputations. In both scenarios, Cicero engages personification either to promote Marcus Caelius by association or disassociation.

Contrasting the alternative purpose of elevating his client, Cicero also personifies attributes to disparage Clodia. In one of his repeated binding binaries where only two alternative occurrences endure, Cicero declares: *aut enim pudor tuus defendet nihil a M. Caelio petulantius esse factum, aut impudentia et huic et ceteris magnam ad se defendendum facultatem dabit*—for either your decency will defend that nothing was done insolently by Marcus Caelius or your shamelessness will give complete means to him and these others about to be defending themselves.<sup>6</sup> Notably, the personifications here vary in potency. Cicero assigns a less active verb to Clodia’s *pudor*; her decency will merely support, defend, and preserve Marcus Caelius’ innocence. On the other hand, Clodia’s *impudentia* will give or grant the full ability to aid the accused in their protection. The increased agency ascribed to the negative attribute exhibits a subtle message being pushed by Cicero. Since Clodia’s shamelessness holds more life as the more strongly personified figure, it also bears more authenticity; thus, by extension, Clodia’s shamelessness is more likely to exist in real life than her decency.

In Section 60, Cicero uses personification to malign Clodia once again, but in

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3 Ibid.

4 Cic. *Cael.* 43.

5 Ibid.

6 Cic. *Cael.* 50; and Andrew Dyck, *Cicero: Pro Marco Caelio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 138.

a much more explicit sense. When discussing the swiftness of the alleged poison that Marcus Caelius distributed, Cicero ponders: *nonne ipsam domum metuet ne quam vocem eiciat, non parietes conscios, non noctem illam funestam ac luctuosam perhorrescet?*—will she [Clodia] not fear the house itself lest she expel her voice, will she not tremble at the conscious walls and that deadly and mournful night?<sup>7</sup> As Cicero argues in Section 53, had Clodia provided Marcus Caelius with the gold, she would have known what such money was for. Therefore if this is the case, the walls of Clodia’s house would be *conscios* of her sins.<sup>8</sup> Through this personification, Cicero focuses on the public discovery of the crime rather than the crime itself. This trope enables Cicero to unite *Clodia* with potential wrongdoing. In this hypothetical, Clodia is already complicit in a crime; however, the animate depiction of her own dwelling’s walls provides an active audience for her to be afraid of finding out. Additionally, Cicero’s vitalization of the walls—very lifeless structures—conveys the seriousness of the offense: even the skeleton of Clodia’s home would be cognizant of such a crime. Given Marcus Caelius’ actual situation in this position as the one accused, Cicero’s personification for the sake of character injury also can be one of emphasis: how difficult it must be for my client to endure these (false) allegations and ongoing proceedings! Just as Cicero operates personification for his client’s benefit, he does so for the debasement of his opponent.

Beyond specific individuals, Cicero also exercises the personification of abstract entities to advance his case. In the opening of his speech, the lawyer states: *ut eo neglecto civitas stare non possit*—that if it [this case] having been neglected, the state would not be able to stand.<sup>9</sup> Cicero sarcastically implies that the state would collapse (similar to how a debilitated human body would) if the jurors do not listen to the forthcoming case. While more of a hyperbole, Cicero’s portrayal of the state highlights the physical status it maintains, one, he suggests, that can be fallen from. Agency is often a key motivation in employing personification; however, here, the potential lacking agency of the state—with the case determining the state’s fate—drives Cicero to paint such an image. Albeit a tenuous interpretation, including such lacking agency may also reveal how Cicero feels regarding the state’s role in the trial compared to his own as the defending attorney. Either way, the humorous personification reveals Cicero’s attitude toward the necessity of this trial: one—which he proves later—that is adverse due to his belief of the case’s entire basis upon false accusations.

Another personification not strictly linked to Marcus Caelius or Clodia emerges in Cicero’s entreaty following the audition of Lucius Luceius’ testimony. Cicero, urging the jury to consider the monumental content of Luceius’ deposition, satirically asks: *quid expectatis amplius? An aliquam vocem putatis ipsam pro se cause et veritatem posse mittere?*—What more do you await? Do

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7 Dyck, *Cicero: Pro Marco Caelio*, 152.

8 Cic. *Cael.* 60.

9 Cic. *Cael.* 1.

you think truth herself can send out the case with some voice of her own?<sup>10</sup> Cicero accentuates the life of the *veritatem* in three ways. First, truth not only performs a human action, but also achieves such with something specifically transmitted by humans: a voice. Compared to Cicero's other personified entities, this is an extremely high accreditation of agency. Second, the reflexive pronouns attached to truth and its voice further distinguish and uplift the human-like individuality of the abstract concept. Third, Cicero employs a very potent verb in *mittere* to *veritatem*; the voice of truth does not just present or give the facts in this scenario but even resolutely discharges the information. These final two points of personification suggest that truth is an autonomous, and thus unchangeable, being. Therefore, Cicero implicitly maintains that associating Luceius' testimony with truth is not an attempt to mold truth to achieve his desired verdict of innocence. From this, Cicero can allege that even inalterable truth is on the side of the defense.

Cicero personifies another independent concept in Section 66. The lawyer asks the court why the army of women did not charge Licinius even when they possessed *facinoris...voce*—the voice of the crime.<sup>11</sup> This personified exaggeration comes as the third entity of a string of tangible pieces of evidence. Given that the former two are a confession in the eyes of many, this third piece naturally proceeds as something that is equally or even more relevant and palpable to achieving a valid accusation; the women could have used “x,” “y,” or *even* “the voice of crime” to substantiate their case. Thus, Cicero once again wields personification to underline the gravity of the situation. What can be more admissible in a legal accusation than the voice of the crime itself? This hyperbolic assertion also sets up Cicero's proceeding line of argument, wherein the lawyer contends that no *argumentum*, *suspicio*, or *exitus* will be discovered to support the women since they do not exist. The partial absurdity of crime testifying with its own voice (like a human) foreshadows the irrationality of the women's claimed situation. Crime cannot speak; saying it does in support of something is ludicrous. Thus, that something which it supposedly supports is also ludicrous. Ultimately, Cicero personifies abstract entities to subtly infuse his own opinions and biases into the jurors' minds: that this case is unnecessary, that immutable truth is on the defense's side, and that the prosecution's claims are outlandish.

The most significant example of personification performed by Cicero relates to his in-trial portrayal of Appius Claudius Caecus, one of Clodia's ancestors. While such a subject is not abstract, *prosopopoeia*—the ancient Greek tradition of personification—includes depicting dead individuals along with conceptual ones.<sup>12</sup> The public held Appius Claudius Caecus in high regard; thus, Cicero's

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10 Cic. *Cael.* 55; and Dyck, *Cicero: Pro Marco Caelio*, 144.

11 Cic. *Cael.* 66; and Dyck, *Cicero: Pro Marco Caelio*, 159.

12 Christer Bruun, “Water for Roman Brothels: Cicero *Cael.* 34,” *Phoenix* 51, no. 3/4 (1997): 364, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1192544>.

assumption of his figure elevates the lawyer's own rank.<sup>13</sup> However, the relation of Appius Claudius Caecus to Clodia is much more important, especially when viewed against the backdrop of the three most famous deeds performed by the figure. By inhabiting the body of Appius Claudius Caecus, Cicero can compare these accomplishments to the failings of Clodia to heighten his denunciation of her. Cicero sardonically contemplates: "Did I end the peace with Pyrrhus so Clodia could strike *amorum turpissimorum...foedera*; did I lead water [to Rome] so Clodia could enjoy it after *inceste* meetings; did I build the road for Clodia to frequent it with *alienis virus*?"<sup>14</sup> This series of slanders conjures the image of a paternal figure scorning the unscrupulous acts of his child. Cicero's use of the first person singular here suggests less of a biased, calculated attack by a lawyer upon Clodia and more of a genuine criticism of her character. Through his in-trial personification of Clodia's venerated ancestor, Cicero ridicules the woman and her salacious actions.

Like his operation of personification, Cicero mixes in various poetic quotations to defend Marcus Caelius. The most direct allusion comes in Section 18, wherein Cicero aligns Clodia to Medea, a character in a work by Ennius of the same name.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, Cicero opens his reference to Medea by citing Marcus Crasus, a fellow member of the defense team, and his inclusion of the same myth in his preceding statements in response to the prosecution's (Atratinus') diminishing equation of Marcus Caelius to Jason of the golden fleece.<sup>16</sup> Cicero attempts to outdo his opponent, ascribing the title of *Palatinam Medeam*—Palatine Medea to Clodia.<sup>17</sup> As Matthew Leigh admirably explains, Cicero amends Ennius' words and fashions Marcus Caelius to "play Jason to a modern-day Medea."<sup>18</sup> Having moved to his new home in the city, Marcus Caelius is plagued by Clodia, *animo aegra, amore saevo saucia*—sick in soul, wounded by a savage love.<sup>19</sup> This comparison generates two intended perceptions of Marcus Caelius. First, Cicero elevates Marcus Caelius' move into Rome, proffered as one of the prosecution's charges, to the same status as Jason's many acts of bravery and fortitude. Second, Cicero passes the powerful vengefulness that Medea bears resulting from spurned love onto Clodia, emphasizing the latter's culpability regarding her relationship with Marcus Caelius.

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13 Ibid.

14 Cic. *Cael.* 34.

15 Katherine Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio* (Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1973), 15; Matthew Leigh, "The *Pro Caelio* and Comedy," *Classical Philology* 99, no. 4 (2004): 309, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/429939>.

16 Leigh, "The *Pro Caelio* and Comedy," 309; D. H. Berry, *Cicero Defence Speeches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 253.

17 Cic. *Cael.* 18.

18 Leigh, "The *Pro Caelio* and Comedy," 309.

19 Cic. *Cael.* 18.

When contrasting father archetypes in Section 38, Cicero derives his latter example—the more lenient parent—from Terence’s *Adelphoe*.<sup>20</sup> Understanding the comic diction in Terence’s work, comparison to such a figure initiates a more sportive and aloof attitude—an attempt at establishing space between Caelius and the grave accusations against him. Notably, Cicero quotes the speech of Micio, himself a tolerant father.<sup>21</sup> Cicero naturally favors such a figure, a *leni vero et clementi patre* who endures his son’s outlandish acts, in the case of Marcus Caelius. Overall, Cicero downplays the youthful indulgences of Marcus Caelius; even still, the lawyer employs the words of Terence to show a figure agreeable towards such practices, thus creating greater acceptance of Marcus Caelius’ situation.

Finally, Adrian Hollis presents the least substantiated—but most profound if true—of the poetic allusions. In Section 67, Hollis contends that Cicero’s inclusion of the Trojan horse image spawns from a specific Latin tragedy, *Equus Troianus*.<sup>22</sup> Undoubtedly, Cicero’s audience would be familiar with the story of the Trojan Horse. Furthermore, they would understand Cicero’s rationale for scorning how the prosecution’s witnesses saw the supposed crimes, preposterously nominated an *equus Troianus...qui tot invictos viros muliebre bellum gerentis tulerit ac texerit*—Trojan Horse which bore and hid so many unconquered men waging a womanly war [a war for a woman].<sup>23</sup> Also, this image enables Cicero to solidify his Clodia-centric approach to the case, claiming that just as Helen was the impetus for the Achaeans’ actions, Clodia is the sole stimulus of the testimony of the prosecution’s witnesses. Nevertheless, if one believes Hollis’ claim that Cicero’s incorporation of the Trojan Horse is a citation of a particular tragedy, a more theatrical air surrounds the allusion. If Cicero’s words in his speech come directly from a play, then not only are the prosecution’s witnesses like the Achaeans in the supposed deed, but they are also just like the *actors* playing the Achaeans roles—acting a part, pretending, and feigning reality. Connecting such witnesses to the domain of tragedy via such an extended allusion enables Cicero to construe their testimonies as mere performances far from the realm of authenticity.

Ultimately, the rhetorical devices of personification and poetic allusion play but a small part in Cicero’s extended speech of defense. Nevertheless, their use is critical, as it enables Cicero to advance his case in a more refined manner—not by using unmistakable words of praise or direct slanders, but by construing images of people, concepts, or stories that exhibit those same attributes through their existence or related actions and aligning such images with the individuals prominent in the trial at hand. Cicero’s personification and poetic quotations

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20 Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio*, 22; Austin, *Cicero: Pro M. Caelio Oratio*, 101.

21 Leigh, “The *Pro Caelio* and Comedy,” 318.

22 A. S. Hollis, “A Tragic Fragment in Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 67?,” *The Classical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1998): 563, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/639845>.

23 *Cic. Cael.* 67.

are not mere literary tools; they are the fundamental basis upon which the lawyer builds his sophisticated palisade of words, the masterpiece of *Pro Caelio*.

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# A translation and commentary on the ekphrastic passages in *Alexanders Saga*

Alexander Mayo

## Introduction

This is an annotated translation of three ekphrastic passages from *Alexanders Saga*, an Icelandic text dating to the 13th century AD. It is a translation of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*, possibly made by Bishop Brandr Jonsson at the behest of King Magnús Hákonarson between 1257 and 1263.<sup>1</sup> The *Alexandreis* was composed beginning around 1176;<sup>2</sup> Walter says that it took him five years to complete. We can be sure that it was finished before 1185, when the *Architrenius* by Johannes de Hauvilla was completed, given that the *Architrenius* is clearly engaging with the *Alexandreis*. Walter's primary source for the *Alexandreis* was Quintus Curtius Rufus's *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, though he also drew from Marcus Justinus's *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* and Julius Valerius's *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, a translation itself of a version of the Greek Alexander Romance. The *Alexandreis* echoes Curtius's 10 book structure, and tells the story of Alexander from his birth to his death. Walter's classical literary inspirations include Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan. The *Alexandreis* quickly became widely known and liked; it was used in the 13th century already as a school text, and was ranked by some to be the equal to Lucan, Statius, or Horace.

## The Composition of *Alexanders Saga*

The specific circumstances surrounding the composition of *Alexanders Saga*

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the problem of the translator of this saga, who is also at times credited as the translator of *Gyðinga Saga*, a translation of texts pertaining to Jewish history, see Wolf 1988. Though not certain, I use Brandr throughout to refer by name to the translator of *Alexanders Saga*; I also decline Brandr as an English name, i.e., using Brandr's instead of Brands for the Genitive case.

<sup>2</sup> See Lafferty 2011, 181-183 for a discussion of the dating of the *Alexandreis*. Although this question is of great importance for scholars of the *Alexandreis*, a precise dating of the *Alexandreis* has little effect on a discussion of *Alexanders Saga*.

are a bit unclear, though its translation is part of a general trend in Old Norse literature which valued translated literature highly. The 13th century was a time of great production in the Norwegian court. King Magnús, continuing the legacy of his father, *Hákon inn gamli*, “the old,” Hákonarson, was a patron of the literary arts, primarily through the commission of translations from major European languages—Latin and French—into Old Norse.<sup>3</sup> These translated works—so-called “translated *riddarasögur*” (sg. *riddarasaga*)—quickly took on an important role in the Old Norse literary milieu, inspiring “indigenous” Icelandic imitations.<sup>4</sup> *Alexanders Saga* was one of five so-called “Antikenromane.” Along with *Trójumanna Saga*, *Gyðinga Saga*, *Rómverja Saga* and *Breta sögur*, these works were translated more or less directly from Latin originals, and served as both literary and informational works.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from the text as a whole, and from the excerpts which I translate below, that the Norse translator of *Alexanders Saga* has an excellent knowledge of the Bible (specifically the Old Testament), and an excellent knowledge of Latin. He is also an astounding Icelandic prose stylist, as judged by none other than Halldór Laxness, the only Icelander to ever win a Nobel Prize,<sup>6</sup> who published an edition of *Alexanders Saga* in 1945.<sup>7</sup> Laxness viewed Brandr’s prose as exemplary and thought *Alexanders Saga* a worthy model for a young Icelandic author.

## Ekphraseis in the *Alexandreis* and *Alexanders Saga*

There are three ekphraseis in the *Alexandreis*. Walter describes Darius’s shield, the tomb of Darius’s wife, and the tomb of Darius himself. Walter notably chooses not to provide an ekphrasis for the tomb of Alexander himself late in the work, at a position where we might expect one, or at the tomb of Achilles at Troy, in Book I, which Alexander visits.<sup>8</sup> Of these three ekphraseis, only Darius’s shield is clearly

3 Amory 1984 strongly and generally convincingly argues against the idea that medieval Greek romances could have influenced Norse literature in this time frame; certainly there are no extant translations of medieval Greek into Old Norse. Notably, he claims that some Greek works reached the Norse-speaking world through translations into Latin.

4 Clunies Ross 2010, 81-84 For a discussion of the use of the word “indigenous” in this context, see Lavender 2021.

5 See Würth 1998 for an excellent introduction to this pseudo-historical genre more broadly.

6 In 1955.

7 The edition is Laxness 1945; cf. Crocker 2019 for a discussion.

8 The epitaph of Achilles is given thus in *Alexanders Saga*:

Hér hvílir Achilles inn sterki, er drap Hectorem son Priami konungs. Sjá inn sami var svikinn í tryggð ok drepinn af Paride bróður Hectoris í sólarguðs hofi.  
 “Here lies Achilles the strong, who killed Hector, son of King Priam. The same [i.e., Achilles] was betrayed in trust and killed by Paris, the brother of Hector, in the

related to classical ekphrasis, most notably the shields of Achilles (as depicted in the *Ilias Latina*, which Lafferty suggests Walter had access to) and Aeneas (depicted in Book 8 of the *Aeneid*).<sup>9</sup> The two tombs are not classical in inspiration but do fit into a common Medieval genre of tomb ekphrasis. These ekphrasis are ekphrastic in both the modern sense, i.e., descriptions of works of art or physical objects, and in the ancient sense, i.e., describing the unfolding of a scene.<sup>10</sup>

Darius's shield has no named craftsman, but the craftsman is ascribed agency in choosing which scenes are to be displayed on the shield and which are to be omitted (see n. 21 below). The other two objects—the tombs—are sculpted by the Jewish sculptor Apelles, whom Walter treats with respect, both for his craftsmanship, and for his theological understanding, which is amply demonstrated in these ekphrasis. All three of these ekphrasis were popular in the Middle Ages and widely commented upon by glossators.<sup>11</sup>

Despite their Medieval interest, these passages have been less appreciated for their literary merits in the modern day. Raby is dismissive of the ekphrastic passages,<sup>12</sup> both of the shield of Darius and of the tomb; he sees the Shield of Darius as a pointless nod to the generic conventions of epic; he considers the tomb ekphrasis to be of poor literary merit. Nonetheless, these passages provide interesting perspectives on Walter's understanding of Biblical and Ancient history, and they serve important roles within the narrative. Further, Raby's subjective understanding of their beauty is just that—subjective—and should hardly preclude literary analysis of these ekphrastic passages, whether in Latin or in their Norse translation.

While there is some scholarship on the ekphrasis in the *Alexandreis*, almost none has been done on the translated ekphrasis in *Alexanders Saga*, and what has been done has focused primarily on how they were received in later Norse prose works. This is in keeping with a critical change Brandr makes—he often explains the Biblical stories which Walter only alludes to. As such, the Norse ekphrasis have a distinctly didactic tone, completely different from the Latin originals. Geraldine Barnes has addressed their impact on similar passages in *Saulus Saga ok Níkanors*, *Ectors Saga*, *Vilhjáms Saga sjóðs*, and *Adonias Saga*. Brandr was successful in his didacticism. *Alexanders Saga* as a whole, and these ekphrasis especially, took on

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sun-god's [i.e., Apollo's] estimation [that it was right].”

Quotations from *Alexanders Saga* are from Van Leeuwen 2009.

9 Lafferty 1998, p. 106, n. 13

10 For a discussion of the tomb ekphrasis genre, see Akbari 2020 125 ff; for the distinction between Ancient and modern theories of ekphrasis Webb 2009.

11 For an overview of glosses on ekphrastic passages, see Akbari 2020; for an edition of glosses on the tomb of Darius's wife in Book IV, see Townsend 2008; Colker (1978) presents an edition of two glosses in full and a selection of two glosses which he calls representative of the wider tradition on the *Alexandreis* (Colker 1978 xxx); these contain some glosses on the ekphrasis. Townsend (1992 pg. 22) points out that some Medieval manuscripts repeat one or more of the ekphrasis at the end of the poem in a special format to allow for more glosses.

12 1934 2. 74, 79

an important role in the Icelandic literary milieu: it became a source of factual, encyclopedic knowledge. In fact, ekphrasis as a whole took on a similar role: they became one of the places where an author could demonstrate the accuracy of their account generally. Indeed, such proofs became obligatory—whether as a rhetorical trope or because they were legitimately taken seriously—in later *riddarasögur*.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to a literal translation of the ekphraseis, the first into English, which I hope will encourage and enable further research into them, I have provided a commentary, which aims to elucidate the biblical references<sup>14</sup> and to point out notable stylistic and contentual differences between the Latin of the *Alexandreis* and the Norse of *Alexanders Saga*. The translation is based primarily on the normalized text by Andrea Van Leeuwen; I have compared it with Finnur Jónsson's 1925 critical edition, and the notes to that edition by the editors of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. Although no English translation of *Alexanders Saga* exists, I have also consulted the 1996 German translation of these passages by Stephanie Würth; the final product is my own.

## A Note on my Translation

I have translated the three ekphrastic passages from the Old Norse into English. I have attempted, where possible, to preserve word order. I have preserved the Norse's (from an English perspective) overuse of prepositions and conjunctions, which has in some cases led to a clunky translation; I hope that the twin virtues of the text's interesting content and the translation's literalness will outweigh the vice of the prose's turgidity. I have put names in their typical English spellings, not in their Latin or Norse spellings.

## The Shield of Darius

About that [the battle] is now to say, that here it was possible to see, as is to be expected, many and marvelous weapons. One, however, overtook all others. And that was the weaponry of King Darius. No gold was spared in it. But the value of it was greater concerning the craftsmanship, that was thereupon. His shield was sevenfold in thickness, and inlaid all around with gold.<sup>15</sup> There

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13 For truth-claims, O'Connor 2005; For *riddarasögur*, and specifically ekphraseis, as sources of knowledge Kjesrud 2010, Barnes 2014

14 The biblical references are generally the same in the Latin and the Norse; Colker's (1978) *apparatus fontium*, at the bottom of each page in his Latin text, has been a great help.

15 I.e., on the rim of the shield.

was inscribed the relatives and predecessors of King Darius, and their great works.<sup>16</sup> The giants, who first made the Tower of Babel after the Noah-flood on the plain,<sup>17</sup> which is called Sennaar. And there after the division of tongues.<sup>18</sup> In another place on the shield was inscribed King Nebuchanezzar, and that he went to Jorsalaborg with his army and won the city, broke to earth the temple of the Lord and all the city walls, made captive the Jewish people, and had King Sedecias, who he had had blinded, [taken] home with him to Babylon.<sup>19</sup>

That was all inscribed on the shield, which had been done well by the former kings. And that was all omitted, which had been done to their disgrace.<sup>20</sup>

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16 The Norse word here which I translate “inscribe” is from the word *skrifa*; *skrifa* has a wide semantic range, and can mean “to write,” “to paint,” “to carve,” “to draw,” or “to embroider.” In this passage, with reference to the shield, it clearly carries the meaning of “sculpted” or “inscribed,” but the choice of how to translate *skrifa* is not always so easy; it carries some of the ambiguity inherent in an ekphrasis, which blends written and visual mediums.

17 ON *Nóaflóð*.

18 Gen. 11:1-9. ON *tungnaskifti*, from *tungna* “tongue” (in the meaning of “language” that is current in English as well) + *skifti* “change.” This compound, which is used in the Biblical translation *Stjórn*, is used exclusively in Old Norse to refer to the language event after the construction of the tower of Babel; its Latin equivalent, *confusio linguarum* is not used in Walter, who says “...sermo prior omnibus unus / Scinditur in uarias, dictu mirabile, linguas.” (II 502-503). “One language, preceding all, was torn into many, miraculous to say, languages.” The translator has recognized the story here and exchanged Walter’s description of the events for the less evocative, more formulaic and idiomatic *tungnaskifti*.

19 2 Kings 24-25; *Babylonem* is in the accusative case here, despite *til* in Old Norse expecting a genitive. Brandr is inconsistent throughout in this regard; sometimes Latin terms are declined as the Latin preposition would demand; other times they are declined into the case the Norse preposition would demand. Wolf (1998, 385) notes as an example of a case change “descendit origine Beli” (II, v. 326), “descendit from Belus,” which is translated as “kommer fra Belo konunge,” “comes from King Belus.” Here, in addition to shifting the grammatical case from genitive to dative, as the Norse *fra* would expect, Brandr glosses Belus as a “konunge,” “king.” In some cases, Old Norse, following Latin, does not decline nouns of foreign origin; see n. 38 below.

20 Brandr ascribes an impersonal agency here to the sculptor; the Norse reads *látit niðri liggja*, or, literally, “made to lie down.” The idiom *liggja niðri*, means “to omit,” it is relatively uncommon. Its component parts are “liggja,” “to lie” and “niðri,” “below/under,” giving it a spatial, physical meaning in addition to its idiomatic meaning. It occurs in the Norse rendering of the following Latin text (quotes from the Latin are from Colker 1978):

Ne tamen obscurent ueterum preconia regum  
 Quorundam maculae, sculptoris dextera magnam  
 Preterit seriem quam pretermittere uisum est.

In the third section, it was carved how King Balthasar drank from the golden vessel, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of the Lord, and the hand was seen to write on the wall, that which no one managed to interpret, except for the Prophet Daniel.<sup>21</sup> On the border around these stories was the story of the magnificent king Cyrus, who defeated Lydia and King Croesus, who was tricked by the prophecy of the sun god.<sup>22</sup> These great tidings were all inscribed there, which here are only abbreviated.<sup>23</sup> And it would be a big story, if they were explained in full. And it is to be said about the death of King Cyrus, which is

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Nevertheless, lest the ancient stain of some  
Besmear the praise of the kings, the right hand of the sculptor  
Omitted a great list which it seemed better to let pass.

As such, we can be sure that Brandr is using *liggja niðri* in its idiomatic sense, and not a physical sense. He does not mean to say that these images are shown lower down on the shield; they are not shown at all. This is also enforced by the start of the next paragraph, *Í þriðja stað*, “in the third place.” We have already had two sections of the shield described; if the events were carved at the bottom of the shield, the next paragraph should open with the fourth section; as it opens with the third, we know the sins of Darius’s fathers are not depicted on the shield. Walter goes on to describe some of these sins which are omitted, thus making his ekphrasis somewhat fictional to the shield (events are described which do not appear on the shield in the same way as events which do appear on the shield); here, Brandr chooses not to translate them. Evidently, Brandr does not think the wrongdoings of Darius’s ancestors worth repeating.

21 Daniel 5. As Pettersson (2009, 174-175) points out, the description is a loose paraphrase of the Latin (II.523-526) here; this shows Brandr’s focus on spiritual matters, and how he views *Alexanders Saga* as a text which can provide spiritual education to the reader. The clause *er Nabuchodonosor hafði tekit ór templo domini*, “which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of the Lord,” provides an important piece of Biblical knowledge to the audience—it casts Nebuchadnezzar in quite a bad light—and is completely added by Brandr; nothing resembling it is present in the Latin. Perhaps Brandr felt his audience might be less familiar with this story than Walter thought the *Alexandreis*’s would be, and Brandr therefore felt compelled to gloss the cup’s origin.

22 ON *sólarguðs*; *sólarguð* is the Norse word for Apollo; it is also used in the epitaph of Achilles (see above n. 9). In the Latin, Walter names *Apolline* at line 529.

23 It is unclear if this reference to “abbreviation” is to Brandr’s act of abbreviating in translation or if it is to the abbreviation inherent in an ekphrasis (see Fowler 1991). See above, n. 17 for a discussion of the meaning of the verb *skrifá*, whose derivative *skrifuð* I translate “inscribe.” Wolf (1988, p. 380) takes it as referring to the description of the shield in the *Alexandreis*; as this passage is relatively fully translated (and very fully in comparison with the tomb of Darius in Book VII) I am inclined to disagree, taking it to refer to the abbreviation of the events on the shield; Brandr does not translate some elements of the Latin (see n. 21 above) but in other places he expands on Walter’s descriptions (see n. 22 above).



produced everywhere in books, that a queen, who is called Tomyris, goes against him. And in their struggle, which she held with him, King Cyrus fell.<sup>24</sup> About this occurrence Master Galterus speaks thus: “Ho, ho. Terrible is this world’s fortune. And it often is shown how fickle she is. King Cyrus was, in his days, the most widely-landed king, and the most blessed by victory. His fame had traveled the whole world. And wherever he landed, everything before him came to suffer. And as powerful and mighty as he was, still a woman defeated him. Mortal men should not,”<sup>25</sup> says the Master, “boast of acquired power and show contempt for lesser men. Nor should they, even the ones blessed in victory, be ungrateful for the greatest conqueror.<sup>26</sup> He who is able to give strength and power, victory and wealth, he is the same who is able to take everything that he wants to, immediately.<sup>27</sup>

## The Tomb of Darius’s Wife

Now King Alexander had the queen’s body, the wife of Darius, prepared with great honor for burial and anointed with the costliest aromatics. And he also had a great stone cut from the peak of a crag. It was set over the grave of the queen. This type of construction is called *pyramis* in Latin. That is like a “high tower” in our tongue.<sup>28</sup> A Hebrew man, who is called Apelles,<sup>29</sup> craft-

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24 This marks the end of the ekphrasis proper; the next few lines, which are the last of Book II, are Walter moralizing on the contents of this final section of the shield.

25 This is a rhetorical device in Norse translations; it distinguishes the “impartial” narrator from the “partial” narrator. When Walter switches from description to moralization, Brandr marks it as Walter’s personal view, distinct from the general narration. In later texts it became popular to attribute indigenous compositions to a fictional Master Galterus (as in *Ectors Saga* and *Hrólfs saga kraka*; see Ármann 1999.)

26 I.e., God.

27 The theme of humility is one which Walter returns to throughout the *Alexandreis*—Alexander’s pride as he becomes more and more successful is the root of his death.

28 Walter does not use the word *pyramis* here to describe the tomb; he uses it to describe Darius’s tomb, which Brandr also describes as *pyramis á latínu*. After glossing it here, *Þat er sem hár turn á vára tungu*, he does not gloss it again in its next appearance. A similar gloss is also given in *Gyðinga Saga* (Wolf 1988 377; Jón Helgason 1966 xxix n. 8).

29 There are a few men named *Apelles* in Classical literature and history. Horace, *Satyrarum libri* 1.5 100-1 makes a derogatory, anti-semitic remark aimed at a certain Apella: “... credat Iudaeus Apella, / non ego;...” “The Jew Apella might believe [that], not I;” “The Jew Apella” takes the fool’s role again in Walter’s own *Tractatus Contra Iudaeos* (PL CCIX 447). *Contra Iudaeos* was written before the

ed the stone, before it was raised up. He was very marvelous in his handiwork. Not only was there written, or carved, the names of the Greek kings, but also how the whole world was made, and created over six days of work, which almighty God did, when he shaped all things, mental and physical.<sup>30</sup>

There it was also marked, how Adam and Eve were tricked by the snake, and for that cast out of Paradise to the earth, where Adam was formed.<sup>31</sup> After that it was written, how Cain slew Abel, his brother, and then, how Lamech, who was the seventh from Cain, came to harm him. It is possible to see, how on account of many and great barbarities of men, it was such that God repented, that he had shaped man. Then next was marked the ark-building and the Noah-flood. And there after that, how Noah found wine to produce.

Then was marked the patriarchs,<sup>32</sup> Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and about each of them some notable events. Then next was the life of Joseph. And how Jacob went with his sons to Egypt. It is possible to see the great works, which God wrought in Egypt for Moses, his servant, before he led the whole Jewish People thence across the red sea, and drowned King Pharaoh and all his army, who thought it possible to walk there, as the Jews had done before. And then, how God fed the people in heavenly flour, and gave Moses the law on that mountain, which is called Sinai, [and] stopped their thirst with that water,<sup>33</sup> which sprang from the hard, rocky ground, where Moses himself is buried,<sup>34</sup> where no man can find his grave. And after there, with what wonder Joshua

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*Alexandreis*, while Walter was still resident at Châtillon; it is his only surviving work of Prose. (See Abulafia 2005 for a more detailed discussion of *Contra Iudaeos*, as well as how Walter's views of Jews and Judaism affect his prolific poetic output outside of the *Alexandreis*.) There was a historical Apelles, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, who in fact worked for Alexander. The primary source for Apelles is in Pliny's natural history; Apelles features prominently in 35.36-37. (For the availability of Pliny in the medieval period, which was wide, see Doody 2010 p. 10 n. 17.)

As Abulafia (p. 278) observes, Walter seems to be conflating the fictional Jewish Apella, the object of his and Horace's mockery, with the historical painter—Apelles in the *Alexandreis*, though marked as Jewish and clearly religiously knowledgeable, shows no signs of the caricature Apella's credulousness and has the historical Apelles's artistic abilities.

30 Genesis 1:1 - 2:7.

31 Genesis 2:21-5, 3. The Latin text does not name either Adam or Eve. In fact, the only person named in this paragraph in the Latin is Cain (at IV 194). This serves to focus the beginning of this ekphrasis around Cain. The passage in *Alexanders Saga* is less dense than its Latin counterpart, and the literary-critical implications of focusing on Cain are lost. Instead, the passage serves a more didactic purpose, wherein the reader is given Biblical knowledge through the ekphrastic medium.

32 ON *hofuðfaðir* is a calque of Latin *patriarchus*.

33 Exodus 14-20; these events are slightly out of order.

34 Deuteronomy 34

led the Jews over the Jordan and how the city, which is called Jericho, fell before their trumpeting, and that Joshua died, after he had divided the promised land among all his people, who came from the 12 sons of Jacob.<sup>35</sup> After that Apelles showed in his work the judges, who were before the Jewish people, and how Dalila betrayed Samson the strong, who was one of their number.<sup>36</sup>

In another place on this gravestone was marked the kings' lives, and there was contained, how Eli fell dead off of his chair.<sup>37</sup> Then, next, how Samuel coronated Saul to the acclaim of the Jews. And then when Saul, who at first was a good king, did not carry on in that fashion,<sup>38</sup> David was anointed as king, [he] who killed the giant Goliath with a small stone, when he was yet a young man in age.<sup>39</sup> After such great works were written the names and works of other kings, both how Salomon had the temple built for the glory of God, and many other things, which his father David had done exceptionally well.<sup>40</sup>

And Apelles omitted everything, which they had done against God. Such as when the kings who came after them sacrificed to idols.<sup>41</sup> And that was precisely marked in, with what chance Elijah killed the people who had been called the prophets of Baal<sup>42</sup>, that false God who was so called. And how he was carried up from earth in a flaming chariot unseen by<sup>43</sup> his disciple Heliseo.<sup>44</sup>

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35 A brief summary of the events in Joshua 3 - 24:29

36 Judges 16

37 1 Samuel 4:18

38 Saul's transgressions include an unlawful sacrifice (1 Samuel 13), abuse of his troops before the battle (he lays a curse on any of them who might eat before the battle is won; in their haste to eat after winning the battle they do not slaughter oxen and sheep in accordance with kosher law; 1 Samuel 14), and finally sparing the king of the Amalekites, after God had commanded Saul not to spare any of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). See n. 35 above for another slightly out-of-order timeline.

39 Despite the order presented here, David kills Goliath after Samuel anointed him. (He is anointed in 1 Samuel 16, and kills Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.)

40 Solomon's building and dedication of the temple is described in 1 Kings 5, 6 and 8; David is the focus of the rest of 1 Samuel (16-31) and all of 2 Samuel.

41 Walter devotes around 10 lines (IV 231-245) to these transgressions; Brandr only mentions the sacrifice to idols, in the *Alexandreis* at line 242 "ydola regum," "idols of kings." Brandr evidently thinks that these transgressions are less important to the passage than Walter does.

42 1 Kings 18. ON. *Baal* is unmarked for case, as it is in the Latin.

43 Lit. "in the not-seeing of"

44 2 Kings 2:11; the Latin text for this and the preceding sentence is not explicit in its reference to Elijah's journey to heaven. It reads (IV.247-8):

Sed gens sacra Baal gladio feriuntur Helie,  
Disipulusque dolet non comparere magistrum.

But the accursed tribe of Baal is slain by the sword of Elijah,  
And the disciple grieves that the master is not in sight.

Above on the stone was marked those kings, which the holy books say to have been good and excellent. Those were Ezechial and Josiah.<sup>45</sup> It was marked about Josiah, that he rid the people of idols, and woke the law, which had long been sleeping, up,<sup>46</sup> and how the sun reversed its celestial course, until he had believed to have gotten for himself from God, what he had asked for. And that was, that God gave him a longer life. And about Josiah, who was known for many glorious works, was it marked, how wonderfully he held the Easter time. Except for David and these two kings there were none, who were not guilty of a sacrifice or some other law-break.

Above the kings was marked on the stone the prophets and said, in which time or under which king they had said forth their prophecy. These four were first: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel and Daniel. It was carved, how Isaiah reached out his finger and said: “See here. A maiden will give birth to a son.”<sup>47</sup> And the others spoke with some words each from his prophecy about the birth of Christ or the suffering of God’s son. After that was written 12 lesser prophets, and their names and something of each of their prophecies, which all came in a place below.<sup>48</sup>

Highest on the stone was marked the rule of King Cyrus and that he allowed the Jews leave to go home from their captivity, and how they renewed Solomon’s temple at Zorobabel’s command. After that was the story of Hester and then Tobie, and that Judith killed Holofernes in his own war camp.<sup>49</sup> And these stories all ended in the life of the knight Esra. Throughout this great work, which here is abruptly abbreviated, and this handicraft, in which they were crafted, was all worked with gold and prepared, there where it was thought better to do so.

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The disciple grieves because Elijah has disappeared, going into heaven in the flaming chariot, an event that Brandr describes but Walter does not. Again Brandr, although maintaining much of Walter’s content (the blind spot of the disciple, for instance), has changed the focus of the ekphrasis, from the grief of Elisha to the spectacle of Elijah ascending to heaven *i eldligri kerru*, “in a flaming chariot.”

45 This sentence, which maps out the next portion of the ekphrasis, is Brandr’s own creation; its repetition is one of the places in the ekphrasis that feels most didactic.

46 A metaphor present in the Latin: “Et reuocat longo sopitas tempore leges.” “And woke the laws, asleep for a long time.” The Norse includes the preposition in “woke up:” *vakði löginn upp*, “woke the law up.”

47 Isaiah 7:14; the gesture, possibly a nod to the physical description expected in an ekphrasis, seems to be an invention of Brandr.

48 This abbreviation is shared by Brandr and Walter; Walter does not describe these prophecies in greater detail.

49 Judith 13; *herbúðum* which I render here “war-camp,” is the Norse word generally used to translate Latin *castra*; here the Norse translates IV.273 “In castrisque necat Holofernem mascula Iudith,” “And manly Judith killed Holofernes in the army camp.” While *castra* is always plural, *herbúð* is in the singular here. Brandr also drops the adjective *mascula*, “manly.”

## The Tomb of Darius

Then he [Alexander] had Darius's body prepared for burial and anointed with costly aromatics. Then he made his journey out respectfully, as was the custom in that time to do in the wake of the most high ones, and buried him near the former Serkja kings, his ancestors. He also had a high stone of white marble raised before his grave, which Apelles had made marvelously well, by his great handiwork. He is the same one who was named earlier in this story and he then again became renowned from such a work. Under this high stone, which is called pyramis in Latin, stood four pillars; they were so made, that their ankles were [made] of bronze, their legs of silver, and their heads of gold.<sup>50</sup> At the top of the pillar was a vault as transparent as glass, shaped like the sky to look at.<sup>51</sup>

On this vault was written the whole world, divided into its three sections, and likewise, which country lies in which third, or which marvelous places are in which land and there with the nature both of the lands and their populations, which live in the lands, and the islands, which lie in the sea.<sup>52</sup> It was also written, how the ocean surrounds all the land, or how the Miðjarðarsjár,<sup>53</sup> which all rivers fall into, divides the three parts of the world. And, since Apelles knew fully what Daniel had prophesied,<sup>54</sup> he wrote before the grave of Darius these words: "Here lies a significant ram.<sup>55</sup> Alexander, the hammer of the world, broke both of these horns."<sup>56</sup> It is possible to understand that thus: "Here lies Darius, who was marked out as the ram in the prophecy of Daniel. His horn, that is

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50 The body parts are not named explicitly in Walter's description, which also layers the three metals on top of each other. Townsend, in his notes to his translation of the *Alexandreis* (2006 pg. 157 n. 1) suggest that the metals ordered in this way suggest the prophecy in Daniel 2, where layers of different metals represent the "succession of kingdoms"; perhaps Brandr, by using the words for human body parts to describe sections of the column, is making this connection more explicit for his audience. If this is the case, then Brandr at least is one medieval reader who made the same connection as Townsend.

51 This section in the Latin has the phrase "fornacibus...binis," which Townsend (2006 pg. 158) translates as "twice-refining fires." This reference to the *process* of creating artwork, as opposed to the final product of the artwork itself, is typical of ancient ekphrasis. (This can be seen in Homer's *Iliad*, the *Ilias Latina*, and the *Aeneid*). At no point in the Norse text of any of these ekphraseis, once the description of the completed artwork is begun, is reference made to the artistic, masonic or metallurgical process of creating the physical artwork.

52 Walter spends 11 densely-packed lines (VII.404-414) describing specific details; these are all omitted by Brandr.

53 ON Miðjarðarsjár is lit. "mid-earth-sea;" it is the Norse word for the Mediterranean.

54 I.e., because he was Jewish.

55 This language echoes the epitaph of Achilles. (See above n. 9).

56 Daniel 8 3:8

his kingdom, Alexander broke under him, he who tamed the peopled world like a hammer iron.”<sup>57</sup> Apelles also set on the grave the number of years from the foundation of the universe to the beginning of Alexander’s rule, following the account of the Jews. That is, four thousand, eight hundred, sixty and eight years.<sup>58</sup>

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57 This gloss is Brandr’s own.

58 This reckoning is present in Walter (VII.429-430); its original source is the *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore, ch. 192 (Koon et Wood 2008). The “account of the Jews” Brandr refers to is in fact a later Christian source.

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# The Water is Wide: Ariadne, Marriage, and the Sea

*Rachel Kamphaus*

Catullus 64, with its overlapping narratives, impressive ekphrasis, and lofty language, is rich in imagery. One of the most consistent images is that of the sea. The poem itself starts with the Argonauts setting sail on their journey, plunging their ships into “the clear waters of Neptune” (*liquidās Neptūnī...undās*).<sup>1</sup> The description of the voyage and sea continues from this point; Catullus at various points vividly describes the “briny shallows” (*vada salsa*), “twisted waves [that] grew white with foam” (*tortaque... spūmīs incanduit unda*), and “Nereids” peeking out from the “white whirlpool” (*candenti gurgite*).<sup>2</sup> And yet, the image of the sea is hardly surprising at the beginning of the poem, which introduces the marriage of Peleus to Thetis, a sea nymph. The sea is a much more interesting presence in relation to Ariadne, the lamenting princess just recently abandoned by her husband, Theseus. Catullus introduces Ariadne as a grieving figure, mourning the departure of her beloved and her deliberate isolation from her family. While she laments, she often stands near, looks at, or otherwise interacts with the ocean. In Catullus 64, the sea acts as both a barrier that physically separates Ariadne from Theseus and her family, and a symbolic reflection of marriage, a structure Ariadne is no longer a part of. Thus, the sea is both an image that geographically isolates Ariadne and a metaphor that represents the social role she is excluded from.

Ariadne’s decision to marry Theseus makes her a social outcast, since it results in her abandonment by her husband and isolation from her family. In Ariadne’s myth, she betrays her family by helping Theseus escape her father’s labyrinth and kill her brother, the Minotaur. In lines 116-120, Catullus conveys the foolishness of Ariadne’s choice, as he wishes to tell,

...ut linquens genitoris filia vultum,  
ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris,  
quae misera in gnata deperdita laetabatur,  
omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem.

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1 Cat. *Carm.* 64.2.

2 Cat. *Carm.* 64.6, 13, and 14.

...how the daughter, leaving the expression of her father,  
 the embrace of her sister, and finally the [embrace] of her mother  
 (who used to be happy on account of her miserable lost daughter)  
 chose the sweet love of Theseus over all these things.

Catullus' repeated use of *ut* creates a cumulative effect; Catullus' gives much more poetic weight to Ariadne's family than he does to Theseus' love. By choosing Theseus, Ariadne gains "sweet love", but loses the expression of her father, the embrace of a sister, and the embrace of a mother. The results of such a decision seem to be disastrous; in her own lament, Ariadne cries, "In return for [my choice] I will be given as spoils to the beasts and birds to be torn apart, nor, dead, will I be buried with thrown earth" (*Pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque/praeda, neque iniacta tumulabor mortua terra*).<sup>3</sup> Even at this point, on the brink of death, Ariadne still tries to participate in the structures of marriage/familial relationships. She says she will be "given" (*dabor*) to the wild beasts and birds, a word that mirrors marital language elsewhere in Catullus' poetry. For example, the poet uses a form of *dare* to describe the union between Peleus and Thetis— "Now let the bride be given immediately to the desiring husband" (*dedatur cupido iam dudum nupta marito*).<sup>4</sup> In *Carmen* 62, Catullus describes marriage in similar terms of handing over: "the father himself handed [her] to him" (*pater cui tradidit ipse*).<sup>5</sup> In these examples, Catullus conceptualizes marriage as the exchange of a woman from father (or family) to a husband, a process which places women under the near constant power of men. Interestingly, he uses the same language to describe Ariadne's relationship to the carrion that will feed on her corpse, only he replaces husband or father with "birds" and "beasts". Thus, in this passage, Ariadne cannot imagine a life or identity outside of her relationship to family or husband; even in death, she sees her body as belonging (or, more accurately being given), to another.

Without belonging to a husband or father, Ariadne seems to be in a position of social isolation. In the classical world, much of women's social lives revolved around their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters.<sup>6</sup> In her current state, Ariadne cannot fulfill her social obligations to obey her father, serve her husband, or bear children. As a woman who is neither wife nor daughter, she seems to exist outside the margins of society. She does not believe she will even receive the most basic of rights, a burial, which places her on a similar marginal footing as executed criminals, actors, and prostitutes, all of whom were denied burials in Roman society.<sup>7</sup>

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3 Cat. *Carm.* 64.152-153.

4 Cat. *Carm.* 64.384.

5 Catullus, *Carmen* 62.60.

6 Moya K. Mason, "Ancient Roman Women: A Look at Their Lives," *MKM Research*, 2022, [www.moyak.com/papers/roman-women.html#44](http://www.moyak.com/papers/roman-women.html#44).

7 Although Ariadne is a Greek figure, I think it is more important to use evidence for Roman burials and social customs here. As a Roman writer, Catullus' own values and the customs of his time were likely more informative in developing his

This social isolation that Ariadne feels is physically reflected by the sea and its role as a barrier from the civilized mainland. Ariadne is on Dia, an island away from her home. Ariadne thinks she is all alone—Catullus refers to the island as a “deserted shore” (*deserto... litore*) with “lonely sand” (*sola harena*) and a “lonely island inhabited by no house” (*nullo colitur sola insula tecto*) where “all things are deserted” (*omnia sunt deserta*).<sup>8</sup> The environment is overwhelmingly isolating for Ariadne. While looking out at the sea, Ariadne contemplates her options. Should she seek the mountains of her home? Should she hope for the help of her father? Should she comfort herself with faithful love of a husband?<sup>9</sup> Ariadne sees these options as impossible, lamenting in particular the physical barrier that separates her from her family/husband—the sea: “No exit of the sea lies open, since waves encircle” (*nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis*).<sup>10</sup> Importantly, Ariadne does not mention her mother or sister here (as she has done before)—it is the men who define her social role in the world that the sea removes her from. Thus, the sea physically separates Ariadne from rejoining her family or husband, and in turn, from the traditional social structure of woman.

Catullus also creates an association among the sea, marriage, and motherhood, which makes Ariadne’s position as belonging to none of these categories much starker. In the first 30 lines of the poem, Catullus mentions six sea deities. Among these (Neptune, Amphitrite, the nymphs/Nereids, Thetis, Tethys, and Oceanus), there are two married couples (Neptune and Amphitrite, as well as Tethys and Oceanus), and one more (Thetis) who is about to be married. Furthermore, Amphitrite (whom Catullus uses as a synonym for “sea”) seems to represent a young bride losing her virginity. In the passage, she is “untried” (*rudem*), until the “desiring (*optantes*) Argonauts sail upon her.”<sup>11</sup> The sea, personified through Amphitrite, seems to take on the role of a virgin, and the Argonauts the role of the young lover. Catullus also gives a particular emphasis to motherhood, as many of the deities either represent or play the role of a woman in various stages of this role. Tethys, for example, is noted for her relationship to her granddaughter (*nepotem*) and Thetis (perhaps obviously) for her marriage to Peleus.<sup>12</sup> Even the sea monsters and obstacles that Catullus lists later in the poem are feminine and imagined as cruel mothers of Theseus: Syrtis, Charybdis, and Scylla.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the sea represents traditional marital and familial relationships, which Ariadne is not

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characterizations than Greek beliefs. Louise Cilliers and Retief Francois, “Burial Customs and the Pollution of Death in Ancient Rome: Procedures and Paradoxes,” *Acta Theologica* 26 (2010), 2005.

8 Catullus, *Carmen* 64.57, 133, 184, and 187.

9 Cat. *Carm.* 64.178-183.

10 Cat. *Carm.* 64.185.

11 Cat. *Carm.* 64.5, 11.

12 Cat. *Carm.* 64.29.

13 Cat. *Carm.* 64.156.

a part of. Thus, not only does the sea physically separate Ariadne from her homeland, but it is also emblematic of the structures that make Ariadne an outsider.

Although the sea is a reminder of happy marriage at the beginning of the poem, it is an uncomfortable presence to Ariadne, an overwhelming expanse she cannot cross, a barrier between her and her husband/family. Rather than feel liberation based on her independent status, Ariadne is helpless under Roman social structures. Unable to fulfill the duties of a Roman wife or mother, Ariadne feels purposeless, seeing her only option as death: “all things show death” (*ostendant omnia letum*).<sup>14</sup> Without a husband, who will protect her? Without a family, who will bury her? Ariadne’s abandonment thus places her in an uncomfortable, isolated state apart from society.

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14 Cat. *Carm.* 64.187.

# Egyptian “Helmet” Masks of First-Century Hawara

*Livia Hoffman*

Discussions of funerary art from the region of Hawara during the Roman Period are dominated by analyses of mummy “portraits.” However, these painted panels were not the only form of mummy adornment employed in burials in this locale and time period.<sup>1</sup> Another was the “helmet” mask, although this style has been disregarded in most scholarship.<sup>2</sup> This essay aims to explore the helmet mask in Hawaran funerary burials and to consider its relationship with prior Egyptian facial funerary depictions. Examining the materiality, production, and iconography of two helmet masks produced in first-century Hawara—here referred to as EA69020 (fig. 1) and E.103a.1911 (fig. 2)—one discovers that many traditional, Pharaonic-Era elements were preserved in the funerary portraiture of this region during this later time.

Before analyzing EA69020 and E.103a.1911, a brief discussion of the development of the helmet mask—and facial coverings in general used in Egyptian burials—will be presented. In Old Kingdom Egypt (c. 2686-2181 BCE), a mummy was covered with a plaster coating extending over the entire body, including the face. The facial features of the deceased were molded in linen over the skull, which in turn was covered by a thin whitewash of plaster and paint.<sup>3</sup> During the First Intermediate Period (c. 2181-2055 BCE), these painted linen heads developed into

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1 Christina Riggs, “Facing the Dead: Recent Research on the Funerary Art of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt,” in *American Journal of Archaeology* 106, no. 1 (2002): 85-101, 85.

2 The famed Egyptologist Flinders Petrie scorned gilt mummy “helmet” masks in comparison to mummy “portraits.” In his excavation notes, he referred to the helmet masks of Hawara as a “plague of gilt mummies,” reluctantly deciding to “bring them all away as they will be worth something in England, in spite of their hideously late style.” See, M. L. Bierbrier and Paul Roberts, ““One of Our Mummies Is Missing”: Evaluating Petrie’s Records From Hawara,” in *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt* (London: British Museum, 1997), pp. 19-25, 21.

3 Sue D’Auria, Peter Lacovara, and Catherine H. Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic: the Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), 119.

separate cartonnage masks that covered the head and shoulders of the mummy.<sup>4</sup> These so-called “helmet” masks characterized the funerary equipment of various social classes, royal and non-elite, from the First Intermediate Period onwards.<sup>5</sup> While the helmet mask was eclipsed with the development of the anthropoid coffin in high-status burials of the late Middle Kingdom (c. 2040-1782 BCE), the helmet mask continued to appear in burials, and saw a return to its former popularity in the last centuries of the Pharaonic era.<sup>6</sup> And, as EA69020 and E.103a.1911 confirm, this renewed popularity of the helmet mask-form continued into the Roman Period.

As EA69020 and E.103a.1911 were created in Hawara during the first century, context should be provided about the ethnicity, culture, and burial practices present there and then. The Romans made clear distinctions amongst the inhabitants of Egypt, dividing them into classes corresponding to Roman law.<sup>7</sup> Holders of Roman citizenship were the highest social class, and below these were the *astoi*—non-Roman citizens of Egypt’s three (later four) major Greek cities.<sup>8</sup> A third category comprised peregrine non-citizens, termed the *Aigyptioi*, and within this group were the *Hellenes*—a privileged subset of those who resided in the chief towns of the nomes in Egypt.<sup>9</sup> It is from the *Hellenes* class that the burial culture of first-century Hawara, and our two masks, emerge.

Although the *Hellenes* rose as the governing class of the principal towns of the nomes (Egyptian administrative provinces), they were still regarded as ‘Egyptian’ in the minds of the Romans.<sup>10</sup> However, since this ethnicity was a construction of the Roman legal and administrative systems, scholars rely on the names of the *Hellenes* in Hawara to determine how those of this class self-identified.<sup>11</sup> Examining onomastic records of this sect, one finds that most names are Greek formations, yet rooted in Egyptian religion.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that most inhabitants of Hawara regarded themselves as both Hellenis-

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4 D’Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic*, 119.

5 The Egyptian term for such a mask was *swht* (“eggshell”). Ibid, 128.

6 Salima Ikram and Aidan Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998), 167-68.

7 L.M. Bierbrier and Roger Bagnall, “The People of the Roman Fayum,” in *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt* (London: British Museum, 1997), 7-18.

8 Bierbrier and Bagnall, “People of the Roman Fayum,” 9. These cities were Alexandria, Ptolemais, Naukratis, and Antinoopolis.

9 Ibid, 7. The word nome (from the Greek word νομός) is used to refer to the territorial divisions of ancient Egypt.

10 Ibid.

11 While it might be natural to regard the written language of the Hawaran population as the basic discriminant of ethnicity, one must recognize that Greek very quickly became the only written language of Roman Egypt. See Ibid, 9.

12 For example, the name Isidorus is the name Isis joined to the Greek root for gift, -δωρ. See Ibid.

tic and Egyptian, as well as belonging to the Roman empire (though not as fully-fledged citizens). Regarding the funerary environment of Hawara in the Roman period, burial customs during the 1st century CE accommodated both two- and three-dimensional artistic treatments of the deceased’s head.<sup>13</sup> The simultaneous appearance of these differing depictions of the dead indicates that the mortuary sphere in which these burial goods were produced was small, and suggests that the same artisans or workshops produced these differing forms of facial covering, even though scholarship tends to treat them as distinct from each other.<sup>14</sup>

Having provided a general background on Egyptian funerary facial coverings and Hawaran culture of the first century, EA69020 and E.103a.1911 may now be considered in depth. At first glance, both masks appear to be dominated by a Hellenistic aesthetic, as the hairstyle, dress, and jewelry of the two objects depart from Pharaonic tradition. The hairstyles of EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 are both modeled on those of the contemporaneous Julio-Claudian family,<sup>15</sup> and both are dressed in Roman cloaks and shawls covering their hair.<sup>16</sup> The jewelry of EA 69020 (named Aphrodite) is Hellenistic in character, wearing ball earrings (fig.3) that reflect a Mediterranean-derived trend current in first-century Italy.<sup>17</sup> The wreaths worn (fig.4) and the flower garlands clasped by EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 are also features unprecedented in Pharaonic funerary art.

However, the materiality, production methods, and iconography adorning these masks are all derived from Pharaonic tradition, making them a hybrid of Hellenistic and Egyptian art. As noted, the funerary helmet mask-form was established early in the Pharaonic Era of Egyptian history. Both EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 can be considered to possess a “helmet” mask shape, as the coverings are three-dimensional and extend to the deceased’s breast and shoulders. In assuming this model, both EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 demonstrate how the first-century Hawara community perpetuated, and thereby preserved, a traditional Pharaonic Egyptian form of funerary facial covering.

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13 Christina Riggs, “Facing the Dead: Recent Research on the Funerary Art of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt,” in *American Journal of Archaeology* 106, no. 1 (2002): 85-101, 95. In certain cases, masked and portrait mummies could be deposited in a single grave, indicating that burials were not differentiated based on the style of the deceased’s facial coverings.

14 Ibid, 95.

15 Ibid, 95.

16 Mladen Tomorad, Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska, and Asja Müller, “Provenancing Roman Period Mummy Masks: Workshop Groups and Distribution Areas,” in *Egypt 2015: Perspectives of Research: Proceedings of the Seventh European Conference of Egyptologists, 2nd-7th June 2015, Zagreb, Croatia* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2017), 131.

17 Susan Walker and Morris L. Bierbrier, “The Cultural and Archaeological Context,” in *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* (London: British Museum Pr., 1997), 149.

Continuity may also be observed in the manner of production of EA 60920 and E.103a.1911. Throughout the Pharaonic Era, helmet masks were made of cartonnage—gummed linen and plaster combined with resin or gesso.<sup>18</sup> While wet, the cartonnage could be molded and formed into a shell covering the deceased's head, and when dry could be painted or gilded. A CT scan of EA 69020 shows that the mask was comprised of several layers of textile, that was covered by a thicker layer of gesso used for modeling the facial features and hair curls.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, studies of E.103a.1911 reveal that it consisted of layers of woven linen bound together, though here the mask was reinforced from behind by a layer of chopped vegetable fibers.<sup>20</sup> In continuing to use the same foundational manufacturing processes in their formations, masks EA 69020 and E.103.a.1911 reveals that Hawara's first-century community continued to produce representations of the deceased with methods originating in the Pharaonic Period.

Another aspect of continuity present in EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 involves their paint. The use of paint on funerary masks is a trait securely dated to the Pharaonic Period. The very first iterations of facial coverings involved the application of paint, even before the emergence of the helmet mask form.<sup>21</sup> After the emergence of the helmet mask model, the practice of painting the deceased's features continued, as this rendering conveyed the dead's appearance with detail.<sup>22</sup> Both EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 so convey the appearance of the dead, thereby continuing the Pharaonic practice of using colorants.

Regarding the paint materials used in the production of EA69020 and E.103a.1911, new pigments from the Mediterranean are found to be employed. On EA 69020, the purple colorant of the *clavus*, the red of the floral bouquet, and the bright pink featured on the back are not derived from red-ochre, the Pharaonic painting's traditional pigment. Instead, these colors are formed from red lead (or lake pigment) made with madder. This pigmentation was an innovation of the

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18 D'Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic*, 166.

19 Marie Vandenbeusch, Daniel O'Flynn, and Benjamin Moreno, "Layer by Layer: The Manufacture of Graeco-Roman Funerary Masks," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 107, no. 1-2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/03075133211050657>, 297. These textile layers were applied onto a core constructed of either mud or straw—unlike Ptolemaic Period masks formed with an internal mold, Roman Period cartonnage facial coverings were externally shaped.

20 Julie Dawson et al., "Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage: Technical Study and Conservation of a Mummy Mask from Hawara," in *Decorated Surfaces on Ancient Egyptian Objects: Technology, Deterioration, and Conservation; Proceedings of a Conference Held in Cambridge, UK on 7-8 September 2007* (London: Archetype Publications, 2010), 106. The vegetable fibers, here identified as flax with cereal straw, were most likely a by-product of linen manufacturing, and thus were inexpensive.

21 D'Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic*, 119.

22 *Ibid.*, 128.



Roman period, and noted for its richer coloring and more durable effects.<sup>23</sup> The red coloring of E.103a.1911 found next to the wreath, the solar disks of the deities flanking the head, the purple *clavus*, and the red border of the mask are also derived from red lead. Along with the white lead pigments of the mask, this is a pigment sensibility rooted more in northern Mediterranean and Roman tradition.<sup>24</sup>

Still, EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 feature colorants known from paintings of the Pharaonic Period. The use of black pigmentation for the eyes, brows, and lashes in EA 69020 aligns with the practical application of black paint on Pharaonic funerary masks.<sup>25</sup> Turning to E.103a.1911, the yellow pigments derive from orpiment, an arsenic sulfide mineral, well known in Egyptian artwork from the Middle Kingdom forward.<sup>26</sup> The green pigmentation is likely to represent copper-proteinates or copper-resinates, again traditional to Pharaonic painting.<sup>27</sup> And the black pigmentation, all carbon-based, is consistent with materials used in Pharaonic Period painting.<sup>28</sup> In using traditional colorants alongside novel ones of Graeco-Roman origin, masks EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 demonstrate that pigmentations established in the Pharaonic Period were not discontinued in Hawara’s funerary sphere, but were maintained alongside the introduction of paints from the Hellenistic world.

The gilded features on EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 are another aspect of continuity regarding both materiality and iconography. In Egyptian art, gilding—the application of a thin sheet of gold upon a firm support—was a method used to achieve the appearance of solid gold. The technology of gilding is well-rooted in the Pharaonic Period, with the earliest known visual references of beaten gold foil dating to Dynasty 6 (c. 2345-2181 BCE) of the Old Kingdom.<sup>29</sup> Regarding Phar-

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23 Christina Riggs, “Beautiful Burials, Beautiful Skulls: The Aesthetics of the Egyptian Mummy,” in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 56, no. 3 (2016): 247–263, 256.

24 Dawson et al., “Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage: Technical Study and Conservation of a Mummy Mask from Hawara,” 109-111. The particles of the lake pigments found on E.103a.1911 are similar to those identified in pigment jars from Pompeii and on other Roman Egyptian cartonnage masks, such as EA 69020.

25 Susan Walker and Morris L. Bierbrier, “Gilded Masks from Hawara,” in *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* (London: British Museum Pr., 1997), 67.

26 Dawson et al., “Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage,” 111.

27 Ibid. In the Pharaonic Period, green colorings were obtained only from copper, of both natural and synthetic character. See Julie Dawson et al., “Egyptian Colours and Pigments in French Collections: 30 Years of Physicochemical Analyses on 300 Objects,” in *Decorated Surfaces on Ancient Egyptian Objects: Technology, Deterioration, and Conservation; Proceedings of a Conference Held in Cambridge, UK on 7-8 September 2007* (London: Archetype Publications, 2010), 29.

28 Dawson et al., “Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage,” 111.

29 Deborah Bigelow, Pamela Hatchfield, and Richard Newman, “Ancient Egyptian Gilding Methods: in Gilded Wood: Conservation and History,” in *Gilded*

aonic funerary masks, the technique of gilding was employed to connect the deceased to the divine. While such an elevation was initially reserved for royal burials, by the end of the Old Kingdom, this privilege was extended to all who could afford it.<sup>30</sup> Non-royal death compositions were no longer restricted to protecting the face and hiding decomposition—instead, their primary purpose became to equip the mummy with divine attributes, gilded skin being the most prominent.<sup>31</sup>

Gilding is pronounced in EA69020, as deceased Aphrodite is encased in gold foil—the material completely covers her body and her clothing,<sup>32</sup> with only her hair, eyes, and the purple *clavus* of her dress remaining untouched. Likewise, E.103a.1911 is heavily gilded, with the entire front—save the *clavus* of the shawl, the pink floral bouquet, and the white papyrus roll clasped in the deceased's hand—featuring a layer of the metal. With these features, masks EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 display that facial coverings of first-century Hawara continue to preserve iconography that originated in the Pharaonic Period.

Another element of iconographic continuity present in EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 can be found in the vignettes of traditional Egyptian funerary gods. Pharaonic funerary art—including helmet masks—relayed their mortuary context through traditional religious symbols and scenes.<sup>33</sup> On EA 69020 and E.103a.1911, a number of Egyptian funerary deities that characterize Pharaonic funerary masks are portrayed. On the top of EA 69020 (fig. 5), the vulture goddess Nekhbet is shown in her animal form, wearing the crown of Upper Egypt. While the crown is colored pink instead of the traditional white, it can be recognized by its form, shape, and its association with Nekhbet. Although damaged, one can still discern the figure of Osiris on the back of EA 69020 (fig. 6), whose head is flanked by falcons—donning the dual crown of Upper and Lower Egypt—and mummiform divinities.<sup>34</sup> This identification can be made based on the appearance of the *atef* crown.<sup>35</sup> The most prominent funerary deity, Osiris was central to the development of funerary rituals and iconography from the Old Kingdom onwards.<sup>36</sup>

More Egyptian deities can be found decorating E.103a.1911. Hovering above the

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*Wood: Conservation and History* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1991), 27.

30 D'Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic*, 128.

31 *Ibid.*, 60. As a substitute for gold foil, yellow paint could be used to mimic the gilded skin of the deceased.

32 Christina Riggs, "Beautiful Burials, Beautiful Skulls: The Aesthetics of the Egyptian Mummy," in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 56, no. 3 (2016), 256.

33 Riggs, "Facing the Dead," 97.

34 Walker and Bierbrier, "Gilded Masks from Hawara," 67-68.

35 D'Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic: the Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt*, 51. Osiris can also be identified in representations by his mummiform figure, his grasping of the crook and flail, and his false beard.

36 *Ibid.*, 50. The name "Osiris" is an ancient Greek rendering of the god's Egyptian name *wsir*.

man’s gilded wreath is the image of Khepri (fig. 7).<sup>37</sup> An aspect of the sun god Ra (specifically referring to the rising sun), Khepri is commonly represented as a winged scarab beetle propelling the solar disk into the sky, and so appears on this funerary mask. The crown of the head also bears the image of a winged goddess outstretching her arms (fig. 7). While debate exists as to whether this figure is of the goddess Isis or Nephthys, both deities bear funerary connotations and are traditional to mortuary artwork.<sup>38</sup>

Additional iconography appears on the painted registers framing the head (fig. 8). On each side, two of the four sons of Horus are shown to meet with Anubis and Ra-Horakhty.<sup>39</sup> All of these deities are embroiled in Egyptian mythology of the afterlife. Anubis, the god of cemeteries and embalming, was heavily associated with the rituals of mummification and burial.<sup>40</sup> Ra-Horakhty, like Khepri, was an aspect of the solar god Ra, whose funerary connotations arose from the view that the cyclical patterns of the sun were a metaphor for rebirth and the afterlife.<sup>41</sup> And the four sons of Horus were associated with mummification in their role as the protectors of the Canopic jars holding the deceased’s internal organs.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the images decorating EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 reveal how these objects—and the funerary sphere of Hawara at large—continued to include traditional Pharaonic mortuary iconography.

When focusing on the advent of the mummy “portrait,” emphasis may be placed on how representations of the dead became Hellenized in Roman-Period Egypt. Yet, as a careful study of EA 69020 and E.103a.1911 and their materiality, production, and iconography reveals, Pharaonic elements did in fact experience significant continuity in the mortuary sphere of first-century Hawara. To be sure, these “helmet” masks are distinct from their Pharaonic predecessors, as they feature the incorporation of Graeco-Roman characteristics. Yet, these objects also maintain traditional elements, thereby displaying the Roman Period’s cultural, artistic, and aesthetic hybridity.

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37 Dawson et al., “Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage,” 106.

38 The funerary connotations of Isis derive from her role as the sister-wife to Osiris, the lord of the dead, and those of Nephthys from her association with protection over the mummified organs of the deceased. See George Hart, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 21.

39 Dawson et al., “Roman Egyptian Gilded Cartonnage,” 106.

40 Hart, *Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 21. Anubis most frequently appears in the form of a crouching jackal, though here the god assumes the anthropomorphic form of a jackal-headed human.

41 Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 28. Harakhti translates to mean “Horus of the Horizon.”

42 Hart, *Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 204. The human Imsety presided over the liver, the baboon Hapy over the lungs, the hawk Qebehsenuef over the intestines, and the jackal Duamutef over the stomach.



**Figure 1:** Frontal view of the mummy mask of Aphrodite (EA 69020).



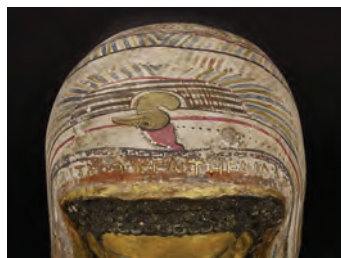
**Figure 2:** Frontal view of the mummy mask of an unmanned man (E.103a.1911).



**Figure 3:** An example of gold ball earrings contemporaneous to those found adorning EA 69020.



**Figure 4:** An example of a Roman gilded funerary wreath contemporaneous with those found on EA 69020 and E.103a.1911t.



**Figure 5:** Aerial view of EA69020 displaying the painted figure of the goddess Nehkbet, who here is rendered as a vulture donning the crown of Upper Egypt.



**Figure 6:** Anterior view of EA 69020 displaying a mummiform divinity, a falcon wearing the dual crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, and an atef crown suggesting the presence of Osiris.



**Figure 7:** Aerial view of E.103a.1911 displaying the symbol of the solar god Khepri and the figure of a winged goddess (either Isis or Nephthys).



**Figure 8:** Side view of E.103a.1911 displaying the figure of Anubis and Ra-Horakhty with the four sons of Horus.

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