

ISSN 1018-9017

# SCHOLIA

*Studies in Classical Antiquity*



NS Vol. 17 / 2008

New Zealand / South Africa

ISSN 1018-9017

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Editor: W. J. Dominik

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*Scholia* features critical and pedagogical articles and reviews on a diverse range of subjects dealing with classical antiquity, including late antique, medieval, Renaissance and early modern studies related to the classical tradition; in addition, there are articles on classical artefacts in museums in New Zealand and the J. A. Barsby Essay.

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**Publication and Distribution:** *Scholia* and *Scholia Reviews* (volumes 1-15) have published 670 contributions by 296 scholars and academics at 149 universities and other institutions in 30 countries. *Scholia* has been distributed to institutions and scholars in 43 countries.

**Cover Illustration:** Drawing by E. A. Mackay (University of Auckland) based on an Attic black-figure fragment (inv. L.1989.K) in the Museum of Classical Archaeology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban (on permanent loan from A. Gosling).

**Typesetting:** W. J. Dominik, G. R. B. Turner

**Printing:** Otago University Print

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*Studies in Classical Antiquity*

ISSN 1018-9017

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

A distinguishing feature of *Scholia* has been its publication of articles and reviews by scholars from thirty countries around the world on six continents. A number of these countries are represented in *Scholia* 17 (2008), namely New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom (England and Scotland), Canada, South Africa, USA (including Puerto Rico), Germany and Austria. The leading articles in this volume deal with Plato's *Republic*, *Apology* and *Phaedo*; Euripides' *Bacchae*; Solon's poetry; Plautus' *Mercator* and *Amphitruo*; Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*; and Hobbes' use of Ovid's *Tristia*.<sup>1</sup>

The editors of *Scholia* are endeavouring to ensure the availability of the journal well into the future in both print and online formats. In addition to agreeing to permit ProQuest to include *Scholia* in its ProQuest 5000 database ([http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pq\\_5000.shtml](http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pq_5000.shtml)), the editors have also accepted the offer of RMIT Publishing to permit Informit, a source of Australasian scholarly research, to serve as a repository for all its contents in its Informit e-Library (<http://www.informit.com.au/elibrary.html>). The editors are in contact with both businesses in an attempt to ensure that *Scholia* appears in as professional form as possible on their websites. As a result of these agreements the contents of the journal can no longer be placed on the main *Scholia* website (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/classics/scholia>), though the journal will continue to maintain a web presence through this site, which contains comprehensive information about the journal, and its reviews website (<http://www.classics.ukzn.ac.za/reviews>). The reviews website features *Scholia Reviews*, an electronic journal that contains the versions of the review articles and reviews published in *Scholia* as well as those that do not appear in printed form.

The In the Museum section, which contains news about classical artefacts in New Zealand museums, features a major article by Patricia Hannah on a bronze Corinthian helmet in the Otago Museum, Dunedin.<sup>2</sup> Although the Otago Museum acquired the helmet eighty years ago, it was never published as a scholarly article; hence the need for publication to make it more widely known. This volume also includes the 2008 J. A. Barsby Essay, which is the edited paper judged to be the best university student essay submitted to the Australasian Society for Classical Studies New Zealand essay competition during 2008. The essay, written by Richard Carpenter (Auckland), is entitled 'Rome's "Student Who Surpasses the Master" Motif'.<sup>3</sup> The competition, which attracted twenty-three entries, was adjudicated by Babette Puetz (Victoria, Wellington) and Patrick O'Sullivan (Canterbury).

William J. Dominik  
Editor, *Scholia*

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Articles', p. v.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 153-63.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 164-73.

# THE WAY OUT OF PLATO'S CAVE

**Thomas Fred Morris**

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**Abstract.** That “the essential practice of the philosopher” in Plato’s *Phaedo* is to release the soul from the body implies that it is the turning away from the sensible world of Plato’s *Republic*. If this release were mere preparation for thought, then the subsequent thought would be the essential activity. That this release is “the philosopher’s essential practice” is shown to follow from Plato’s *Republic* 518b6-519b5, *Apology* 30a8-b2, and *Phaedo* 63e-67e.

Socrates calls releasing the soul from the body τὸ μελέτημα αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν τῶν φιλοσόφων (“the essential practice of the philosopher,” Pl. *Phd.* 67d7-10).<sup>1</sup> He describes the purification that leads to this release as:

... τὸ χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἐθίσαι αὐτὴν καθ’ αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος συναγείρεσθαι τε καὶ ἀθροίζεσθαι, καὶ οἰκεῖν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα μόνῃν καθ’ αὐτὴν, ἐκλυομένην ὥσπερ [ἐκ] δεσμῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;

(Pl. *Phd.* 67c6-d2)

... separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body and teaching the soul the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body, and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as [from] chains?

It might seem as if Socrates is talking about the habit of ignoring the bodily distractions that disrupt a philosopher’s concentration. This is indeed suggested by Alcibiades’ interpretation of a time in which Socrates is standing from one morning to another: Alcibiades takes him to be wrestling with some problem or other before he says a prayer to the sun and goes away (Pl. *Symp.* 220c1-d5). But rising above distractions cannot be the essential practice of the philosopher, for if one desires to escape from one’s senses to allow oneself to concentrate on solving some particular problem, then one’s essential practice is not escaping from the influence of one’s senses—the essential practice has to do with what

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<sup>1</sup> The texts of Plato *Phd.*, *Ap.* and *Cri.* are those of J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera* 1 (Oxford 1967); of Plato *Symp.* is that of J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera* 2 (Oxford 1967); of Plato *Resp.* is that of J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera* 4 (Oxford 1968). Translation of Plato *Phd.*, *Ap.* and *Cri.* is by H. N. Fowler (tr.), *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1914); of Plato *Resp.* is by P. Shorey (tr.), *Plato: Republic* 1-2 (Cambridge, Mass. 1937). I occasionally make changes to these translations.

one does subsequently as one goes about solving the problem. Moreover, it is simply not that difficult for mentally healthy people to concentrate on their subject matter—for example, a mentally healthy mathematician does not need to study how to avoid being distracted in order to deduce a mathematical truth.

Another possibility is that Plato is talking about the sort of activity described, for example, in the *Upanishads*: “Always dwelling within all beings is the Atman, the Self, a little flame in the heart. Let one with steadiness withdraw it from the body even as an inner stem is withdrawn from its sheath,” (*Katha Upanishad* 6, 17). The prayer that Alicibiades hears Socrates offer up to the sun might then be a prayer directed to the object of Socrates’ contemplation as he withdrew his soul from his body.

Meditative practices generally involve focusing on one thing as a means of avoiding involvement with the world around us. For example, because we are always breathing, we are always stimulating nerves connected to the hairs in our noses; thus some Buddhists meditate by focusing on the feeling from these nerves to the exclusion of all other sensations. While such a spot at first has merely negative significance—it is that to which one turns in order to avoid thinking of everyday matters—with time one comes to think of it as the way through which one can experience spiritual reality. One gradually builds up a positive desire for this spot as the gateway to the eternal, and becomes increasingly better at freeing one’s mind from the preoccupations with worldly matters that tend to prevent one from focusing on it. Anyone who has tried to free themselves from such preoccupations knows how difficult it is. When we meditate or pray, we tend to dwell on the things of this world. Rather than thinking about spiritual reality or God, we find ourselves thinking about what snack we are going to make for ourselves when we are done meditating, or how we wish that some sick person become healthy, or what some particular person may have been saying about us at that party, and so on and on. When one is meditating, one needs to recognize such concerns as indulgences, and to respond to them by fastening one’s attention on one’s particular spot. As with any habit, the more one does so, the more it becomes second nature to do so.

This article argues that when Plato talks of the need for the soul to escape from the body, he is talking about something like meditation; that is, he is concerned with maintaining a state in which one is indifferent to bodily sensations. I do this by showing first how this need can be derived from what Plato says in the allegory of the Cave; secondly, how it can be derived from what Plato says in the *Apology* 30a-b; and thirdly, in six parts, by carefully working through the details of the discussion of the essential practice of the philosopher in Plato’s *Phaedo*. To maintain this state of indifference to bodily

sensations enables one to experience the unhypothesized beginning, for the unhypothesized beginning is reached by turning away from the sensible world.

### *The Allegory of the Cave*

In the allegory of the Cave, Plato says that education is not a matter of putting knowledge into the soul but of changing the orientation of the student (Pl. *Resp.* 518b6-c8). The way in which the prisoners can experience the splendor of the world of being is by turning 180 degrees away from the world of becoming (518c8-10). That which is turned is that which we commonly experience in shrewd people: ἢ οὐπω ἐννενόηκας, τῶν λεγομένων πονηρῶν μὲν, σοφῶν δέ, ὥς δριμύ μὲν βλέπει τὸ ψυχάριον καὶ ὀξέως διορᾷ τὰῦτα ἐφ' ᾧ τέτραπται ("you must have noticed in dishonest men with a reputation for sagacity the sharp power of perception of their little soul piercing the objects to which it is directed," 519a1-3). This sharpness makes the dishonest man's soul quick to discern the things that interest it. But, if the power of perception is oriented in the proper direction, it is most quick in its discernment of the higher things (519b3-5). Thus the essential practice of people who want to experience the world of being is to change their orientation. This frees their power of perception to experience that which can be perceived in the world of being. Just as sharp, worldly people succeed through their passion to find their advantage, so too is passion required in order to perceive the unhypothesized beginning.

Initially Plato sees the prisoners as being forced to look straight ahead at the wall of a cave, but he then changes his metaphor and sees their problem as that of being forced to look downward by leaden weights that are clinging to them. These weights have been attached through food and similar pleasures, and greediness, and they have been accumulating since childhood. They must be struck off, if the prisoners are to be free to look toward the realm of being (Pl. *Resp.* 519a8-b5).

Plato indicates how these weights became attached: Ἀλλὰ μὲν ὅτω γε εἰς ἓν τι αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι σφόδρα ῥέπουσιν, ἴσμεν πού ὅτι εἰς τὰλλα τούτω ἀσθενέστεραι, ὥσπερ ῥεῦμα ἐκεῖσε ἀπωχετευμένον ("We surely know that when a man's desires set strongly in one direction, in every other channel they flow more feebly, like a stream diverted into another bed," Pl. *Resp.* 485d6-8). When we feel passion for something, a channel in our soul becomes deeper, and we have a greater tendency to have future passion flow down that channel, rather than down a different channel. That is, we develop predispositions to desire certain types of objects, and the more that we reinforce these predispositions the more they tend to dominate our lives. For example, when Charles Dickens' Scrooge was a young man he was interested in a variety of matters, but his life became dominated by the predisposition to care about

money that he gradually built up over time. His channels toward other objects flowed more and more feebly. In Plato’s *Republic*, the prisoners’ greediness for food, and so on, is a result of such channelization from their childhood.

Predispositions to desire what we have previously desired prevent us from experiencing what we can experience if our power of perception (that power with which supposedly shrewd people pierce their objects) is directed toward the realm of being; our preoccupations with the objects of the sensible world prevent us from looking back toward the fire in the Cave. The passions that we have developed for the shadows on the wall suggest their objects as being what will be good for us, causing us to have mistaken ideas about the Good:

Ὁ δὲ διώκει μὲν ἅπαντα ψυχὴ καὶ τούτου ἕνεκα πάντα πράττει,  
ἀπομαντευομένη τι εἶναι, ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς  
τί ποτ’ ἐστὶν οὐδὲ πίστει χρῆσασθαι μονίμῳ οἷα καὶ περὶ τᾶλλα . . .  
(Pl. *Resp.* 505d11-e3)

Every soul pursues the Good and for its sake does all that it does, with an intuition of its reality, but is yet baffled and unable to apprehend its nature adequately or to attain to any stable belief about it as about other things . . .

But the truly good thing is the unhypothesized beginning, the Form “Good”:

τὰ δ’ οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ  
ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι, ὁφθεῖσα δὲ συλλογιστέα εἶναι ὥς ἄρα  
πᾶσι πάντων αὕτη ὁρθῶν τε καὶ καλῶν αἰτία . . .  
(Pl. *Resp.* 517b7-c2)

My dream as it appears to me is that in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good. When seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things right and beautiful . . .<sup>2</sup>

If we truly understand that the goodness that we ultimately desire is to be found by turning away from the sensible world, we shall no longer desire the objects of that world, and we shall be free to turn our souls 180 degrees and to contemplate the splendor of being.

But there is a big difference between, for example, understanding that outward appearances are not really important—that it is the inner person that really matters—and actually treating the girl with an ugly face in the same way that one treats the girl with a pretty face. To really appropriate an understanding

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<sup>2</sup> K. M. Sayre, *Plato’s Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue* (Notre Dame 1995) 173-81 argues that the unhypothesized beginning is *not* the Form “Good”; but, as he does not consider this passage, his argument is fatally flawed.

means to have it influence what one cares about, to have it influence one's desires with their implied ideas of what is good. To appropriate the understanding that what is truly good is to be found by turning away from the sensible world requires creation of a new channel in one's soul that can eventually become so deep that the channels toward sensible objects of desire run feebly. That is, the philosopher needs to develop a deep channel away from sensible objects *per se*. Channels get deeper through the strong desires that we feel for their objects (Pl. *Resp.* 485d6-8). If we feel a strong passion to escape from sensible objects of desire, we shall develop a predisposition or habit that will allow us to escape from their pull, and thus free us to reorient our souls. Therefore the practice that is required by the *Republic*—an effort not to be concerned with the sensible world—is precisely the habit that is described as “the essential practice of the philosopher,” if that practice is understood to be something like meditation.

*Plato's Apology 30a-b:  
Why the Philosopher Would Despise Things of the Body*

Socrates claims that the philosopher despises clothing and ornamenting the body except insofar as it is necessary to do so (Pl. *Phd.* 64d8-e1). Rowe objects that, while excessive indulgence interferes with philosophy, it is not clear why a philosopher should not be moderately interested in the things of the body.<sup>3</sup> But, when we are desirous of not giving in to temptation, we can despise what tends to pull us in the opposite direction. For example, Leontius is said to despise his body for just this reason:

ὥς ἄρα Λεόντιος ὁ Ἀγλαΐωνος ἀνιών ἐκ Πειραιῶς ὑπὸ τὸ βόρειον τεῖχος ἐκτός, αἰσθόμενος νεκροὺς παρὰ τῷ δημίῳ κειμένους, ἅμα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῖ, ἅμα δὲ αὖ δυσχεραίνει καὶ ἀποτρέπει ἑαυτόν, καὶ τέως μὲν μάχοιτό τε καὶ παρακαλύπτειτο, κρατούμενος δ' οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διελκύσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, προσδραμών πρὸς τοὺς νεκρούς, “Ἴδοὺ ὑμῖν,” ἔφη, “ὦ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος.”

(Pl. *Resp.* 439e7-440a3)

On his way up from the Piraeus under the outer side of the northern wall, becoming aware of dead bodies that lay at the place of public execution, at the same time he felt a desire to see them and a repugnance and aversion. For a time he resisted and veiled his head, but overpowered in despite of all by his desire, with wide staring eyes he rushed up to the corpses and cried, “There you wretches, take your fill of the fine spectacle!”

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<sup>3</sup> C. J. Rowe (ed.), *Plato: Phaedo* (Cambridge 1993) 138.



The fact that the philosopher despises bodily things can be seen to follow from Plato’s *Apology*: μήτε σωμάτων ἐπιμελεῖσθαι μήτε χρημάτων πρότερον μηδὲ οὕτω σφόδρα ὥς τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὥς ἀρίστη ἔσται (“do not care about your bodies or your property more than about the perfection of your souls, or even so much,” 30a8-b2). For, if we desire to make our first concern be the welfare of our souls, we shall despise our bodies to the extent that we are tempted to make them our first concern; at those times when we choose to be concerned moderately with clothing and ornamenting our bodies, we give our bodies a priority that they do not deserve, and we can despise such concerns as temptations that are causing us to lose our orientation toward the perfection of our souls; we need to limit our desire for such things to what is necessary.

This concern not to care so much for our bodies and property seems to follow from an earlier formulation:

ἐγὼ δὲ τούτῳ ἂν δίκαιον λόγον ἀντίποιμι, ὅτι “Οὐ καλῶς λέγεις, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, εἰ οἶει δεῖν κίνδυνον ὑπολογίζεσθαι τοῦ ζῆν ἢ τεθνάναι ἄνδρα ὅτου τι καὶ σμικρὸν ὄφελός ἐστιν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐκεῖνο μόνον σκοπεῖν ὅταν πράττῃ, πότερον δίκαια ἢ ἀδίκᾳ πράττει, καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἔργα ἢ κακοῦ.”

(Pl. *Ap.* 28b5-9)

But I would answer him justly: “You do not speak well, if you think that a person who is good for the least thing ought to consider the danger of life or death, and not rather regard only, when they do something, whether they are acting rightly or wrongly, and whether their acts are those of a good person or a bad.”<sup>4</sup>

If, at any given moment, we make a priority of our bodies or our property, we are not thinking merely of what will be the right thing to do. But it is actually the other way around: Pl. *Ap.* 28b5-9 follows from 30a8-b2. Plato gives no explicit support in the *Apology* for the claim at 28b5-9 that we should only think about doing what is right. But Socrates shows his ground when he deduces the same principle elsewhere: μὴ οὐ δέη ὑπολογίζεσθαι οὕτ’ εἰ ἀποθνήσκειν δεῖ παραμένοντας καὶ ἡσυχίαν ἄγοντας, οὕτε ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν πάσχειν πρὸ τοῦ ἀδικεῖν (“we ought not consider whether we must die if we stay here and keep quiet or whether we must endure anything else whatsoever, but only the question of doing injustice,” Pl. *Cri.* 48d3-5).<sup>5</sup> Socrates’ conclusion is derived from the premise that within us ὁ τῷ μὲν δικαίῳ βέλτιον ἐγίγνετο τῷ δὲ ἀδίκῳ ἀπώλλυτο (“there is something that is benefited by justice and

<sup>4</sup> Jesus also taught that we should concentrate on being righteous without regard to our future material wellbeing (*Matthew* 6:31-34).

<sup>5</sup> J. Stephens, “Socrates on the Rule of Law,” *HPhQ* 2 (1985) 3 sees the connection with Pl. *Ap.* 28b.

ruined by injustice,” 47d4-5).<sup>6</sup> If you allow yourself to do what is unjust, then you can ruin something inside of you. This ruination would take place through misdirected passion, for Socrates says to Crito: ὦ φίλε Κρίτων, ἡ προθυμία σου πολλοῦ ἀξία εἰ μετὰ τινος ὀρθότητος εἴη· εἰ δὲ μή, ὅσῳ μείζων τοσοῦτῳ χαλεπωτέρα (“dear Crito, your passion is worth a great deal, if it should prove to be rightly directed; but otherwise, the greater it is, the more difficult it is to deal with,” 46b1-3).<sup>7</sup> Surely the way in which this misdirected passion makes things more difficult for us is through the deepening of those channels in our souls that give us predispositions to have similar passions in the future. The way in which unjust action ruins our souls is therefore by creating channels so deep that we cannot really care about anything else. Thus, the concern for the perfection of one’s soul (Pl. *Ap.* 30a8-b2) is the ground for teaching (28b5-9) that we should never have an ulterior motive for what we do. To allow oneself to desire things of the body more than is necessary is to fall away from making a priority of the state of one’s soul. Indeed, one would then be corrupting one’s soul by deepening its channels toward inferior objects of desire.

People who live without ulterior motive will develop a stoical disregard for their future situations, and thus an increasingly greater indifference to their outward circumstances. They will desire to respond justly to their present situation, rather than to attain sensible objects of desire at some future time. While this will weaken their ties to the sensible world, merely abstaining from ulterior motives will not necessarily give them the positive motivation to dissociate themselves from that world. But, to the extent that one recognizes that a concern for the things of the body will tend to corrupt one’s soul, one will tend to despise them, and thus tend to develop a desire to escape from their sirens’ song. Because misdirected passion makes it more difficult to maintain one’s orientation toward perfecting one’s soul, the stronger one’s commitment

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<sup>6</sup> H. Teloh, *Socratic Education in Plato’s Early Dialogues* (Notre Dame 1986) 98 sees living justly as being instrumental to the examination of one’s life (“injustice discourages the give and take of *logoi*”), and thereby holds that to commit an injustice prevents examination of one’s life which is therefore not worth living (rather than the converse that examination of one’s life is instrumental to living justly, and that it is an unjust life that makes one’s life not worth living.)

<sup>7</sup> E. J. M. West, “Socrates in the *Crito*: Patriot or Friend?”, in J. Anton & A. Preus (edd.), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy 3 Plato* (Albany 1989) 74 thinks that Socrates is commending Crito’s passion rather than passion in general. But Socrates adds εἰ μετὰ τινος ὀρθότητος εἴη (“if it should prove rightly directed,” Pl. *Cri.* 46b1-2). Only rightly directed passion is valuable. The context makes plain that Socrates does not think that Crito’s passion is rightly directed.

to one’s soul becomes, the greater will be one’s desire to escape the temptations of the things of the body.

*Plato’s Phaedo 63e-67e*

I argue that Plato makes mistakes on purpose in the *Phaedo*. Indeed, Plato’s work is replete with arguments that are so bad that they can be defeated by intelligent freshmen—as Thomas Jefferson observes, Plato puts into Socrates’ mouth “such paralogisms, such quibbles on words, and sophisms, as a school boy would be ashamed of” (Jefferson’s letter to William Short, from Monticello, August 4, 1820).<sup>8</sup> The way to reconcile this fact with the fact that Plato’s engaging manner of writing shows that he is obviously a very intelligent person is to take him as making these mistakes on purpose. We shall find that, when we articulate what is wrong with an argument, we come across the true point that Plato is trying to convey. This requires that we patiently consider the details of his argumentation.

Socrates argues that the philosopher should strive to separate his soul from his body because the body’s senses interfere with the apprehension of truth (Pl. *Phd.* 63e8-67e9). He eventually presents three reasons why the philosopher’s senses interfere with the apprehension of truth. First, the senses are inaccurate and indistinct (65a9-b6); secondly, the senses ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας ἐμπύμπλησιν ἡμᾶς πολλῆς (“fill us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense,” 66c2-4); and thirdly, the senses ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσιν αὐτῷ πανταχοῦ παραπίπτον θόρυβον παρέχει καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ ἐκπλήττει, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ καθορᾶν τᾶληθές (“are constantly breaking in upon our studies and disturbing us with confusion, so that they prevent us from beholding the truth,” 66d5-7).<sup>9</sup> He further gives us a number of indications that his first reason, namely the inaccuracy of the senses, is not the real problem. Thus, the problem is either his second reason, namely that the senses cause us to be desirous of the wrong things, or his third reason, namely that the senses are constantly disrupting our concentration with their confusion. Because Socrates will later explain that to escape from the companionship of the body is needed as *preparation* for understanding absolute truth (67d6-e1), it cannot merely be a matter of preventing the senses from breaking up a process of thought that has already begun. While this preparation

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<sup>8</sup> M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York 1994) 1435-440.

<sup>9</sup> R. Woolf, “The Practice of a Philosopher,” *OSAPh* 26 (2004) 100 recognizes only the first of the three problems, holding that the problem with the senses is that they “are impostors, presenting a false picture of reality.”

might still be a process of learning how not to be distracted, nonetheless, even if this preparation gets to a point where one is not even distracted by a gunshot, then the problem of how the preparation for the activity can be the same as the essential activity of the philosopher still remains. Moreover, it is not really true that we need to have the concentration of an Archimedes in order to be successful in abstract thought; the senses are not *constantly* breaking in and causing us to lose our concentration.

Furthermore while, for example, loud noises sometimes fill us with fear, mere distractions do not generally fill us with “loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies.” Generally, we are merely curious about them. On the other hand, it does make sense to say that, when thought is trying to focus on eternal reality, desires for sensible objects constantly break in and disturb it with confusion. Undisciplined minds have a great deal of difficulty in rising above their preoccupations with the things of the day. We leaders of lives of quiet desperation cannot just shuck off our orientation toward the things of which we have been so desirous and turn to the other world. Surely all people who have tried to concentrate on eternal reality know the experience of Shakespeare’s Claudius, King of Denmark: “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below” (*Hamlet* 3.3.97<sup>10</sup>).

Thus, the need for philosophers to separate their souls from their bodies is a need for the philosophers to change the orientation of their souls, so that they will no longer have “loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies” for the objects that are presented to them by the senses, but will instead have a predisposition to care about absolute truth. This preparation is the development of a certain habit, the habit of collecting and bringing the soul together from all parts of the body, and of the soul living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as from chains (Pl. *Phd.* 67c6-d2). This habit is in competition with other habits, other channels within our souls. The task of philosophers is thus to desire truth to such an extent that the corresponding channel in their souls becomes deeper than all the other channels in their souls. Their essential task is to care about absolute truth.

*Plato’s Phaedo 64a4-65a2: A False Dilemma Leads to the  
Question Why Philosophers Would Despise Ornamenting the Body*

Socrates begins an argument by claiming that philosophers have the desire for death all of their lives (Pl. *Phd.* 64a4-9), but he indicates that the nature of that death and how the philosopher desires death are not what people commonly

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<sup>10</sup> S. Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller (edd.), *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (New York 2002).

think (64b7-9). He identifies death as the separation of the soul from the body (64c4-8). Thus, his task will be to show that, for some reason, philosophers desire to separate their souls from their bodies.

The philosopher is said not to care about bodily pleasures—including those of eating, just as the past passions that hold down the prisoners in Plato’s *Republic* include desires for food—or about ornamenting the body beyond what is necessary (Pl. *Phd.* 64d2-e1). Socrates commits a false dilemma fallacy, asking whether the philosopher would care about unnecessary bodily ornaments or whether he would despise them (64d8-e1).<sup>11</sup> Why cannot the philosopher merely be neutral with respect to unnecessary things of the body? While I might care about philosophy rather than physics, that does not necessarily mean that I will *despise* physics. Socrates is presupposing the very thing that he is supposed to be proving, that philosophers have some sort of aversion to the things of the body—that they are trying to get away from it. He goes on to conclude that it is clear that, in the case of bodily pleasures, the philosopher frees his soul from association with the body to a greater extent than do other people (64e8-65a2). We are left to wonder what the reason for this might be, for he has given us none.

*Plato’s Phaedo 65a9-65d8: An Invalid Argument  
Indicates that the Problem is Not the Inaccuracy of the Senses*

Socrates seems to give a reason why the philosopher would despise the body, when he says that the body’s senses are a hindrance in the acquisition of knowledge because they are inaccurate and indistinct (Pl. *Phd.* 65a9-b6); and he concludes that the soul is deceived whenever it considers anything in company with the body (65b9-11). But this conclusion does not follow. For, first, while I may be fooled by optical illusions *sometimes* or distant or small objects may be unclear *sometimes*, at other times my eyes accurately inform me about what an author has written, about where tools are located, and so on; I am not deceived by my body’s inaccurate and indistinct sensations whenever I consider things in company with my body.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in Plato’s Divided Line passage (Pl. *Resp.*

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<sup>11</sup> K. Dorter, *Plato’s Phaedo: An Interpretation* (Toronto 1982) 27 comments: “One allows oneself to appreciate the charms a certain experience has to offer without forgetting their triviality in comparison with more important matters.” But this interpretation of the philosopher’s attitude toward bodily pleasures does not accord with the fact that Plato’s text says that the philosopher will *despise* the body.

<sup>12</sup> As D. Gallop (ed. and tr.), *Plato: Phaedo* (Oxford 1975) 91 writes: “Such ‘deceit’ . . . occurs against a background of perceptual judgments that are generally correct.” Rowe [3] 140 aptly observes: “We should need more than poetic hyperbole to convince us that the evidence of the senses is *always* deceptive.”

509d6-511e5), mathematicians use sensible objects—such as a drawing of a triangle—to help them to think about Forms. Whether or not the triangle is drawn perfectly is irrelevant to a geometrical proof: οὐ περὶ τούτων διανοοῦμενοι, ἀλλ’ ἐκείνων περὶ οἷς ταῦτα ἔοικε, τοῦ τετραγώνου αὐτοῦ ἔνεκα τοὺς λόγους ποιούμενοι καὶ διαμέτρου αὐτῆς, ἀλλ’ οὐ ταύτης ἦν γράφουσιν (“they are not thinking of the images but of those things of which they are a likeness, pursuing their inquiry for the sake of the square as such and the diagonal as such, and not for the sake of what they drew,” Pl. *Resp.* 510d6-e1). Therefore, whether or not the mathematician’s eyes perfectly represent what is drawn is irrelevant.

At this point, Socrates draws a further conclusion that *is* in accord with the Divided Line—for the higher division of the intelligible part of the line makes no use of sensations—but this should not obscure the fact that the argument leading up to it has been invalid. This further conclusion—that realities can be revealed only in thought (Pl. *Phd.* 65c2-3)—is derived from another invalid move. Even if the senses’ inaccuracy and indistinctness necessarily deceive us whenever we consider anything in company with the body, it does not follow that realities, if they can be revealed at all, can be revealed only in thought. The fact that realities cannot be apprehended accurately and distinctly by the senses does not mean that they cannot be apprehended *at all* by the senses; it can still be possible to apprehend realities in inaccurate, confused ways.

Socrates then concludes that thought is best when it is not troubled by such things as hearing and sight, or pain and pleasure (Pl. *Phd.* 65c5-7). It is not clear exactly what he has in mind here. Is it simply a matter of thought tending to be troubled by bodily pleasures and desires to ornament the body (which was the difficulty at 64d2-e1)? Or can it also be a matter of thought being troubled by these inaccurate representations of hearing and sight?<sup>13</sup> Pain and pleasure troubling the soul seem to refer merely to bodily temptations, because they do not have much to do with cognition. Can one say that the other pair, hearing and sight, trouble—or grieve—the soul with their inaccurate representations? If the soul recognizes them as inaccuracies, then the soul can simply ignore them. But if the soul has difficulty recognizing that they are inaccurate, then it might be the case that it can become troubled by their inaccurate representations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> P. J. Ahrens Dorf, *The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's Phaedo* (Albany 1995) 42 takes as unproblematic the point that the senses do not possess truth and therefore deceive the soul.

<sup>14</sup> I see no textual support for the claim by Gallop [12] 91 that Socrates’ quarrel with the senses here is that they give no indication that there are such things as Forms and strongly suggest that there are not. Socrates is about to introduce, but has not yet done so, the fact that

A new train of thought is abruptly begun. Socrates asserts that there is such a thing as absolute justice, absolute beauty, and absolute goodness (Pl. *Phd.* 65d4-8). Simmias agrees that he has never beheld any such things with his eyes. He is surely correct; it is obvious that such absolute realities belong to a realm different from the realm of the things that we are accustomed to experience with our eyes. But the fact that this point is obvious resolves the issue of why the senses are distracting. Of course, the philosopher knows that he is interested in a reality that is not beheld through the senses; therefore he must not be troubled by the senses’ inaccurate representations of what he is not interested in. Thus, by a process of elimination, it seems clear that the reason why the philosopher needs to avoid being troubled by the senses is that he needs to avoid desires for bodily pleasures and for ornamenting the body.

*Plato’s Phaedo 65e2-66a6: Plato Plays with Words to Make  
Us Feel that the Problem with the Senses Really is Their Inaccuracy*

Socrates proceeds to mention a number of Forms that cannot be perceived by the senses. He says that, in addition to never having been seen through the bodily organs, these Forms are known ἐγγύτατα (“most precisely”) by someone who is ἀκριβέστατα (“most precise”) in his preparations to understand them (Pl. *Phd.* 65d9-e4). Because the issue is one of *precise* knowledge, we seem to be back to the proposition that the senses seem to interfere with the thinking process because of their inaccurate, indistinct—and therefore imprecise—character. But it has just been established that these absolutes are not beheld by the senses. Therefore, it is not as if the thinker who fails to apprehend most precisely the truth of the absolutes fails because he has relied on the senses’ inexact representations. Thus, this precise preparation must entail the precision of not allowing oneself to indulge even moderately in the things of the body (beyond what is necessary).

Only after having obtained Simmias’ agreement that various Forms are not perceived through the senses, does Socrates proceed to give reasons for that claim. These reasons omit the specific need not to be influenced by imprecise senses, but include the more general need to ἀπαλλαγεῖς ὅτι μάλιστα ὀφθαλμῶν τε καὶ ὠτῶν καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν σύμπαντος τοῦ σώματος, ὡς ταραττοντος καὶ οὐκ ἐῶντος τὴν ψυχὴν κτήσασθαι ἀλήθειάν τε καὶ φρόνησιν ὅταν κοινωνῇ (“remove himself, so far as possible, from his eyes and ears, from his whole body, because he feels that its companionship troubles the soul and hinders it from attaining truth and wisdom,” Pl. *Phd.* 66a3-6). The

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the senses do not apprehend Forms. Therefore, that fact does not play a role in Socrates’ deduction of the conclusion that thought is best when it is not troubled by the senses.

expression ὅτι μάλιστα (“so far as possible”) seems to refer back to the need to escape bodily pleasures, for the philosopher was said to despise bodily pleasures καθ’ ὅσον μὴ πολλὴ ἀνάγκη μετέχειν αὐτῶν (“except insofar as it is necessary to have them,” 64e1).

The philosopher’s thought needs to correlate with its object: the philosopher should be doing nothing ἀλλ’ αὐτῇ καθ’ αὐτήν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ χρώμενος αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ εἰλικρινεὶς ἕκαστον ἐπιχειροῖ θηρεύειν τῶν ὄντων (“but employing pure, unadulterated thought in order to find the pure unadulterated essence of things,” Pl. *Phd.* 66a1-3). Our issue is the nature of the troubles and hindrances that adulterates thought. If it is merely a question of avoiding distractions, then it is hard to see how the body’s companionship makes the philosopher’s thought less pure. You either succeed in thinking abstractly or you do not; if you succeed, then the companionship of the body is not going to make your thought any less precise. But if it is a question of the senses causing one’s soul to be oriented in a direction that prevents one from apprehending absolute truth, then it makes sense to say that they trouble and hinder us by preventing us from getting a proper view of our objects.

*Plato’s Phaedo 66b7-d7: An Invalid Argument Shows that  
the Constant Problem of the Senses Cannot Be Being Distracted*

Socrates goes on to give further reasons why lovers of wisdom would want to dissociate themselves from the body. The first reason is that μυρίας μὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀσχολίας παρέχει τὸ σῶμα διὰ τὴν ἀναγκαίαν τροφήν (“the body keeps us constantly busy by reason of its need of sustenance,” Pl. *Phd.* 66b7-c1). What is wrong with this, reader? Apart from conditions of extreme poverty, people do not need to be *constantly* occupied with meeting their bodily needs. That we can have time for intellectual pursuits was understood when Socrates said that the lover of wisdom would despise bodily desires “*except insofar as it is necessary to have them*” (64e1). If we were all so poor that we had to be constantly busy in order to meet our bodies’ needs, then it indeed follows that ἔως ἂν τὸ σῶμα ἔχωμεν καὶ συμπεφυρμένη ἢ ἡμῶν ἢ ψυχῇ μετὰ τοιούτου κακοῦ, οὐ μή ποτε κτησώμεθα ἱκανῶς οὐδ’ ἐπιθυμοῦμεν· φαμὲν δὲ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ἀληθές (“we shall never sufficiently attain the truth that is the object of our desire while we have a body and the soul is contaminated by such an evil,” 66b5-7). But, because we are not all this poor, Socrates must still explain how the body prevents us from attaining to complete truth once we have met our bodily needs.

Seemingly in recognition of this problem, Socrates proceeds to give a further reason: ἔτι δέ, ἃν τινες νόσοι προσπέσωσιν, ἐμποδίζουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος θήραν (“moreover, if our bodies become diseased, they hinder our



pursuit of truth,” Pl. *Phd.* 66c1-2). While this is true at those times when we are sufficiently sick, we are not all sick all of the time<sup>15</sup>—just as there are times in which relatively wealthy people are not trying to meet their bodily needs. Thus Socrates’ argument is still invalid.

Socrates adds yet another premise: ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας ἐμπύμπλησιν ἡμᾶς πολλῆς, ὥστε τὸ λεγόμενον ὡς ἀληθῶς τῷ ὄντι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ φρονῆσαι ἡμῖν ἐγγίγνεται οὐδέποτε οὐδέν (“and the body fills us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense, so that, as they say, it really and truly makes it impossible for us to think at all,” Pl. *Phd.* 66c2-5). While it is certainly true that our preoccupations with the things of the sensible world prevent us from doing the type of thinking of the highest division of Plato’s Divided Line, the words ὥστε τὸ λεγόμενον (“as they say”) prevent this from being Plato’s meaning. He must be referring to thinking in the ordinary sense of the word, and it is simply not true that people never think at all. Socrates’ premise is false.

He makes one more point before concluding that ἀσχολίαν ἄγομεν φιλοσοφίας (“we have no leisure for philosophy,” Pl. *Phd.* 66d2). He blames wars on the body, for wars are fought for the sake of gaining money, and we desire money for the sake of the body. Even if this were true, it would not save his argument, for there are times of peace in which healthy people who are not in extreme poverty can still have leisure to think. We are not constantly at war any more than we are constantly sick, or in general constantly striving to meet the body’s needs for sustenance.

And then Socrates takes it all back, acknowledging that there actually are times when we do have the leisure to think: τὸ δ’ ἔσχατον πάντων ὅτι, ἐάν τις ἡμῖν καὶ σχολὴ γένηται ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ τραπώμεθα πρὸς τὸ σκοπεῖν τι, ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσιν αὐτῷ πανταχοῦ παραπίπτον θόρυβον παρέχει καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ ἐκπλήττει, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ καθορᾶν τὰ ληθέες (“worst of all, if we do get a bit of leisure and turn to philosophy, the body is constantly breaking in upon our studies and disturbing us with confusion so that it prevents us from beholding the truth,” Pl. *Phd.* 66d3-7). What confusion can this be that is worse than all the things that take time away from doing philosophy (being worst of all)? It cannot be the confusion of meeting our bodily needs or of being sick or of being at war; such possibilities have been screened out, for Plato is describing a time in which we are free from all these influences. Furthermore, disturbing us with confusion will certainly not describe the effects of merely *inaccurate* sense representations.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ahrens Dorf [13] 47 sees this.

<sup>16</sup> Ahrens Dorf [13] 48 also sees this.

If the problem is that sensory distractions keep us from concentrating, then we merely have a false claim. Even though we might occasionally be distracted by loud noises, and so on, mentally healthy people quite commonly have periods of time in which they are able to concentrate on abstract problems.<sup>17</sup> Our concentration is not being *constantly* disturbed. But, if the problem is one of focusing our attention on things not in the sensible world, the confusion can be the many ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας (“loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense,” Pl. *Phd.* 66c2-4) that keep our mind’s eye on the objects of the visible world. We can be so preoccupied with the visible world that we are not be able to free ourselves to reorient our souls toward the true essences of things. Even though we may be thinking about the eternal, we can still be motivated by earthly desires. The difficulty of losing one’s desires for the things of the sensible world is the only problem that could be *constant*.

*Plato’s Phaedo 67b7-67e9:  
“The Essential Practice of the Philosopher”*

How can we turn away from sensible objects? We are surrounded by them. How can the philosopher go about τὸ χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἐθίσαι αὐτὴν καθ’ αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος συναγείρεσθαι τε καὶ ἀθροίζεσθαι, καὶ οἰκεῖν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα μόνῃν καθ’ αὐτὴν, ἐκλυομένην ὥσπερ [ἐκ] δεσμῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; (“separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body and teaching the soul the *habit* of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body, and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as [from] chains?” Pl. *Phd.* 67c6-d2)?<sup>18</sup> Just as the prisoners in the Cave were chained so that they were forced to see nothing but the shadows on the wall of the Cave, so too are the philosophers,

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<sup>17</sup> P. Hadot (tr. M. Chase), *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford 1995) 95 suggests that Socrates is talking about rising above our individuality and passions in order to look at things from the perspective of universality and objectivity. But such objectivity is also required of the sophists, for they would not be able to argue both sides of a question with equal facility if they were partial to one side. The essential task of the philosopher ought to entail more than part of the task of the sophist.

<sup>18</sup> R. O’Connell, *Plato On the Human Paradox* (New York 1997) 116f. suggests that Plato is referring to out of the body experiences such as those “reported by people who have gone through medical ‘death’ and returned from it.” But these experiences can still involve sensations: for example, O’Connell himself describes some of these people as being “a kind of ‘outside spectator’ witnessing what is being done to their body.”

who manage to escape from being preoccupied with the objects of the visible world, referred to in the *Phaedo* as being freed from their chains.<sup>19</sup> We need to develop this particular *habit*—its development is the precise preparation that is required for the precise apprehension of the absolute truth. What else can this mean but that we need to develop a new channel in our souls, so that our passion flows in a new direction? When we get sufficiently passionate about not desiring the things of the senses, our passions for sensible objects will flow more feebly, like a stream diverted to another bed. We shall have a new habit to replace the old habits. Thus, if we are going to escape from our senses, we need to develop a channel in the opposite direction: the way to escape from the senses is to despise having anything to do with them more than is necessary.

Thus, the philosopher can be said to desire death: he would, insofar as he is able, turn away from the body and toward the soul (Pl. *Phd.* 64e4-6). People who have developed such predispositions naturally hope that when they die they will attain to the object to which they have been directing all their efforts (67b7-c3). This is the only thing that they have been caring about so, of course, they hope for it; it is the object towards which the deepest channel in their souls flows. They have built up this channel to the point where it has become second nature (a “habit”) to desire to escape from sensations, and so they will welcome death as a possible means of doing so.<sup>20</sup>

The passionate turning away from the things of the senses is the art of the speediest and most effective shifting or conversion of the soul (Pl. *Resp.* 518d3-7). Just as the sharp person’s glance of narrow intelligence is quick to apprehend the outward object toward which it is directed, so too can this same faculty of passionate appropriation be quick to apprehend its object. Just as the sharp person has built up a predisposition to be alert to supposedly

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<sup>19</sup> J. Gold, “Plato in the Light of Yoga,” *Philosophy East & West* 46 (1996) 18 notes this parallel. J. Gold, “Bringing Students Out of the Cave: The First Day,” *Teaching Philosophy* 11 (1988) 26 claims that Plato is telling us that ignorance is bondage. But the problem of the Cave dwellers is that they are ignorant *because* of their chains; ignorance is the result of their predicament, not the cause.

<sup>20</sup> Ahrens Dorf [13] 54 asks: “But how can the mere desire, however intense, for happiness after death provide anyone with reasonable or even plausible grounds for hoping that such happiness will, in truth, be his?” Desire does not need reasonable or even plausible grounds. The teenage German girls who desired Hitler’s love in the 1930s knew that it was extremely unlikely that he would reciprocate. Our present passion comes from our past passions—through the channels that those passions have deepened—not from what it is reasonable or plausible to expect. R. Burger, *The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth* (New Haven 1984) 41 is incorrect when she writes: “While presumably aiming at contact with ‘the beings,’ the psyche in fact desires to be only with itself as a separate being.” The psyche desires to be with itself as a means to the further end of apprehending “the beings.”

advantageous circumstances, the philosopher can build up similar passion to be alert to the possibility of seeing absolute truth. This building up is the preparation for turning our souls around 180 degrees. When we succeed in doing so, we come into contact with that which can be found in the world of being:

“Ὅταν δέ γε αὐτὴ καθ’ αὐτὴν σκοπῇ, ἐκεῖσε οἴχεται εἰς τὸ καθαρὸν τε καὶ αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον, καὶ ὡς συγγενῆς οὖσα αὐτοῦ αἰεὶ μετ’ ἐκείνου τε γίγνεται, ὅταν περ αὐτὴ καθ’ αὐτὴν γένηται καὶ ἐξῇ αὐτῇ, καὶ πέπαυταί τε τοῦ πλάνου καὶ περὶ ἐκεῖνα αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὡσαύτως ἔχει, ὅτε τοιούτων ἐφαπτομένη καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῆς τὸ πάθημα φρόνησις κέκληται;

(Pl. *Phd.* 79d1-7)

But when the soul contemplates by itself, it passes into the realm of the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless, and being of a kindred nature, when it is once independent and free from interference, consorts with it always and strays no longer, but remains in that realm of the absolute, constant and invariable, through contact with beings of a similar nature. And this condition of the soul we call wisdom?<sup>21</sup>

Thus, οὐδὲν ἄλλο αὐτοὶ ἐπιτηδεύουσιν ἢ ἀποθνήσκειν τε καὶ τεθνάναι (“those who study philosophy aright study *nothing but* dying and being dead,” Pl. *Phd.* 64a5-6): these lovers of wisdom study to get to and to maintain the condition of the soul that they call wisdom. They study nothing but their “essential practice” of escaping from the desire for the things that are presented to them by their senses (beyond what it is necessary to desire).

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<sup>21</sup> M. Pakaluk, “Socratic Magnanimity in the *Phaedo*,” *AncPhil* 24 (2004) 108 misses Plato’s position in its specificity when he holds that wisdom is loved because it is an activity of the soul.

## RECOGNIZING DIONYSOS: THE SECOND MESSENGER SPEECH IN EURIPIDES' *BACCHAE*<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This article examines the second messenger narrative in *Bacchae*, in particular the four occurrences of *oratio recta* and their relationship to the broader dramatic action. Such a treatment demonstrates that we have Pentheus fully cognizant of his mistakes and his role in his downfall. A similar pattern of action is revealed in final scene of the play with Agave and her release from madness.

The *Bacchae* has always been one of the most disturbing and baffling plays of Euripides, and little consensus exists on its precise meaning.<sup>2</sup> Earlier scholarship focused primarily on trying to ascertain the poet's view of Dionysos, with the play being interpreted as everything from a deathbed conversion of an ageing poet who recants his earlier critical view of the gods to a rationalist critique that denounces the excesses and cruelty of religion.<sup>3</sup> Along with these interpretations came variations on the character of Pentheus, ranging from a harsh and cruel tyrant who opposes the god to a pious king crushed by a vindictive and arbitrary god.<sup>4</sup> Despite the divergence of opinion, all of these commentators shared the view that the play was primarily about Dionysos and the nature of his worship. Pentheus was a secondary figure, rather superficially

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Department of Classics at Dalhousie University. I would like to thank the audience for the discussion and, in particular, Rainer Friedrich for his useful remarks. I would also like to thank the editor and the two anonymous referees of *Scholia* for their helpful suggestions and comments.

<sup>2</sup> The text of Euripides' *Bacchae* is that of J. Diggle (ed.), *Euripidis Fabulae* 3 (Oxford 1994); of Aristotle's *Poetics* R. Kassel (ed.), *Aristotelis de Arte Poetica Liber* (Oxford 1968); and of Aristotle's *Rhetorica* W. D. Ross (ed.), *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Oxford 1964). All translations are my own.

<sup>3</sup> For a useful overview of the history of scholarship on Euripides' *Bacchae*, see H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* 1: *Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden 1990) 96-100. Also helpful are H. Oranje, *Euripides' Bacchae: The Play and its Audience* (Leiden 1984) 7-19; R. Seaford (ed. and tr.), *Euripides' Bacchae* (Warminster 1997) 30-35.

<sup>4</sup> For various views of Pentheus, see A. P. Burnett, 'Pentheus and Dionysus: Host and Guest', *CPh* 65 (1970) 15-29; G. S. Kirk, *The Bacchae* (Englewood Cliffs 1970) 66; J. R. March, 'Euripides' *Bakchai*: A Reconsideration in the Light of Vase Paintings', *BICS* 36 (1989) 43-45; B. Seidensticker, 'Pentheus', *Poetica* 5 (1972) 35-64.

drawn and apparently, as Murray put it, ‘not very interesting to the poet’.<sup>5</sup> A shift in emphasis came with the works of Dodds and Winnington-Ingram who, adopting a psychological approach to the drama, focused on elements within Pentheus’ own character that were thought to be decisive for his ruin.<sup>6</sup> With their emphasis on the opposition between deity and human rebel, they returned a much needed critical focus to the character of Pentheus. Current criticism offers us a number of different perspectives from which to view the play. We may now read the play as everything from a re-enactment of a rite of passage to a metatheatrical treatise on the nature of the theatre.<sup>7</sup> Yet the most enduring and influential interpretation of the play remains the psychological reading, most successfully argued by Dodds, but adopted in various forms by numerous critics since then.<sup>8</sup>

In his commentary on the *Bacchae*, Dodds comes up with a detailed psychology for the character of Pentheus: he is ‘the dark puritan whose passion is compounded of horror and unconscious desires, and it is this which leads him to his ruin’.<sup>9</sup> Dodds finds these repressed desires and obsessions surfacing repeatedly throughout the play: the king’s violent and impetuous behaviour, for instance, reveals the typical tragedy tyrant with an unhealthy lust for power; more telling, however, is Pentheus’ supposed focus on Dionysos as a sexual being and his obsessive conviction that Dionysiac worship is a front for illicit sexual activity. Exhibiting all the puerile sexual curiosity of an adolescent, Pentheus betrays his own secret fascination with those very activities that he so

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<sup>5</sup> G. Murray, *Essays and Addresses* (London 1921) 79.

<sup>6</sup> E. R. Dodds (ed.), *Euripides’ Bacchae*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1960); R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge 1948) 45-47; 159-61.

<sup>7</sup> For metatheatrical treatments of the play, see H. P. Foley, *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Cornell 1985); C. Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides’ Bacchae* (Princeton 1997). For a recent critical treatment of this approach, see G. Radke, *Tragik and Metatragik: Euripides’ Bakchen und die moderne Literaturwissenschaft* (Berlin 2003).

<sup>8</sup> For other psychological treatments of the play, see I. A. Larue, ‘Prurience Uncovered: the Psychology of Euripides’ Pentheus’, *CJ* 63 (1968) 209-14; M. Parsons, ‘Self-Knowledge Refused and Accepted: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on the *Bacchae* and the *Oedipus at Colonus*’, *BICS* 35 (1988) 1-14; W. Sale, ‘The Psychoanalysis of Pentheus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides’, *YCLS* 22 (1972) 63-82; Seaford [3] 33f.; C. Segal, *Interpreting Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text* (Ithaca 1986) 268-312; Segal [7] 162-64, 185-89, 287; Seidensticker [4] 35-64. For criticisms of the psychological reading of the play, see J. Gregory, ‘Some Aspects of Seeing in Euripides’ *Bacchae*’, *G&R* 32 (1985) 23-31; M. Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (Stanford 1987) 121f.; March [4] 45-50. For a useful overview of this type of approach to Greek tragedy, see S. Goldhill, ‘Modern Critical Approaches to Greek Tragedy’, in P. E. Easterling (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1997) 340-43.

<sup>9</sup> Dodds [6] 97f.

strongly denounces. Thus, when the god tempts Pentheus with the prospect of watching the Bacchantes on the mountainside, his suppressed Dionysian longing erupts forth in a form of ‘sexual voyeurism’<sup>10</sup> and Pentheus succumbs, helpless against the forces of his own nature. Betrayed and destroyed from within, his later *σπαράγμός* (‘tearing’) at the hands of the Maenads becomes the external manifestation of an inner psychological destruction. Thus, throughout the *Bacchae*, what we witness is not the futile struggle of a mortal against a divinity, but a man battling in vain against the instinctual and elemental forces residing within his own nature. Dionysos then is not a traditional Olympian divinity, but the personification of a blind force of nature which, when suppressed or rejected, unleashes its destructive power on all those within its midst.<sup>11</sup>

This psychological interpretation of the *Bacchae* has exerted an enormous influence on scholarship; even those who oppose Dodds’ specific psychologisms are often in broad agreement with his overall argument.<sup>12</sup> It appears to offer a convincing explanation for some of the more puzzling aspects of the play, such as Pentheus’ constant harping on the illicit behaviour of the Maenads, references too numerous to dismiss simply as a reflection of the typical Greek male belief about the sexual proclivities of women; secondly, the swiftness with which Pentheus yields to the god’s tantalizing proposal to see the Bacchantes, an about-face that for many cannot be explained solely in terms of Dionysian madness.<sup>13</sup> Most compelling, however, has been his depiction of Dionysos as a ruthless force of nature, a view that appears to make sense of the often baffling role of the gods in Euripidean drama.

To Dodds’ credit, he has successfully restored Pentheus to his rightful position at centre stage, a status of which much earlier scholarship had deprived him; moreover, his commentary is filled with a number of perceptive insights into the play. Yet his exegesis is shot through with terms of modern psychology and buttressed by some rather fanciful interpretations of the text. The application of psychoanalysis to any type of literature is a tricky undertaking, particularly when applied to Greek tragedy, as it requires us to interpret motivation and behaviour in terms of inner thoughts and desires; that is, by principles of psychological causation rather than by political, ethical or other

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<sup>10</sup> Sale [8] 71.

<sup>11</sup> Dodds [6] xlv.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Kirk [4] 54f., while opposing Dodds on a number of points, sees Pentheus as a tyrant obsessed with sex.

<sup>13</sup> Seaford [3] 213 explains Pentheus’ behaviour in terms of mystic initiation, while S. Scullion, ‘Pentheus in *Bacchae*: Puritan or Prurient?’, *Omnibus* 48 (2004) 13f. sees the sudden shift as the emergence of the king’s inner conflict between restraint and desire.

such considerations. The weakness of Dodds' argument becomes apparent the moment he claims that Pentheus has gained some insight into the cause of his downfall. If Pentheus is destroyed by his suppressed and distorted Dionysian longings, then any insight into his ruin would require some recognition of this, demanding from him a depth of psychological awareness unheralded in Greek tragedy. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the text to support such a view. Yet Dodds' desire for a Pentheus fully conscious of his role in his downfall is not unwarranted. Greek tragedy is filled with characters that recognize too late their own contributions to their destruction; it is one of the main patterns of tragic action. In what follows, I want to consider Dodds' psychological reading of the play, focusing on the question of Pentheus' insight, for as much as I disagree with his overall reading, I think he was right to see a Pentheus cognizant of his mistakes. That his argument fails is a consequence of his approach rather than, as later critics have claimed, the absence of sufficient evidence.

Pentheus' brief speech on which Dodds rests his argument is reported in the second messenger ῥῆσις ('speech'), spoken by the attendant who has accompanied Pentheus and Dionysos to the mountainside. As the only eyewitness to the recent happenings on Mount Kithairon, he has returned to the city of Thebes in order to bring news of the king's demise. Beginning with a description of the fateful journey from the city to the mountain, the messenger ῥῆσις builds slowly to the dramatic climax of the narrative: the fateful confrontation between mother and son, and the harrowing description of Pentheus' σπαραγμός at the hands of his mother Agave and the rest of the Maenads. He ends his report with the horrifying announcement that Agave is returning from the mountainside with her Pentheus' head impaled upon her θύρσος ('thyrsos', 'Bacchic wand'). Immediately before the gruesome description of the king's dismemberment, we hear of his vain attempt to break through his mother's madness and identify himself to her. Tearing the headband from his head, he says:

Ἐγώ τοι, μήτερ, εἰμί, παῖς σέθεν  
Πενθεύς, ὃν ἔτεκες ἐν δόμοις Ἐχίονος·  
οἴκτιρε δ' ὦ μήτέρ με μηδὲ ταῖς ἐμαῖς  
ἁμαρτίαισι παῖδα σὸν κατακτάνηις.

(Eur. *Bacch.* 1118-121)

Mother, it is I, Pentheus, your son  
to whom you gave birth in the House of Echion.  
Mother, pity me; do not, for my  
mistakes, kill your own son.

For Dodds, these words are evidence of the king's sincere 'repentance'; but if he means by this that Pentheus has now understood the depth of his folly, then



for many he has gone far beyond what the text will support, and most critics have rejected this aspect of Dodds' argument.<sup>14</sup> Kirk, for instance, thinks it is unlikely that the speech shows anything beyond Pentheus' recognition that spying on the Maenads was a mistake; indeed he questions whether Pentheus is even completely sane here.<sup>15</sup> Others have conceded that he dies with a clear mind, but doubt whether the king has learned anything of significance.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, most critics have been unwilling to venture beyond Winnington-Ingram's assertion that Pentheus 'understood his physical danger; of greater insight there was, and could be, nothing, nor should we read too much into his ultimate admission of error'.<sup>17</sup> The refusal of critics to see anything of significance in Pentheus' words is no doubt a response not only to Dodds' over-interpretation, but also to the brevity of the speech and to its rather ambiguous nature. Yet to suggest that Pentheus meets his death oblivious to everything except the awareness of his own impending doom not only trivializes his recognition of his mistakes, but also the vengeance of Dionysos. We are to imagine that the devastating revelation of the god's power elicits from Pentheus nothing more significant than the realization that dressing up as a woman to spy on the Maenads was not such a bright idea after all. Moreover, when we examine Pentheus' last words within the context of the messenger speech, it is clear that Euripides has designed the narrative so that all the focus falls on the king's last words.

Apart from the physical horror of events described in the second messenger ῥῆσις, one of its most striking features is the occurrence of four short direct speeches from the three main characters of the play: Pentheus (Eur. *Bacch.* 1059-062); Dionysos (1079-081); Agave (1106-109); and Pentheus again (1118-121). These speeches are set against a series of lengthy descriptive passages so that the structuring principle of the whole ῥῆσις becomes the interplay between direct speech and descriptive narrative.<sup>18</sup> Direct speech generally adds a degree of vividness and engages the spectator more fully in the

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<sup>14</sup> Dodds [6] 217.

<sup>15</sup> Kirk [4] 116f. n. 1120. See also S. J. Esposito, *The Bacchae of Euripides* (Newburyport 1998) 118 who argues similarly.

<sup>16</sup> V. Leinieks, *The City of Dionysos: A Study of Euripides' Bakchai* (Stuttgart 1996); see also Oranje [3] 96.

<sup>17</sup> Winnington-Ingram [6] 165f.

<sup>18</sup> The contrast between narrative elements and the more dramatic direct speeches could be seen as a reflection of the way in which tragedy structures itself along the lines of the contrast between mimetic and diegetic action, or 'showing' and 'telling' as it is sometimes described.

events, while descriptive passages serve to slow down the narrative.<sup>19</sup> In this case, the narrative passages delay repeatedly the dramatic climax of the narrative, the *σπαράγμός*. More importantly, they highlight and pinpoint the four speeches as decisive moments in the story. This technique of construction binds the three main participants, Dionysos, Pentheus, and Agave into a tight relationship of avenger, victim, and killer, thereby condensing the action of the play into a chain of cause and effect and capturing for us what is essentially the dramatic nucleus of the tragedy: divine vengeance.

Considering further the basic contrast between speech and narrative, we see that the extended descriptive passages build to each of the direct speeches, while the whole *ῥῆσις* itself climaxes at the *σπαράγμός* and the final speech of Pentheus. The first descriptive passage (1051-057) gives a brief glimpse of a serene landscape and modest Maenads singing and repairing a *θύρσος*. The king's inability to see this scene reflects his greater failure to recognize the divinity of Dionysos. Pentheus' following speech (1059-062), with its request for a vantage point to allow him to see the Maenads, thus serves to remind us of the delusion that has held him through the play, the belief in the sexual promiscuity of the Maenads. The second descriptive passage (1064-074), about the god's extraordinary act of lowering the fir tree and setting Pentheus aloft, produces a short sentence that gives us the fatal consequences of Pentheus' request: *ὥφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατείδε μαινάδας* ('he was seen by the Maenads more than he saw them', 1075). As others have noted, the Maenads do not actually see him until the narrative is resumed again, indicated by the repetition of the verb *εἶδον* ('they saw', 1095) and reinforced by the recurrence of *δεσπότην ἐφήμενον* ('my master seated', 1074, 1095).<sup>20</sup> In between these two lines comes the second speech (1079-081), Dionysos' call for vengeance, isolated by the way that it interrupts the narrative, delaying the actual moment when the Maenads see Pentheus. The rhetorical effect of this suspension is intensified by the following descriptive passage (1084-087) about the unnatural hush that falls over the mountainside, until the god's second command breaks the silence and the Maenads respond with a divinely inspired swiftness. On the other hand, a descriptive passage (1095-104), consisting of a series of failed attempts by the Maenads to dislodge their victim, precedes the third speech (1106-109), by Agave, whose proposal for collective action results in success.

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<sup>19</sup> See I. J. F. de Jong, *Narrative in Drama: The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-Speech* (Leiden 1991) 131-39 for a discussion of the use of direct speech in Euripidean messenger narratives. Also useful is V. Bers, *Speech in Speech: Studies in Incorporated Oratio Recta in Attic Drama and Oratory* (Lanham 1997).

<sup>20</sup> See the treatment of this passage by R. G. A. Buxton, 'The Messenger and the Maenads: A Speech from Euripides' *Bacchae* (1043-1152)', *AantHung* 32 (1989) 225-34.

The dramatic climax of the whole narrative is then reached: πρώτη δὲ μήτηρ ἤρξεν ἱερέα φόνου / καὶ προσπίτνει νιν (‘his mother as priestess began the slaughter, and fell upon him’, 1114f.). At this point, the poet turns our attention to Pentheus and his attempt, in the fourth speech (1118-121), to break through his mother’s madness by identifying himself to her. Pentheus’ speech, like that of Dionysos, has the effect of literally suspending the σπαράγμός in mid-action, thus concentrating all of our attention on the king’s final words.<sup>21</sup> They fail to reach Agave (1122-124); and the actual σπαράγμός begins, but the manner in which Euripides extends that climactic moment by a kind of freeze-frame belies any suggestion that he means us to dismiss the speech (1118-121). Thus, these four occurrences of direct speech mark out the definitive dimensions of the dramatic action: Pentheus’ delusion; the god’s call for vengeance; Agave’s agency in the vengeance; and, Pentheus’ recognition. The two climactic points of the narrative, the σπαράγμός and the fixing of the severed head on the θύρσος, identify the two victims of the revenge and the means by which the god reveals his divinity, first to Pentheus and then later to Thebes.<sup>22</sup> In this respect, the messenger speech serves as a microcosm of the action of the play.

Pentheus uses the word ἁμαρτία, a term that in Greek literature covers a range of meanings, including anything from a simple oversight to a serious

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<sup>21</sup> Little attention has been paid to these words as the ‘last words’ of Pentheus other than as a caution against the modern inclination towards seeing dying words as ‘moments of truth’ (Kirk [4] 116f.), a rather odd sentiment to come from a Homeric scholar given the prominence of that motif in the *Iliad*. The fact that the final words of a character may have some special significance is a convention going back to the *Iliad*, where a dying warrior acquires some sort of unusual insight into the workings of the gods. See F. McIntosh, *Dying Acts* (New York 1995) 91-125 for a treatment of this topic in Greek tragedy. For the most part, she ignores the *Bacchae*, no doubt because the messenger reports the words, but it is quite clear that we are to understand this speech as his final words.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the status of the messengers in the *Bacchae*, see R. G. A. Buxton, ‘News from Cithaeron: Narrators and Narratives in the *Bacchae*’, *Pallas* 37 (1991) 39-48; J. Barrett, *Staged Narrative: Poetics and the Messenger in Greek Tragedy* (Berkeley 2002) 102-31. Buxton [above, this note] argues against the traditional view of the messenger as a third-person objective narrator of events. He examines the two messenger speeches as part of a larger series of narratives in the play, and concludes that in each case the narrator of the speech has a subtle but distinct characterization and thus stands firmly ‘within the drama’ (46). On the other hand, Barrett argues that the messenger has a status different from other characters. He traces the tragic messenger back to its literary antecedent in Homeric epic, suggesting that the perspective of the narrator in Greek tragedy is similar to that of the omniscient narrator of Homeric epic. He applies this argument to the *Bacchae* in order to illustrate another facet of the metatheatrical nature of the play. The objective, detached narrator of earlier scholarship has become a ‘spectator-in-the-text’ (103).

moral offence.<sup>23</sup> Aristotle uses it to speak about the causal element productive of misfortune in Greek tragedy (*Poet.* 1453a10). While one should be wary of importing a later Aristotelian perspective, here the connection between his mistakes and his death is plain at least for the audience. Pentheus does not elaborate on his mistakes but, within the broader dramatic action, they are readily identifiable. The first and most obvious is that he has rejected the divinity of Dionysos, a crime in which his mother and all of Thebes share. Secondly, he fails to recognize that the stranger is a god, and thus is led into committing a climaxing series of acts of ὕβρις against the god. Thirdly, he fails to recognize the danger of his trip to the mountainside, and thus succumbs to the enticing proposal of the stranger. Thus, we have a string of mistakes that eventually results in the destruction of Pentheus by his mother and the Maenads. In order to understand the significance of his words in the messenger ῥῆσις, it is necessary to identify the source of the king's errors, and whether he shows any recognition of them before his death.

For Dodds, Pentheus opposes the stranger because of his violent, impetuous temperament, and gives in because of his repressed sexual longings. In other words, Dodds has located the source of his errors and the cause of his misfortune within Pentheus' character itself. Yet the first two mistakes stem from two assumptions that the king has made. First, he has rejected the divinity of Dionysos based on the dubious circumstances surrounding Semele's pregnancy and death. Pentheus assumes that she lied about being seduced by Zeus and was killed for it. Therefore, the unborn child, Dionysos, was burnt up along with the mother and thus cannot exist (*Eur. Bacch.* 244f.). His second mistake, the failure to recognize the god, is a consequence of his first error as well as of the actions of Dionysos. When Pentheus first returns to his city, he hears two things: the women have left their homes in fake Bacchic revelry; and in their midst is a captivating stranger with the graces of Aphrodite in his eyes (236). The king concludes from these facts that the women on the mountainside are behaving immorally, and that the stranger is the cause of this. In both cases, Pentheus has come up with a logical, rational explanation that accounts for all of the facts. He is, of course, wrong, but there is no need to probe into the psyche of Pentheus in order to find the motivation for his behaviour. It is the response of a ruler attempting to impose order over a city thrown into a crisis by an insulted god. It may be a rash and foolish response given the circumstances, but the point seems to be that Pentheus is blind to the true nature of his situation, not that he is preoccupied with sex.

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<sup>23</sup> See the discussions of ἁμαρτία in the *Bacchae* in J. M. Bremer, *Hamartia: Tragic Error in the Poetics of Aristotle and in Greek Tragedy* (Amsterdam 1969) 183-86; T. C. W. Stinton, 'Hamartia in Aristotle and Greek Tragedy', *CQ* 25 (1975) 248f.

More problematic, however, is the cause of Pentheus' third mistake: his submission to the god and his fateful trip to the mountainside. For Dodds, the god's question βούλητι σφ' ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένους ἰδεῖν; ('would you like to see the Maenads?', 811) touches 'a hidden spring' in Pentheus' mind which releases his repressed desires, and thus, as he puts it, his 'lust to pry into' the affairs of the women proves his undoing.<sup>24</sup> Dodds is right to draw attention to Pentheus' repeated references to the Maenads' suspected immoral activities. It has been a persistent theme throughout the play, from the moment Pentheus returns to this city right up to the end, when he asks to be set aloft the treetop. But to understand the significance of this theme and its role in the king's downfall, it is necessary to situate it in the context of his errors and of the god's revenge plan. First, as pointed out, his suspicions about the women's behaviour on the mountain represent an incorrectly drawn conclusion based on wrongly understood facts, the same type of mistake that he makes about the divinity of Dionysos. Pentheus' first mistake prompts the arrival of the god, who by driving the women from the city and appearing disguised as a mortal, sets in motion a series of actions that seem designed to lead Pentheus into greater error. The king becomes caught up in the effort to return the women, and in this respect he does become obsessed with the women. Their continued presence on the mountainside makes a mockery of his ability to rule his city. The conflict between the stranger and king is played out as a struggle over the control of the women. What we watch on stage then is a man who, trusting in human reason backed by armed force, moves further and further from the truth.

When the stranger is finally brought before Pentheus, everything that the king sees appears only to confirm his initial conclusions: the stranger is indeed beautiful, with long flowing locks and skin pale by design (455-59). In Pentheus' eyes, the stranger is a seducer of women, and thus a grave threat to the πόλις and its οἴκοι. When Pentheus attempts to find out about the cult, the stranger confounds and blocks every attempt, responding with riddling answers that only frustrate the king and provoke his anger. Pentheus hears nothing that contradicts his assumption about the activity of the women and one piece of information that seems to confirm it: the rites are practised at night (486). The miracles in the palace, on the other hand, while they confuse and even frighten the king, leave him more determined than ever to stop the stranger (605-59). And when the first messenger reports of the violent activities of the women on the mountain, and their attack on the surrounding villages, the king finally declares war on the women (781-85). Pentheus' opposition to the god has led him to the point where he is about to march against what is his own city and family. The god has thus attacked Pentheus where he is weakest, not at his

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<sup>24</sup> Dodds [6] 175f.

suppressed Dionysian longings, but in his reliance on royal power, and his unreflected belief that human knowledge always supplies the truth and that force can solve all problems.

Having brought things to a crisis point, the stranger proposes his divine solution: he will return the women to the city without force (804). When Pentheus refuses, the stranger tempts him with the possibility of seeing the Bacchantes in action (810f.); in other words, by offering the king the chance to confirm his assumptions about their behaviour. The conflict between mortal and divine, which up to this point has been over the control of the women, turns into a test of human reasoning against divine power. The weakness of the former is all too apparent as we watch the god toy with his victim, causing Pentheus repeatedly to shift his ground: the king moves from claiming that seeing the Maenads drunk would pain him to admitting that it would please him (814-16), and from wanting to go in secret to the mountainside to agreeing to go openly (816-18). Finally he shifts from intending to go as a man and king to dressing as a woman and as a Bacchant (822-39). Yet to effect this last transformation, the god must resort to his divine power, striking him with madness. Pentheus, as Dodds so perceptively notes, is betrayed from within, not by prurient desires, however, but by his blind faith in the capacity of human knowledge to explain all. When he finally reappears, in his maddened state, dressed as a Bacchant, he has become a grotesque display of one man's failure to know who he is or what he is doing (918). But this is no more than the god himself anticipated with his ominous statement to the king: οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι ζῆς οὐδ' ὃ δρᾷς οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ ('you do not know what your life means nor what you do nor who you are', 506). Pentheus' assumptions about the nature of the stranger and the behaviour of the Maenads then have caused a total volte-face: from violent aggression to passive submission. In the end, Pentheus' deluded belief delivers him into the hands of the Maenads. In this respect, the theme of Pentheus' obsession with the women illustrates the dangers of measuring everything in terms of human intelligence, the basis of his original error and the motivation for Dionysos' vengeance.

What confronts Pentheus on the mountain is not the illicit activity of the Bacchantes, but the terrifying power of Dionysos, first in the form of frenzied Maenads who fall upon the tree and rip it out from the ground, and then in the form of his mother's madness. Despite the doubt expressed by Kirk and others as to Pentheus' sanity, there are too many hints in the text that suggest his release from madness before his death. Not only does he discard what was the visible expression of his madness, the μίτρα ('headband', 1115), but the messenger's words κακοῦ γὰρ ἐγγύς ὦν ἐμάνθανεν ('he understood that he was near to catastrophe', 1113) suggest that his consciousness of reality has

returned. Moreover, the recognition of Dionysos’ divinity can only come with the release from madness. The emphasis from the beginning of the play has been on the process of learning, for both Pentheus and Thebes.<sup>25</sup> To suggest that the king dies oblivious to everything except the awareness of the terrible danger that he is in would not only deprive Dionysos of the recognition of his divinity, but would also render the god’s vengeance incomplete. Revenge in its simplest definition involves a form of repayment for a wrong suffered: in this case, the restoration of Dionysos’ honour for the insult that he has endured. But as Aristotle points out, vengeance also requires that the sufferer know what has punished him and for what reason (*Rh.* 1380b): here Pentheus’ recognition of what has destroyed him and why. So the *σπαραγμός* of Pentheus by Agave and the Maenads is the revelation of the power of Dionysos, made manifest in his ability to break the most fundamental human bond of all, that between mother and child. In this context, the acknowledgement of errors means that Pentheus realizes the power of Dionysos in his mother’s madness and accepts the proof of the god’s divinity. Thus, Pentheus’ admission of wrongdoing is not some deep psychological insight into his own character, but rather it is a recognition of the nature of the god’s power, which is able to bring about that a mother kills her own son. The manifestation of Dionysos’ godhead thus draws from Pentheus the recognition that he was wrong, which must in this respect mean his original error of rejecting the divinity of Dionysos. But this is no more than what the god himself predicted, first at the beginning of the play (39f., 47f.), and then again when he strikes Pentheus with madness: γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς / Διόνυσον, ὥς πέφυκεν ἐν μέρει θεὸς (‘he will come to know Dionysos, son of Zeus, who was born a god in full’, 859f.).<sup>26</sup>

The messenger ῥῆσις does not end with the *σπαραγμός* of the king but rushes forward to the fresh horror of the second climax of the narrative—the impaling of Pentheus’ head on the *θύρσος* by Agave. Thus, the two climactic points of the messenger ῥῆσις represent the two aspects of Dionysos’ revenge: the *σπαραγμός* and the revelation of his identity to the king, followed by the impaling of his head and the revelation of this to Thebes. The second climax sets the stage for the rest of the play, where we see Dionysos’ revenge fall on Agave, Cadmus and the *πόλις* of Thebes. There, Agave undergoes a process analogous to what I have argued that we can see in Pentheus’ words: a release from madness, followed by the recognition of divinity, and the confession of wrongdoing. With the restoration of her senses comes also the greatest horror,

<sup>25</sup> See Oranje [3].

<sup>26</sup> I follow the text of Diggle [2] with its emendation of ἐν μέρει for the ms. ἐν τέλει. For a discussion of the problems, see A. Rijksbaron, *Grammatical Observations on Euripides’ Bacchae* (Amsterdam 1991) 105-07; Seaford [3] 217.

the realization of what she holds in her hands and the awareness that she was the chief agent in the murder. For Pentheus, proof of Dionysos' divinity comes when, restored to sanity, he recognizes the power of the god in his mother's failure to identify him as her son. For Agave, it comes when she recognizes her own son and the horror of what her madness has produced. Like Pentheus, she admits her own wrongdoing: Πενθεῖ δὲ τί μέρος ἀφροσύνης προσῆκ' ἐμῆς; ('what part of my thoughtlessness belonged to Pentheus?' 1301). Cadmus' answer unites mother and son in their crime: ὑμῖν ἐγένεθ' ὅμοιος, οὐ σέβων θεόν ('he turned out similar to you, not revering the god', 1302). Together the fate of mother and son becomes the manifest proof of the god's divinity to all of Thebes:

εἰ δ' ἔστιν ὅστις δαιμόνων ὑπερφρονεῖ,  
ἐς τοῦδ' ἀθήσας θάνατον ἡγείσθω θεούς.

(Eur. *Bacch.* 1325f.)

If there is anybody who looks down on the gods  
having seen the death of this man, let him believe that there are gods.

Just as the plea of Pentheus is met by a terrifying silence, the pleas of Cadmus and Agave for pity are met by a god indifferent to the human suffering in front of him.

The end of the play thus shows the same pattern as the messenger ῥῆσις: human destruction through the revelation of a divine power by a pitiless god. The symmetry between the two scenes suggests we are to see the fate of mother and son as the consequence of a shared ἀμαρτία. Pentheus, like his mother Agave and the rest of Thebes, refused to honour Dionysos as a god and thus was destroyed for it. Although mother and son never meet on stage together, their fates have been inextricably linked from the beginning of the play: both disbelieve the story of Dionysos' birth (26f.); both are objects of the god's vengeance; both suffer a similar form of punishment, namely being struck with madness. And both realize too late their errors. The messenger ῥῆσις brings the two together in a moment of nightmarish realization for Pentheus; the exodus extends the horror into a lifetime of suffering for Agave. Both, however, in their acknowledgement of the divinity of Dionysos, display one of the essential aspects of the tragic figure: the awareness of how they themselves have brought about their own destruction. The psychological reading, which depicts Pentheus as a man whose sexual desires are repressed and whose lust for power is unsatisfied, has little to say about the tragic fate of Pentheus and even less about that of Agave.



## SOLON FR. 13 WEST (1 GENTILI-PRATO) 9F.: MOUND OR MOUNTAIN?

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**Abstract.** This note examines the semantic field and probable reference of the metaphor implicit in the word ἔμπεδος at Solon fr. 13 W (1G-P) 9f. The applications of the nouns and adjectives of line 10 evident in surviving Greek literature are examined closely, and the conclusion is reached that the poet probably had a mountain in mind.

The appreciation of Solon's poetry<sup>1</sup> has come a long way since Wilamowitz's 1893 pronouncement of Solon as a minor poet.<sup>2</sup> Since then, numerous studies of his verse have built up a picture of Solon as a poet capable of expressing complex thought and feeling in clear and vivid language.<sup>3</sup> The December 2003 conference devoted to Solon, held in the Netherlands, bears

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<sup>1</sup> The text of Solon frr. is that of M. L. West (ed.), *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* 2<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1992); B. Gentili and C. Prato (edd.), *Poetae Elegiaci: Testimonia et Fragmenta* (Leipzig 1988). For other cited texts the reader may consult: for Aristotle *Poet.*, R. Kassel (ed.), *Aristotelis de Arte Poetica Liber* (Oxford 1968); for Homer *Il.*, T. W. Allen (ed.), *Homeri Ilias* 2-3 (Oxford 1931); for Homer *Od.*, P. von der Mühll (ed.), *Homeri Odyssea* (Basel 1962); for Apollonius Rhodius *Argon.*, H. Fraenkel (ed.), *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica* (Oxford 1970); for Herodotus, Ph.-E. Legrand (ed.), *Hérodote: Histoires* 1-9 (Paris 1960-1970); for Alcaeus, Ibycus, Alcman and Anacreon frr., E. Lobel and D. L. Page (edd.), *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford 1968); for Hesiod *Op.*, F. Solmsen (ed.), *Hesiodi Opera* (Oxford 1970); for Hesiod frr., R. Merkelbach and M. L. West (edd.), *Fragmenta Hesiodica* (Oxford 1967); for Orphica A., G. Dottin (ed.), *Les Argonautiques d'Orphée* (Paris 1930); for Orphica L., E. Abel (ed.), *Orphei Lithica* (Berlin 1881); for Aratus *Phaen.*, J. Martin (ed.), *Arati Phaenomena* (Florence 1956); for Hesiod *Theog.*, M. L. West (ed.), *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966); for Theognis, E. Diehl and D. Young (ed.), *Theognis*<sup>2</sup> (Leipzig 1971); for Pindar frr., B. Snell and H. Maehler (edd.), *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis* 2<sup>4</sup> (Leipzig 1975); for Pindar *Ol.*, B. Snell and H. Maehler (edd.), *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis* 1<sup>5</sup> (Leipzig 1971); for Aeschylus *PV*, G. Murray (ed.), *Aeschyli Tragoediae*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1960); for *Hymn. Hom. Ap.*, T. W. Allen et al. (edd.), *The Homeric Hymns*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1936); for Aristophanes *Av.*, V. Coulon and M. van Daele (ed.), *Aristophane* 3 (Paris 1967); for Crates Thebanus frr., E. Diehl (ed.), *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* 1<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig 1949).

<sup>2</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin 1893) 2.66.

<sup>3</sup> For the literature on Solon's poetry, see D. E. Gerber, 'Early Greek Elegy and Iambus 1921-1989', *Lustrum* 33 (1991) 163-85.

further witness to the status that he occupies in Greek literature.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle proclaims the ability to create metaphor as the most significant skill of a poet as it is an inborn talent (*Poet.* 1459a7); scholars have long since recognized this element in Solon's verse. Linforth recognizes the poet's genuine poetical gift and inspiration, despite the mundane, practical nature of his themes; for him, Solon's imagery is not artificial embellishment, but spontaneous and unaffected, sincere and straightforward.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, one would have appreciated some demonstration of this assessment, or definition of these amorphous terms. Dietel makes the point that, in Greek lyric poetry, imagery—simile and metaphor—strongly reflects political events, and also ethical questions. An image was considered powerful enough to replace argument to a significant degree, having absorbed within itself the accumulated meaning of previous uses. Increasingly after Homer, image and theme tend to blend more strongly; and the content of an image, while similar to that in epic, was adapted to a particular situation.<sup>6</sup> Dietel supports this argument with analyses of particular images. For Latacz, Solon anticipates the later *Klarheit und Besonnenheit* ('clarity and prudence') which Athenians saw represented in their patron goddess Athena and expressed in Attic tragedy: simplicity of diction, disciplined thought and order. Solon's poetry is a *Mittel der Politik* ('medium—and remedy—of politics'), clear and logical,<sup>7</sup> reaching a true *Literarizität* ('literariness') that distinguished it from the earlier, purely oral political lyric.<sup>8</sup> Recent studies, in particular those of Anhalt and Mülke,<sup>9</sup> have not only increased our understanding of Solon's imagery, but also in the process have revealed a complexity that makes interpretative demands on the audience. In many cases, Solon's use of an image is unique, or the first recorded, in surviving Greek literature. His image of divinely bestowed wealth stands in this category:

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<sup>4</sup> See now J. H. Blok and A. P. M. H. Lardinois (edd.), *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches* (Leiden 2006).

<sup>5</sup> I. M. Linforth, *Solon the Athenian* (New York 1971) 103-27.

<sup>6</sup> K. Dietel, *Das Gleichnis in der frühen griechischen Lyrik* (Würzburg 1939) 27f. Cf. C. Mülke, *Solons Politische Elegien und Iamben (Fr. 1-13; 32-37 West): Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Munich 2002) 17: 'Charakteristisch für die Texte ist, daß sie durch Bilder, nicht durch direkte Ratschläge ihre Rezipienten zu beeinflussen suchen . . . Durch bildhafte Darstellung wird insbesondere das Unanschauliche oder Abstrakte veranschaulicht . . . '.

<sup>7</sup> J. Latacz (ed.), *Die griechische Literatur in Text und Darstellung 1: Archaische Periode* (Stuttgart 1991) 184-87; also H. Fränkel (trr. M. Hadas and J. Willis), *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (Oxford 1975) 226.

<sup>8</sup> Latacz [7] 189.

<sup>9</sup> E. K. Anhalt, *Solon the Singer: Politics and Poetics* (Lanham 1993); Mülke [6].

πλοῦτον δ' ὃν μὲν δῶσι θεοί, παραγίγνεται ἀνδρὶ  
ἔμπεδος ἐκ νεάτου πυθμένος ἐς κορυφήν·

(Sol. fr. 13.9f.)

Wealth which the gods give, remains with a man,  
firmly set from the lowest foundation to the top.<sup>10</sup>

This metaphor is unparalleled in extant Greek, and has been variously interpreted.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that something stable, durable and of some magnitude is required in order to contrast with the uncertainty and movement suggested by the ensuing images of fire and weather (Sol. fr. 13.14-25).<sup>12</sup> It is equally clear that this metaphor must represent wealth of divine origin as being entirely the opposite of the transitory wealth amassed by mortals.<sup>13</sup> Most scholars identify the reference of the metaphor as a heap of grain,<sup>14</sup> but other suggestions include orderly heaps of supplies,<sup>15</sup> a storage jar,<sup>16</sup> a monument,<sup>17</sup> a tree<sup>18</sup> and a mountain.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Solon intends no specific reference,<sup>20</sup> but the metaphor is

<sup>10</sup> Tr. D. E. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Elegiac Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC* (Cambridge, Mass. 1999) 129 (adapted).

<sup>11</sup> Mülke [6] 259.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. W. Allen, ‘Solon’s Prayer to the Muses’, *TAPhA* 80 (1949) 51.

<sup>13</sup> Monetary wealth, in particular, was regarded as transitory; cf. Linforth [5] 36-38; Allen [11] 53; A. Masaracchia, *Solone* (Florence 1958) 207f.; A. Spira, ‘Solons Musenelegie’, in G. Kurz et al. (edd.), *Gnomosyne. Menschliches Denken und Handeln in der frühgriechischen Literatur: Festschrift für Walter Marg zum 70. Geburtstag* (Munich 1981) 186f.; Mülke [6] 257f., who also points out that wealth for Solon meant silver and gold, wheatfields, horses and mules, a home and possessions (Sol. fr. 24.1-3, 24.7f.).

<sup>14</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides: Untersuchungen über griechische Lyriker* (Berlin 1966) 259; K. Ziegler, ‘Solon als Mensch und Dichter’, *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 25 (1922) 201; Masaracchia [13] 209f.; C. M. Bowra, *Early Greek Elegists* (Cambridge 1960) 92; G. Björck, ‘À propos de Solon 1.11’, *Eranos* 40 (1942) 179 n. 1; R. Lattimore, ‘The First Elegy of Solon’, *AJPh* 68 (1947) 164; G. Maurach, ‘Über den Stand der Forschung zu Solons “Musenelegie”’, *GGA* 235 (1983) 19 n. 8, who recognizes the uncertainty.

<sup>15</sup> K. Matthiessen, ‘Solons Musenelegie und die Entwicklung des griechischen Rechtsdenkens’, *Gymnasium* 101 (1994) 389.

<sup>16</sup> M. L. West (tr.), *Greek Lyric Poetry: The Poems and Fragments of the Greek Iambic, Elegiac, and Melic Poets (Excluding Pindar and Bacchylides) Down to 450 BC* (Oxford 1993) 77; Latacz [7] 189.

<sup>17</sup> L. M. Positano, *L’Elegia di Solone alle Muse* (Naples 1947) 30f.

<sup>18</sup> Björck [14] 177-81; C. M. J. Sicking, ‘Solons “Muzenhymne”’, *Lampas* 17.3 (1984) 290-300.

<sup>19</sup> Positano [17] 30f.

<sup>20</sup> F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 107; Gerber [10] 135 n. 2.

not ‘empty’: some ‘picture’, something concrete and known must be in the poet’s and his audience’s mind to give sense and substance to the *πλοῦτος* that derives from the gods. Close analysis of the semantic fields of the keywords helps us recreate that ‘picture’.

First, the basic, concrete meaning of the adjective *ἔμπεδος* is ‘in the ground’, extending into the metaphorical sense of ‘firmly based’, ‘enduring’, ‘stable’, ‘fixed’. Homer applies *ἔμπεδος* to force or strength (*βίη*, *Il.* 4.314; *μένοσ*, 5.254; *Od.* 11.152), to non-returnable gifts (*γέρα*, *Il.* 9.334f.),<sup>21</sup> to a wall (*τειχος*, 12.12), and to Odysseus’ bed (*λέχος*, *Od.* 23.203). Although any parallel is lacking, the adjective can conceivably be used of a monument and a tree, but certainly does not apply to a grain heap or storage jar. It fits a mountain best.

Secondly, the adjective *νείατος* means ‘the lowest part’ of something, for example, body parts (*νείατος*, *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 3.763; *Hdt.* 7.140.8; *νείατος*, *Hom. Il.* 5.293, 5.857, 15.341).<sup>22</sup> There are no parallels for its use in connection with a grain heap, storage jar, monument or tree; but it is used of the foot of a mountain (*νείατος*, *Mt. Ida*, *Hom. Il.* 2.824).

Thirdly, the noun *πυθμήν* is used for the ‘bottom’ or ‘foot’ of things, for example, of a cup or jar (*Alc. fr.* 72.10; *Hes. Op.* 369), of a tree (*Hes. fr.* 240.8; *Hom. Od.* 13.122, 372), of a rock (*Orph. A.* 92, *L.* 162), of a mountain (*Aratus Phaen.* 1.989), and of the sea (*Hes. Theog.* 932; *Thgn.* 1.1035; *Sol. fr.* 13.10, 20); and of Tartarus (*Pind. fr.* 207). The noun also has a more general sense, as the ‘base’ or ‘foundation’ of something (*Aesch. PV* 1046). Accordingly, Solon’s use here offers links with jar, foundation (or building), tree and mountain, but not with grain heap.

Fourthly, *κορυφή* is the ‘top’ or ‘head’ of a god, human or animal (*Hom. Il.* 8.83; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 309; *Ibyc. fr.* 17.4; *Pind. Ol.* 7.36), and the ‘peak’ of a mountain (*Alcm. fr.* 56.1.1, 89.1.1; *Anac. fr.* 12.5; *Ar. Av.* 740; *Hom. Il.* 2.456, 3.10).<sup>23</sup> An absence of parallels for grain heap, storage jar, monument and tree seems to eliminate them all in favour of a mountain.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See also Mülke [6] 258f.

<sup>22</sup> See H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (edd.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*<sup>9</sup> (Oxford 1996) 1164 s.v. ‘νείατος’ for these references to the nape of the neck, feet, chin, and rib-cage or shoulder respectively.

<sup>23</sup> *LSJ* [22] 983 indicates that references to *κορυφή* as ‘peak’ are mostly Homeric, and provides the references included in my text (of which the Homeric references are examples only); cf. Mülke [6] 259.

<sup>24</sup> See also Mülke [6] 259: ‘jede bildliche Verwendung des Wortes geht von dieser Bedeutung aus, sie muß also auch bei Solon zugrundeliegen’. He adds that this interpretation

In this analysis, the common denominator is ‘mountain’. This meaning alone fits the semantic fields of all the operative words: a part of the metaphoric ‘picture’ is firmly based on the ground, while another part rises upwards. None of the other suggestions conveys so supremely the basic ideas of stability, durability and magnitude. This ‘picture’ is a far more fitting analogue for divine bounty.

The issue is complicated by Crates’ adaptation of Solon’s poem to his own Cynic beliefs and view of life. In his parody of Solon’s image of wealth, he writes:

χρήματα δ’ οὐκ ἐθέλω συνάγειν κλυτά, κανθάρου ὄλβον  
 μύρμηκός τ’ ἄφενος χρήματα μαϊόμενος . . .  
 (Crates Theb. fr. 1.6f.)

I do not want to gather riches people speak of, seeking  
 a beetle’s wealth or the riches of an ant . . .<sup>25</sup>

What beetles and ants gather is mainly heaps of plant matter; their hoards are therefore the equivalent of stored grain. Whether one translates the participle μαϊόμενος as causal (‘since I seek . . .’) or, less convincingly, as presenting an action coinciding with οὐκ ἐθέλω and therefore also covered by the negative (‘and do not seek . . .’), the parody still subverts Solon’s image, and brings it down to the lowest level of existence. Crates’ inversion turns Solon’s analogue from something large, grandiose and visible on the landscape into something minute, lowly and hidden underground. Crates seems to have built his parody on the assumption that Solon’s image was a mound of grain. This is supported by the presence of χόρτος (‘feeding place’, ‘animal feed’, ‘food’, fr. 1.3). Crates (ca. 365-285 BCE) wrote more than two and a half centuries after Solon, however, and by his time the image, perhaps already elliptic but still intelligible to Solon’s original audience, had become as open to different interpretations as it is for us. Crates’ parody proves only what *he* thought Solon meant.

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fits well with πυθμένα (Sol. fr. 13.20), used of the bottom of the sea: divinely granted wealth rises from the bottom of the sea to the top of the mountain.

<sup>25</sup> This translation is my own. The parody is established by Crates’ exact repetition of Solon’s first couplet, but also by inversions: ὄλβον . . . δότε, καὶ . . . / . . . αἰεὶ δόξαν . . . ἀγαθὴν (‘grant wealth and ever a good reputation’, Sol. fr. 13.3f.) is replaced by χόρτον . . . δότε γαστέρι, ἥτε μοι αἰεὶ / χωρὶς δουλοσύνης λιτὸν ἔθηκε βίον (‘grant fodder for my stomach, which has ever made my life frugal without actual slavery’, Crates Theb. fr. 1.3f.); γλυκὺν ὦδε φίλοις, ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρὸν (‘sweet to my friends but bitter to my enemies’, Sol. fr. 13.5) by ὠφέλιμον δὲ φίλοις, μὴ γλυκερὸν τίθετε (‘make me profitable rather than sweet to my friends’, Crates Theb. fr. 1.5); and χρήματα δ’ ἱμείρω μὲν ἔχειν, ἀδίκως δὲ πεπᾶσθαι / οὐκ ἐθέλω (‘I long to have money, but do not want to obtain it unjustly’, Sol. fr. 13.7f.) by Crates Theb. fr. 1.6f.

It is also not decisive that the broad context of Solon's poem is an agrarian economy: mountains dominate Greek geography. We are left, in the last resort, with the semantic fields of Solon's vocabulary.

The amount of scholarly debate and the divergent interpretations that have accumulated around various images used by Solon are an indication of the difficulty involved in interpreting his figurative language. Much of this difficulty is due to the lack of text and context, but a great deal also lies in the inherent potency of these images. They are deceptively simple and, though they may have been more directly accessible to the original audience, we have to work hard to decode them. They actually surprise anyone willing to scrutinize them. D'Agostino speaks of Solon's 'improvvisate metafore',<sup>26</sup> and we must agree.

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<sup>26</sup> V. D'Agostino, 'Saggio sui frammenti poetici di Solone', *Rivista di Studi Classici* 7 (1959) 138.

# CASTRATE THE HE-GOAT! OVERPOWERING THE *PATERFAMILIAS* IN PLAUTUS' *MERCATOR*<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** By means of a symbolic castration of the aged father, less privileged characters in Plautus' *Mercator* assume powerful roles and raise their voices as they opt for the distribution of more power within the family in important matters such as divorce. In Plautus' comic version, the change will come not only on the level of the domestic space but also in the public sphere through the modification of the legal system.

Plautus' *Mercator*<sup>2</sup> takes its name from Charinus, Demipho's son, sent off by his father from Athens to Rhodes on a ship loaded with merchandise. Allegedly, Charinus' new occupation as a merchant would help him to recover from his love affair with a *meretrix*.<sup>3</sup> Deeming his son's infatuation to be just a puerile rite of passage, and at the same time upset over the wickedness of the prostitute's pimp, Demipho decides that temporary exile combined with a profitable profession is most probably the only solution for his prodigal son. Little did the old father suspect! Having spent two years abroad, Charinus comes back to Athens with a new girlfriend, whom he has met on the island of Rhodes, a very beautiful girl, as her Greek name, Pasicompsa, indicates. What will set the play into motion is the old father's falling in love with Pasicompsa, his own son's girlfriend, as soon as he lays eyes on her at the harbor. In this

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank *Scholia*'s two anonymous referees for their helpful and constructive comments. I would like also to extend my warmest thanks to Eleni Manolaraki and to my colleague Alden Smith. A version of this work was presented at the Classical Association of the Middle West and South meeting of 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The text of Plautus *Merc.* is that of P. J. Enk (ed.), *Plauti Mercator cum Prolegomenis, Notis Criticis, Commentario Exegetico* 1-2 (Leiden 1932); of Plautus *Rud.* is that of F. Leo (ed.), *Plauti Comoediae* 2 (Berlin 1896); of Suetonius *Tib.* is that of M. Ihm (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Opera* 1 (Leipzig 1908); of Plautus *Cas.* is that of F. Leo (ed.), *Plauti Comoediae* 1 (Berlin 1895); and of Ovid *Met.* is that of F. J. Miller and G. P. Goold (edd.), *Ovid: Metamorphoses in Two Volumes* (Cambridge, Mass. 1977-1984). All translations are mine.

<sup>3</sup> E. Segal, *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968) 64-69 discusses the standard role of sons ignoring monetary gain, thus opposing the basic mandate of the *mos maiorum* to conduct good mercantile business. In Plaut. *Merc.*, Charinus does not meet his father's expectations to augment his *peculium*, but rather spends all his money on Pasicompsa. Most recently, M. Leigh, *Comedy and the Rise of Rome* (Oxford 2004) 98-157 has offered an analysis of the agrarian lifestyle in the comedies and how it is juxtaposed to the more dangerous and risky mercantile seafaring, as Plautus portrays it in *Merc.*

study, I focus on the conflict between the older and younger generations, a prominent theme in Plautine comedy,<sup>4</sup> by addressing how this topic of generational rivalry between fathers and sons is particularly exploited in *Mercator* to draw attention to issues, such as female power, prominent during the play. More specifically, I examine how the distinguished voice of less privileged characters, and of certain female figures in particular, suggests that a departure from the *mos maiorum* may be necessary for the interests of the *domus* and, by extension, of the *urbs*. The father's unbecoming love for a younger woman represents a rupture of ancestral ideals. By means of a symbolic castration of the aged *paterfamilias*, the playwright points to a shift of power within the patriarchal family in important matters such as fidelity or divorce. This shift, however, is only enacted within the safe boundaries of the stage. In Plautus' comic solution, the change will take place not only on the domestic level, but also in the public sphere through the modification of the legal system, a change that is never to be enacted.<sup>5</sup>

The comedy opens with the arrival of young Charinus from Rhodes. While the prologue provides the audience with the necessary background for the denouement of the story, Plautus seizes the opportunity to proclaim that his play originates with Philemon's *Emporos* (*Merc.* 9f.).<sup>6</sup> Acanthio, a slave, however, interrupts Charinus' plan of deceiving his aged father by bringing Pasicompsa

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<sup>4</sup> As D. Konstan, *Roman Comedy* (Ithaca 1983) 20 observes, "the competition between father and son is always the result of paternal encroachment, never of incestuous desires in the youth. By violating the connubial code himself, the father implicitly gives sanction to the son's impulse, and thereby weakens the status boundaries that are his obligation to uphold." D. F. Sutton, *Ancient Comedy: The War of Generations* (New York 1993) 69 points out that "by combining stories about generational conflicts within single families with the conflict of Hellenistic values versus those of Roman forefathers—for that is what *mos maiorum* literally means—Plautus transforms what would otherwise be abstract tales about the eternal human condition within families into creations of considerable immediacy for the time and place in which they were written."

<sup>5</sup> In studies of female figures in Plautus' plays (and especially in *Cas.*), scholars have examined the transgressive role of slaves and wives in questioning the male protagonists' actions. B. Gold, "'Vested Interests' in Plautus' *Casina*: Cross-dressing in Roman Comedy," *Helios* 25 (1998) 17-29 examines how Plautus uses his female characters to voice a concern of Roman social *mores* by questioning the naturalness of normative male sexuality. Similarly, N. E. Andrews, "Tragic Re-presentation and the Semantics of Space in Plautus' *Casina*," *Mnemosyne* 57 (2004) 445-64 has recently argued that in *Cas.* the slave Pardalisca uses the public space outside the house to externalize and legitimize the private concerns of women inside the house.

<sup>6</sup> On the Greek model of the play, see J. C. B. Lowe, "Notes on Plautus' *Mercator*," *WS* 114 (2001) 143-56.



into the house, supposedly as Demipho’s wife’s maid.<sup>7</sup> As the *servus currens* announces, Demipho has already seen and talked to Pasicompsa at the harbor; moreover, he has devoured the girl with his eyes (*oculis . . . hiantibus*, “with his eyes . . . wide open,” 183) and has expressed interest in acquiring her. And yet the old man stumbles upon the major obstacle of how to conceal the newly acquired young mistress. He seeks the help of his neighbor, Lysimachus, though the next-door neighbor is reluctant to become involved. Conveniently enough, however, Lysimachus’ wife is away in the country, and therefore Pasicompsa may stay with him for the time being. When the wife comes back from the *rus*, Lysimachus will be in trouble. However, a solution of the plot is at hand, through the intervention of Lysimachus’ son, Eutyclus,<sup>8</sup> whereby Demipho has to surrender Pasicompsa to Charinus.

The comic implications from a conflict between the older and younger generations are not unique in *Mercator*: the figure of the *senex libidinosus* especially is a stock character employed in other plays (Plaut. *Asin.*, *Cas.*), an element borrowed from New comedy.<sup>9</sup> Unique in this play, however, is that the struggle between the two generations comes to an end after a process of symbolic castration of the elderly father who can be conquered only when his masculinity has been removed.

When the sixty-year-old father sees Pasicompsa, he suddenly feels rejuvenated sexually, a symptom of his *coup de foudre*. In his first appearance, Demipho relates how he dreamed of bringing into his house a new *capra* (“she-goat”), who would replace the old one, his own wife:

mercari uisus mihi sum formosam capram;  
ei ne noceret quam domi ante habui capram  
neu discordarent si ambae in uno essent loco,  
posterius quam mercatus fueram uisu’ sum  
in custodelam simiae concredere.

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<sup>7</sup> On Charinus, see W. S. Anderson, *Barbarian Play: Plautus’ Roman Comedy* (Toronto 1993) 109-13.

<sup>8</sup> On the theme of friendship in the play, see L. Maurice, “*Amici et Sodales*: An Examination of a Double Motif in Plautus,” *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 164-93; L. Nadjo, “L’Amitié dans le *Mercator* de Plaute,” *Caesarodunum* 6 (1971) 100-10. Maurice [above, this note] 168-75 examines how Plautus uses not one but two friends to parody the ideals of friendship and to draw attention metatheatrically to the supremacy of his own dramas.

<sup>9</sup> For a good discussion of the similarities and differences between Plautus’ *Mercator* and *Casina*, see S. O’Byrhim, “The Originality of Plautus’ *Casina*,” *AJPh* 110 (1989) 81-103, esp. 85-88. Although in *Cas.* the father is portrayed as an impotent old man who in his ignorance, and because of his wife’s cunning, succumbs to the cross-dressed slave, I believe that in *Merc.* the old father is stripped of his “masculinity” through distinct imagery (such as the dream).

ea simia adeo post hau multo ad me uenit,  
 male mihi precatur et facit conuicium:  
 ait sese illius opera atque aduentu caprae  
 flagitium et damnum fecisse hau mediocriter;  
 dicit capram, quam dederam seruandam sibi,  
 suai uxoris dotem ambedisse oppido.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 229-39)

It seemed like I had bought myself a beautiful she-goat. So that she would not be hurt by another she-goat, which I already had at home, or fight if they were both in the same place, after I bought her, I thought I would place her in the guardianship of a monkey. Not long afterwards this monkey came to me, cursing and abusing me verbally: he said that thanks to my she-goat's arrival and effort he was greatly disgraced and incurred a significant loss. The goat, he said, the one I entrusted to him to take care of, had completely devoured his wife's dowry.

Then the monkey insists that unless Demipho takes his goat back right away, he will reveal everything to the old man's wife. Demipho's dilemma and torturing dream, however, comes to an end:

interea ad me haedus uisust adgredirier,  
 infit mihi praedicare sese ab simia  
 capram abduxisse et coepit inridere me;  
 ego enim lugere atque abductam illam aegre pati.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 248-51)

And next I dreamed of a kid approaching to report he had kidnapped my goat from the monkey. And he began to laugh in my face. I woke up crying real tears and wailing for having lost her.

Critics such as Fraenkel, Leo, and Marx have observed the similarities between this dream and that of Daemones in Plautus, *Rudens* 593-614.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the connection established between this scene and the episode in *Rudens*, and notwithstanding the difficult issue of dating the two plays,<sup>11</sup> the present scene is

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<sup>10</sup> E. Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin 1922) 198-206; F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen: Zur Kritik und Geschichte der Komödie* (Berlin 1912) 162; F. Marx, "Ein Stück unabhängiger Poesie des Plautus," *SAWW* 140 (1899) 17; see also Enk [1] 7-21 (discussing Marx's views). A. Katsouris, "Notes on Dreams and Dream-like Visions," *Dodone* 7 (1978) 43-86, and "Two Notes on Dreams: Menander, *Dyscolus* 412-8 and Plautus, *Rudens* and *Mercator*," *LCM* 3 (1978) 47f. sides with Marx's view that the dream in Plaut. *Merc.* comes from the scene in Plaut. *Rud.*

<sup>11</sup> On the dating of Plaut. *Merc.*, see Anderson [7] 36 (close to 200 BC); Enk [1] 28-39 (ca. 210 BC); T. Frank, "Two Notes on Plautus," *AJPh* 53 (1932) 243-51, esp. 243-48 (189-88 BC); E. Woytek, "Sprach- und Kontextbeobachtung im Dienste der Prioritätsbestimmung bei Plautus: Zur Datierung von *Rudens*, *Mercator* und *Persa*," *WS* 114 (2001) 119-42, esp. 137 (after 191 BC).

carefully incorporated into *Mercator*’s plot, as we shall see. Demipho entrusts the goat to a monkey, represented by his neighbor Lysimachus, for protection. This new she-goat, however, proves powerful, and prodigally spends the dowry of the monkey’s wife. Demipho is finally saved in his dream by a *haedus*, a younger goat who takes care of the *capra* and at the same time mocks the old man’s stupidity. Demipho is quick to combine his meeting with Pasicompsa with the portent of the dream, yet he does not realize the implications set in motion by his ominous dream (*Merc.* 252-71).<sup>12</sup>

Immediately after Demipho’s recounting of his vision, his neighbor Lysimachus comes to the stage and orders his servants to castrate the he-goat who causes trouble on the farm:

LY. profecto ego *illunc hircum castrari uolo*,  
ruri qui uobeis exhibet negotium.  
DE. nec omen illuc mihi nec auspiciū placet.  
quasi hircum metuo ne uxor me castret mea,  
atque illius hic nunc simiae partis ferat.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 272-76)

LY. As for that he-goat *I want him castrated*, the one on the farm giving you trouble.

DE. I don’t like this omen or augury at all. I am afraid my wife will castrate me as a he-goat and Lysimachus will play the role of that monkey I dreamed.

Being an out-of-context and dispensable piece of information on the surface, Lysimachus’ order to his servants invites the audience to reinterpret Demipho’s dream. In his nightmare, Demipho has already assumed the role of the *hircus* (“he-goat”) who falls in love with a *capra*, just to surrender to a much younger

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<sup>12</sup> D. Aversa, “La scena del sogno nel *Mercator* Plautino,” *Pan* 8 (1987) 5-17 discusses the dream from a psychoanalytical perspective, and points to its Freudian aspects. S. A. Frangoulidis, *Handlung und Nebenhandlung: Theater, Metatheater und Gattungsbewusstsein in der römischen Komödie* (Stuttgart 1997) 133-44 examines Demipho’s dream as a figurative representation of his comic scheme to gain possession of Pasicompsa. H. Zehnacker, “Plaute et la philosophie grecque à propos du *Mercator*,” in J.-M. André, A. Balland et al. (edd.), *Mélanges de philosophie, de littérature et d’Histoire ancienne offerts à Pierre Boyancé* (Rome 1974) 769-85 examines the role of Greek philosophical theories that may have influenced Plautus’ presentation of the dream. Most recently, C. Connors, “Monkey Business: Imitation, Authenticity, and Identity from Pithekoussai to Plautus,” *ClAnt* 23.2 (2004) 179-207 has argued for the role of monkeys (in dreams among other scenes) as a figure for the playwright’s own imitations and distortions of the real world in reworking the Greek models. W. C. McDermott, “The Ape in Roman literature,” *TAPhA* 67 (1936) 148-67 remains a valuable study of the role of monkeys in Roman literature.

*haedus*.<sup>13</sup> The old man immediately apprehends the transparency of the omen: he is the he-goat who will be castrated. By “plundering” his wife’s dowry, Pasicompsa’s presence threatens to destabilize the order in Lysimachus’ house. As we shall see, the return of the wife from the country restores the disturbed *mores* of the urban house, by means of a direct threat of divorce and of immediate withdrawal of a woman’s most powerful weapon, her *dos* (“dowry”). Unless the unhinged older men change behavior, the figurative castration entailed will consist of the removal not only of their masculine power but also of a significant part of their property assets, their wives’ dowries.

The assimilation of the old male to an animal whose manliness will be lost is constant in *Mercator*, as castration is accompanied by the augmented role of female power and the final submission of older generations to the demands of a new status quo. More specifically, after Demipho confesses to Lysimachus his passion for Pasicompsa, the latter disparages, throughout the play, his neighbor’s madness. Among Lysimachus’ censorious apostrophes to his old friend, two stand out. First, Lysimachus addresses Demipho as a *ueruex* (“castrated ram”) and then as a *senex hircosus* (“old goat”):<sup>14</sup>

DE. quid cogitem? equidem hercle opus hoc facto existumo,  
ut illo întro eam. LY. itane uero, ueruex? intro eas? . . .  
iaiunitatis plenus, anima foetida,  
*senex hircosus tu ausculere mulierem?*  
utine adueniens uomitum excutias mulieri?

(Plaut. *Merc.* 566f., 574-76)

DE. What should I consider? Lord, man! I certainly think that what I should do is go inside there!

LY. *Do you really, old wether? You shall go inside? . . . On an empty stomach, foul-breathed pervert, dirty old goat, you will kiss a woman! Why? To make her throw up, as soon as you approach her?*

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<sup>13</sup> What is noticeable in Demipho’s dream of animals is that the language echoes similar phraseology from Attelan farce: . . . *donec ea* [sc. Mallonia] *relicto iudicio domum se abripuit ferroque transegit, obscaenitate[m] oris hirsuto atque olido seni clare exprobrata. unde mora in Atellanico exhodio proximis ludis adsensu maximo excepta percrebruit*, “hircum uetulum capreis naturam ligurire” (“ . . . until Mallonia left the court and returned home in a haste, where she stabbed herself, publicly condemning the hairy and stinking old man for his obscenities. Hence a line from the end of an Atellan play was taken up with great enthusiasm in the next games and was repeated: ‘The old goat is licking the she-goat’s behinds,’” Suet. *Tib.* 45.1.6-11). Suetonius here relates how the death of a certain Mallonia results in the mockery of Tiberius during the following games, by means of allusion to a farce. On Atellan farce, see P. Frassinetti, *Atellanae Fabulae* (Rome 1967).

<sup>14</sup> In Plautus’ *Casina*, a play preoccupied with similar issues, the *senex* is also called *hircus* (*hirquus*, 550) and *vervex* (535).

In the eyes of his “upright” neighbor, Demipho has not only been assimilated to an animal, but also to one whose masculinity has been impaired. After all, Demipho is portrayed with many physical defects. For instance, when Eutychus describes to Charinus the unidentified old man who has already bought Pasicompsa, the picture is painted in the least attractive colors:

EV. feci. CH. qua forma esse aiebant, <Eutyche>? EV. ego dicam tibi:  
*canum, uarum, uentriosum,*<sup>15</sup> *bucculentum, breuiculum,*  
*subnigris oculis, oblongis malis, pansam aliquantulum.*

(Plaut. *Merc.* 638-40)

EU. I did.

CH. How do they say he looked like, Eutychus?

EU. I will tell you: *grey-haired, knock-kneed, pot-bellied, big-mouthed, stubby fellow, with blackish eyes, lantern jaws, and feet a bit splayed.*

If one combines this metaphorical impotence ascribed to Demipho with the presence of female cunning in the play, we can see how the overpowering of the male *paterfamilias* foreshadows the changes proclaimed at the end of the comedy. Lysimachus serves as the go-between, the person who arranges for Pasicompsa to stay at his house. When he brings the girl to the stage, he promises to give Pasicompsa to a female sheep as a wife, which she may easily fleece, thus alluding to Demipho’s wealth but also to his senile dullness and sexual impotence:

. . . LY. ém istaec hercle res est.  
*ouem tibi eccillam dabo, natam annos sexaginta,*  
*peculiarem. PA. mi senex, tam uetulam? LY. generis graecist;*  
*eam seí curabis, perbonast, tondetur nimium scite.*

(Plaut. *Merc.* 523-26)

LY. Lord! Look, this is how things are. *I will give you an ewe, look that one, sixty years old, for your very own!*

PA. Dear old man, so old?

LY. *It is a Greek one! If you take care of it, it will be a very good one! You will shear it to perfection!*

Special emphasis is placed on the feminine gender of the sheep (*ouem eccillam*, 524).<sup>16</sup> Demipho is pliable and can be readily manipulated. Indeed, the reader

<sup>15</sup> In Plaut. *Mil.*, when Pyrgopolynices faces an immediate threat of castration, the word *abdomen* (see P. G. W. Glare [ed.], *Oxford Latin Dictionary* [Oxford 1982] 4 s.v. “abdomen”) is used instead of *inguen* (“groin,” “sexual organs”) or *testis* (“testicle,” 1394-417); a reference to an older man’s big belly would comically emphasize his obesity rather than his sexuality.

<sup>16</sup> The noun *ouis* (“sheep”) would otherwise be distinguished from *aries* (“ram”) if attention were being drawn to its masculine gender (cf. Ov. *Met.* 9.732).

may be tempted to make a metatheatrical interpretation of Lysimachus' words, whereby Plautus alludes to the mining of Philemon's Greek original and its utter transformation into *Mercator*: just as Demipho will be shorn by Pasicompsa, so does Plautus quarry Philemon's *Emporos*, for the sole purpose of clipping or even "castrating" it by means of a thoroughly Roman production. Most important, however, the passage bears upon our understanding of how the transition to a new status of things will be accomplished, namely the reduction of power for the *paterfamilias*.

How does the overpowering of the elderly male figure assist the objectives of the play? How does it relate to the end, and to the message that the playwright passes through laughter? An answer to these questions lies in the role of female figures in the play. As we have seen, the inappropriateness of elderly *amor* results in several humorous situations, but most importantly gives Lysimachus' wife, Dorippa, and her slave, Syra, the chance to express their opinions about divorce with respect to women's rights. Upon discovering what she thinks to be her husband's amorous escapade, Dorippa sends her slave Syra off to her father:

DO. non miror sei quid damni facis aut flagiti.  
nec pol ego patiar seic me nuptam tam male  
measque in aedis seic scorta obductarier.  
Syra, i, rogato meum patrem uerbeis meeis  
ut ueniat ad me iam simul tecum.—SY. eo.—

(Plaut. *Merc.* 784-88)

DO. I am not surprised if you are disgraced or incur a loss! Good heavens!  
I will not endure such a dreadful married life and have prostitutes led to my  
house in such a fashion! Syra, go, ask my father on my behalf to come here  
with you now.  
SY. On my way.

The summoning of the father-in-law alludes to the threat of an impending divorce, since Lysimachus' wife is an *uxor dotata* ("dowried wife").<sup>17</sup> In the scene of the dream, the young *capra* has been portrayed as spending the monkey's wife's dowry. Now the wife's power lies in her right to use her *dos* as a means to threaten her rowdy husband, who can legitimately use the assets while married but has the obligation to return it in case of divorce.<sup>18</sup> Moreover,

<sup>17</sup> On dowry and divorce, see S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford 1991) 323-64, 461-65. P. A. Rosenmeyer, "Enacting the Law: Plautus' Use of the Divorce Formula on Stage," *Phoenix* 49 (1995) 201-17 analyzes the use of divorce formulas in Plautine comedies. K. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton 2000) 68f. discusses the role of the *uxor dotata* in Plaut. *Men.* as opposed to Dorippa in *Merc.*

<sup>18</sup> On marriage *manu* in Plautus' time, see Treggiari [17] 443f.

when Syra comes back, the playwright seizes the chance to have her proclaim women’s rights; as an ideal of *emancipatio*, wives should be allowed, by law, to divorce faithless spouses:<sup>19</sup>

SY. Ecastor lege dura uiuont mulieres  
multoque iniquiore miserae quam uiri.  
nam si uir scortum duxit clam uxorem suam,  
id si rescuit uxor, inpunest uiro;  
uxor uirum si clam domo egressa est foras,  
uiro fit caussa, exigitur matrumonio.  
utinam lex esset eadem quae uxori est uiro;  
nam uxor contenta est quae bona est uno uiro:  
qui minu’ uir una uxore contentus siet?  
ecastor faxim, si itidem plectantur uiri,  
si quis clam uxorem duxerit scortum suam,  
ut illae éxiguntur quae in se culpam commerent,  
plures uiri sint uidui quam nunc mulieres.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 817-29)

SY. Good Lord! Women live under harsh conditions, so much more unfair, poor us, than men. For if a husband brings a “girl” home behind his wife’s back, and the wife finds out, he gets free without a penalty. If the wife goes out behind his back, it is an excuse for him to get a divorce. Would that there be the same law for both husbands and wives; for a good wife is happy with one man: why should a husband be less happy with one wife? Mercy me, I warrant, if any husband cheat on his wife with a mistress, should these men be punished just as their wives are divorced if they make the same mistake, there would be more lone men than there now are women.

Syra’s proclamation of women’s legal rights with regard to divorce comes at a moment in the play when the male protagonist has been conveniently overpowered and subdued.

If we look closer at the new, ideal type of relationship that the play announces, we find substantial differences from what the corrupt elderly fathers of *Mercator*, and of Plautine comedy in general, come to represent. Being a prostitute, Pasicompsa herself would not comply with the conventional *mos maiorum*: she confesses ignorance of how to take care of a household or raise children (*Merc.* 508f.), and therefore she is unwilling to enter a conventional marriage, as one would otherwise expect. Rather, the new generation, to which Pasicompsa and Charinus ascribe, advocates equal roles in a loyal relationship as becomes clear from Pasicompsa’s own words:

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<sup>19</sup> T. J. Moore, *The Theater of Plautus: Playing to the Audience* (Austin 1998) 164 observes how unusual and ironic this scene is, given that slaves would normally follow their masters immediately after their exit from the stage.

LY. quid ais tu? iam bienniumst quom tecum rém habet? PA. certo;  
 et inté nos coniurauimus, ego cum illo et ille mecum:  
 ego cum uiro et ill' cum muliere, nisi cum illo aut ille mecum,  
 neuter stupri caussa caput limaret. LY. di immortales!  
 etiam cum uxore non cubet? PA. amabo, án maritust?  
 neque est neque érit. LY. nolim quidém. homo hercle peiierauit.  
 (Plaut. *Merc.* 535-39)

LY. What do you say? He has had a relationship with you for two years now?  
 PA. Sure; and we have promised each other with an oath, I to him and he to  
 me: I would not have a sexual affair with another man or he with a woman,  
 except for our own two selves.  
 LY. Immortal gods! He couldn't even sleep with his wife?  
 PA. Say again, he is married? He is not and will never be.  
 LY. I would certainly wish. By Hercules, the guy has committed perjury.

Charinus and Pasicompsa seem to espouse a new ideal of a bond where faithlessness has no place. Their secret vows of loyalty play off against Lysimachus' and Dorippa's fight that ends in a reconciliation, but nevertheless displays all the traits of a dysfunctional home: the alternative to reconciliation is divorce. While the wife is away in the country, a place of ancient purity and idealism, the elders of the city go wild:

LY. quid nunc ego faciam nisi uti ádeam atque adloquar?  
 iubet saluere suo' uir uxorem suam.  
 urbani fiunt rustici? DO. pudicius  
 faciunt quam ílli qui non fiunt rustici.  
 LY. num quid delinquent rustici? DO. ecastor minus  
 quam urbani, et multo minu' mali quaerunt sibi.  
 LY. quid autem urbani deliquerunt? dic mihi,  
 cupio hercle scire.  
 (Plaut. *Merc.* 712-19)

LY. What should I now do but go and talk to her? Greetings from the husband  
 to his wife. Have our rustics become city people?  
 DO. They act with more decency than those who do not become rustics.  
 LY. The rustics haven't done something wrong, have they?  
 DO. Mercy me, less than city people as they ask for much less trouble.  
 LY. But what have city people done wrong?

The old men's rebellion, however, needs to be suppressed for the sake of the *res publica*. Any love affair at their advanced age could be destructive for the commonwealth:

DE. fateor, deliqui profecto. EV. étiam loquere, larua?  
 itidem ut tempus anni, aetate alia aliud factum conuenit;



nam si istuc ius est, senecta aetate scortari senes,  
ubi locist res summa nostra puplica?

(Plaut. *Merc.* 983-86)

DE. I admit, for sure, I did something wrong.

EU. Do you still speak, scarecrow? Just like seasons, it is appropriate for men to do different things at different ages. For if it is a proper thing that old men sleep around in old age, *what will become of our affairs of the state?*

When Demipho finally comes to his senses, Eutychus, Lysimachus’ son, concludes the play with a stipulation for the introduction of a new law,<sup>20</sup> whereby older men must never fall in love again with younger women:

DE. eamus intro. EV. immo dicamus senibus legem censeo,  
priu’ quam abeamus, qua se lege teneant contentique sint.  
annos gnatus sexaginta quí erit, si quem scibimus  
si maritum siue hercle adeo caelibem scortarier,  
cúm eo nos hic lege agemus: inscitum arbitrabimur,  
et per nos quidem hercle egebit qui suom prodegerit.  
neu quisquam posthac prohibeto ádulescentem filium  
quin amet et scortum ducat, quod bono fiat modo.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 1015-022)

DE. Let us go inside.

EU. No! I move that we make a law before we leave, by which old men be restrained and kept. If we know of someone, whoever is sixty years or older, either married or, by Hercules, celibate, who wenches, with such man we shall deal in accordance to this law: we shall deem him a dotard, and as far as we are concerned, he who wastes his substance, we swear, shall come to want. Nor shall anyone hereafter prevent his young son from falling in love and marrying his mistress, provided it happens in good measure.

The law, whose solemnity is sealed by the use of future indicatives and imperatives, will aid the restoration of the order, not only in the private but also, and most important, in the public domain. But as any ritual preceding restoration, this one is possible by the restraining and symbolic castration of the out-of-control *senex*. Demipho has been disparaged publicly, an allusion to the ancient custom of *flagitatio*<sup>21</sup> and then, as the audience applauds, he is taken within the safe boundaries of the house, to be kept from further mischievous acts:

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<sup>20</sup> E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Berkeley 1990) 142f. observes that this is a classic instance of unenforceable legislation.

<sup>21</sup> On the custom of *flagitatio*, see A. C. Scafuro, *The Forensic Stage: Settling Disputes in Graeco-Roman New Comedy* (Cambridge 1997) 185-87. In Plaut. *Cas.*, the cast also goes inside to make sure that the play stays short (1005f.).

DE. nihil opust resciscat. EV. quid istic? non resciscet, ne time.  
 eamus intro, non utibilest hic locus, factis tuis,  
 dum memoramus, arbitri ut sint qui praetereant per uias.  
 DE. hercle qui tu recte dicis: eadem breuior fibula  
 erit. eamus.

(Plaut. *Merc.* 1004-008)

DE. There is no need she should know.  
 EU. Is that so? Don't be scared, she shall not know. Let us go inside; this  
 place is not appropriate, while we discuss your deeds. Passers-by may make  
 fun of you.  
 DE. God, you are absolutely right. This play will be shorter. Let's go.

As Moore has suggested, attention is paid to the conflict between generations, and not to husbands and wives, at the end of the play.<sup>22</sup> The legislation that comes at the end, therefore, can be practiced only within the illusory, safely escapist, boundaries of the stage and only to the effect of producing laughter. After all, only old men are to be punished under the provisions of the "new" law, whereas young ones can enjoy the benefits of the double standard proposed, provided of course it be practiced *quod bono fiat modo* (1022).<sup>23</sup> The audience does not leave unsatisfied, having laughed at the comic situations, but at the same time having been reassured that these events should and will remain a fiction of the stage.

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<sup>22</sup> Moore [19] 165 maintains that "this is a comedy, and the concerns of wives do not require resolution. The dismissal of the wife through metatheatrical means opens the way for an epilogue that omits her."

<sup>23</sup> Scafuro [21] 235-38 discusses the proposed legislation in terms of Greek and Roman *mores*. According to Scafuro, the double standard castigated in Syra's monologue is redefined later in Eutychus' proposal. As Sutton [4] 63 points out, "sympathy is always placed on the side of the son rebelling against his father, or of youth rebelling against old age. Sons and their hedonistic enterprises are portrayed in a tolerant or favorable light; fathers and their authoritarian values are not."

**MULIER ES, AUDACTER IURAS:  
PLAUTUS, AMPHITRUO 831-36  
AND THE ADULTERESS' DECEPTIVE OATH<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract.** In order to shed light on the exchange between Amphitruo and Alcumena at Plautus, *Amphitruo* 831-36, this article examines the comic tradition involving the faithless wife's exploitation of an equivocal oath to conceal her guilt. Alcumena's protestations of fidelity conform to the tradition by recalling the half-truths of the typical comic adulteress while simultaneously enhancing the impression of the play's human agents as unwitting players in a divinely staged farce.

At the climax of Amphitruo's disastrous initial homecoming (Plaut. *Amph.* 551-860),<sup>2</sup> Alcumena solemnly asserts her innocence of the infidelity with which her husband has begun to charge her:

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this paper were presented to the Classical Association of Canada in May 2003 and the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in April 2004. I would like to thank Peter Burnell, Judith Fletcher, C. M. Foley, James Mullens, Alan Sommerstein, and the anonymous *Scholia* reviewers for their encouragement and advice.

<sup>2</sup> The text of Plaut. *Amph.* and of *Asin.* is that of F. Leo (ed.), *Plauti Comoediae* 1 (Berlin 1895); of Soph. *OT* is that of A. Dain and P. Mazon (edd.), *Sophocle* 2 (Paris 1968); of Soph. *Phil.* is that of A. Dain and P. Mazon (edd.), *Sophocle* 3 (Paris 1967); of Eur. *Hipp.* is that of J. Diggle (ed.), *Euripidis Fabulae* 1 (Oxford 1984); of Men. *Sam.* is that of F. H. Sandbach (ed.), *Menandri Reliquiae Selectae* (Oxford 1972); of Ar. *Thesm.* is that of V. Coulon and M. van Daele (edd.), *Aristophane* 4 (Paris 1967); of Lysias is that of U. Albin (ed.), *Lisia, I Discorsi* (Florence 1955); of Ar. *Eccl.* is that of R. G. Ussher (ed.), *Aristophanes, Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford 1973); of Apul. *Met.* is that of D. S. Robertson (ed.) and P. Vallette (tr.), *Apulée, Les Métamorphoses* 1-3 (Paris 1940-1946); of Philo is that of L. Cohn (ed.), *Philonis Alexandrini Opera Quae Supersunt* 5 (Berlin 1962); of Joseph. *AJ* is that of B. Niese (ed.), *Flavii Iosephi Opera* 1-4 (Berlin 1: 1887; 2: 1885; 3: 1892; 4: 1955); of Pausanias is that of F. Spiro (ed.), *Pausaniae Graeciae Descriptio* 1-3 (1: Stuttgart 1967; 2-3: Leipzig 1903); of Alciphron is that of A. R. Benner and F. H. Fobes (edd. and trr.), *The Letters of Alciphron, Aelian and Philostratus* (London 1949); of Aristotle is that of V. Rose (ed.), *Qui Ferebantur Librorum Fragmenta* (Stuttgart 1967); of Philonides, Amphis and Alcaeus is that of R. Kassel and C. Austin (edd.), *Poetae Comici Graeci* 1-8 (Berlin 1983-1991); of Herodotus is that of Ph.-E. Legrand (ed.), *Hérodote, Histoires* 1-9 (Paris 1960-1970); of [Dem.] *Against Boeotus* 2 and of Dem. *Against Boeotus* 1 is that of W. Rennie (ed.), *Demosthenis Orationes* 2.2 (Oxford 1966); of Pl. *Symp.* is that of J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera* 2 (Oxford 1967); of Tibullus is that of F. W. Lenz and G. K. Galinsky (edd.), *Albii Tibulli Aliorumque Carminum Libri Tres*<sup>3</sup> (Leiden 1971); of Ov. *Ars Am.* is that of

per supremi regis regnum iuro et matrem familias  
 Iunonem, quam me vereri et metuere est par maxume,  
 ut mi extra unum te mortalis nemo corpus corpore  
 contigit, quo me impudicam faceret.

(Plaut. *Amph.* 831-34)

By the might of Jupiter the highest and by Juno, goddess of marriage,  
 whom it is right that I most should reverence and fear,  
 I swear that no mortal man other than you alone  
 has joined his body to mine so as to render me unchaste.

Amphitruo, however, has already had his patience tried by Sosia's comic 'who's on first?' routine regarding the other 'Sosia' (Plaut. *Amph.* 551-632), and has

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J. H. Mozley and G. P. Goold (edd.), *Ovid in Six Volumes* 2 (Cambridge, Mass. 1979); of Propertius is that of G. P. Goold (ed.), *Propertius, Elegies* (Cambridge, Mass. 1990); of Hor. *Carm.* is that of F. Klingner (ed.), *Q. Horati Flacci Opera* (Leipzig 1959); of Ov. *Am.* is that of G. Showerman and G. P. Goold (edd.), *Ovid in Six Volumes* 1 (Cambridge, Mass. 1977); of Bérout is that of N. J. Lacy (ed. and tr.), *Bérout: The Romance of Tristran* (New York 1989); of Macrobian *Sat.* is that of J. Willis (ed.), *Ambrosii Theodosii Macrobiani Saturnalia* (Leipzig 1963); of *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* is that of T. W. Allen *et al.* (edd.), *The Homeric Hymns*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1936); of Ov. *Met.* is that of F. J. Miller and G. P. Goold (edd.), *Ovid: Metamorphoses in Two Volumes* (London 1977-1984); of Hom. *Od.* is that of P. von der Mühl (ed.), *Homeri Odyssea* (Basel 1962); of Plut. *Lys.* is that of B. Perrin (ed.), *Plutarch's Lives* 4 (Cambridge, Mass. 1968); of Ach. Tat. *Leucippe and Clitophon* is that of E. Vilborg (ed.), *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon* (Stockholm 1955); of Apollod. *Bibl.* is that of R. Wagner (ed.), *Apollodori Bibliotheca: Peditasimi Libellus de Duodecim Herculis Laboribus* (Leipzig 1894); of Petron. *Sat.* is that of K. Müller and W. Ehlers (edd.), *Petronius: Satyricon* (Munich 1983); of Aristaenet. *Epist.* is that of O. Mazal (ed.), *Aristaeneti Epistularum Libri* 2 (Stuttgart 1971); of Schol. Arat. is that of J. Martin (ed.), *Scholia in Aratum Vetera* (Stuttgart 1974); of Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* is that of A. Le Boeuffe (ed. and tr.), *Hygin, L'Astronomie* (Paris 1983); of Nonnus *Dion.* is that of R. Keydell (ed.), *Nonni Panopolitani Dionysiaca* 1-2 (Berlin 1959); of Schol. Callim. *Hymn* 1 is that of R. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Callimachus* 2 (Oxford 1953); of Schol. Lycoph. *Alex.* is that of E. Scheer (ed.), *Lycophronis Alexandra* 2 (Berlin 1958); of Ael. *VH* is that of R. Hercher (ed.), *Claudii Aeliani de Natura Animalium Libri XVII: Varia Historia, Epistolae, Fragmenta* 2 (Graz 1971); of Ath. is that of G. Kaibel (ed.), *Athenaei Naucratis Deipnosophistarum Libri* 15 1-3 (Stuttgart 1965-1966); of Ar. *Lys.* is that of V. Coulon and M. van Daele (edd.), *Aristophanes* 3 (Paris 1967); of Aesch. *Ag., Cho. and PV* is that of G. Murray (ed.), *Aeschylus Tragoediae*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1960); of Eur. *Phoen.* is that of J. Diggle (ed.), *Euripidis Fabulae* 3 (Oxford 1994); of Lycoph. *Alex.* is that of L. Mascialino (ed.), *Lycophronis Alexandra* (Leipzig 1964); of Soph. *Aj.* is that of A. Dain and P. Mazon (edd.), *Sophocle* 2 (Paris 1968); of Hom. *Il.* is that of T. W. Allen (ed.), *Homeri Ilias* 2-3 (Oxford 1931); of Schol. Hom. *Il.* is that of H. Erbse (ed.), *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)* 1-5, 7 (Berlin 1969-1988); and of Eust. *Il.* is that of M. van der Valk (ed.), *Eustathii Archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem Pertinentes* 1-4 (Leiden 1971-1987). All translations are mine (except as otherwise stated).

begun to suspect that some deception is afoot.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, he is far from receptive to his wife’s protestations:

AMPH.	vera istaec velim.
ALC.	vera dico, sed nequiquam, quoniam non vis credere.
AMPH.	mulier es, audacter iuras.

(Plaut. *Amph.* 834-36)

AMPH.	If only you spoke the truth!
ALC.	I do speak the truth, but to no purpose, since you refuse to believe it.
AMPH.	You’re a woman: you swear boldly.

As with much of Plautus’ *Amphitruo*, the scene has good tragic (in this case, Sophoclean) antecedents: Amphitruo’s mistrust of Alcumena’s veracity, and the verbal sparring to which this mistrust leads, recalls that of Oedipus in the presence of Teiresias (Soph. *OT* 300-462) and, still more directly, Philoctetes in his second meeting with Neoptolemus (*Phil.* 1268-277).<sup>4</sup> The distinctly misogynistic caste of Amphitruo’s scepticism is also grounded, at least in part, in tragic precedent. Although the male characters of New Comedy routinely invoke stereotypes of women’s infidelity, dishonesty, libidinousness, extravagance, ill-temper, vanity, superstition, and the like, individuals with this misogynistic bent are by no means limited to the New Comic stage: Sophocles’ Creon, his Oedipus, and Euripides’ Hippolytus offer three examples among many from tragedy. More significantly, the use of invidious stereotypes as rhetorical *points d’appui* is characteristic of tragic debates, as in Oedipus’ attack on Teiresias as a treacherous charlatan (*OT* 380-403) and, still more aptly, Hippolytus’ famous denunciation of women (Eur. *Hipp.* 616-68).<sup>5</sup> Viewed in this light, Amphitruo’s cynical response to his wife’s protestations suggests the potentially disastrous miscommunication of high tragedy; and it is perhaps not accidental that the closest parallel elsewhere in New Comedy is offered by Demeas’ confrontation with Chrysis (Men. *Sam.* 325-98), which is another scene with overt ties to tragic models.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> D. Christenson (ed.), *Plautus: Amphitruo* (Cambridge 2000) 31, 242 ad 551-73.

<sup>4</sup> G. Manuwald, ‘Tragödienelemente in Plautus’ *Amphitruo*—Zeichen von Tragödienparodie oder Tragikomödie?’, in T. Baier (ed.), *Studien zu Plautus’ Amphitruo* (Tübingen 1999) 192f.

<sup>5</sup> Z. Stewart, ‘The “*Amphitruo*” of Plautus and Euripides’ “*Bacchae*”’, *TAPhA* 89 (1958) 351f.

<sup>6</sup> If we had more information regarding Euripides’ *Alcmene*, one suspects that particular associations with that play would be forthcoming. Cf. J. Blänsdorf, ‘Plautus, *Amphitruo* und *Rudens*—oder wieviel literarische Parodie verträgt eine populäre Komödie?’, in W. Ax and R. F. Glei (edd.), *Literaturparodie in Antike und Mittelalter* (Trier 1993) 69f., n. 38. On

Amphitruo's dismissive *mulier es, audacter iuras* (Plaut. *Amph.* 836) suggests another interpretative context, however, one grounded in comic treatments of adultery.<sup>7</sup> The faithless wives of the comic tradition are notoriously brazen in their treachery: one thinks, for example, of the Aristophanic adulteress who leaves her husband upstairs grinding an herbal remedy while she sneaks outside for a quick assignation with her lover (Ar. *Thesm.* 476-89), or who helps her lover escape from under her husband's nose by unfolding her cloak as a screen (498-501).<sup>8</sup> Brazenness of speech is a particular trait of such women: consider, for example, Euphiletus' wife, who accuses her husband of having designs on the household maid at the very moment that she is departing to sleep with her lover in Euphiletus' own bedroom (Lys. 1.12f.), or the Aristophanic maid who, acting as the treacherous wife's proxy, presents the unsuspecting husband with a suppositious child newly smuggled into the house and proclaims:

Λέων λέων σοι γέγονεν, αὐτέκμαγμα σόν,  
τά τ' ἄλλ' ἀπαξάπαντα καὶ τὸ πόσθιον  
τῷ σῷ προσόμοιον, στρεβλὸν ὥσπερ κύτταρον.

(Ar. *Thesm.* 514-16)

You've got a lion, sir, a lion, the very image of yourself, sir,  
with everything a perfect match,  
its little weenie too, curled over like an acorn!<sup>9</sup>

The later tradition, under the influence of the so-called 'adultery mime',<sup>10</sup> offers further instances: for example, the cunning adulteress who, when caught with

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*Alcmene*, see F. Jouan and H. Van Looy (edd. and trr.), *Euripide 8 Fragments 1 Aigeus-Autolykos* (Paris 1998) 117-35; B. Snell et al. (edd.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 1-5 (Göttingen 1977-2004) Eur. *TrGF* 5.1 *Alcmene* F 87b-104.

<sup>7</sup> For a general discussion of the adultery theme, see J. R. Porter, 'Adultery by the Book: Lysias 1 (*On the Murder of Eratosthenes*) and Comic *Diegesis*', *EMC* 16 (1997) esp. 422-33 (= E. Carawan [ed.], *The Attic Orators* [Oxford 2007] 61-72).

<sup>8</sup> There is disagreement as to whether the wife is merely holding up a garment for her husband's perusal, or distracting him by giving him a glimpse of her body beneath a cloak that she is wearing: see R. Seager, 'Notes on Aristophanes', *CQ* 31 (1981) 247f.; A. Giacomoni, 'Rito e trasgressione erotica: Aristoph. *Thesm.* 466 ss.', *QUCC* 63 (1999) 93; C. Austin and S. D. Olson (edd.), *Aristophanes: Thesmophoriazousae* (Oxford 2004) 203f. ad 499-501; cf. S. Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge 1958) 81; H.-J. Uther, 'Ehemann: Der einäugige Ehemann', in K. Ranke et al. (edd.), *Enzyklopädie des Märchens: Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung* (Berlin 1975-) 3.4/5.1082-84.

<sup>9</sup> J. Henderson (ed. and tr.), *Aristophanes 3: Birds, Lysistrata, Women at the Thesmophoria* (Cambridge, Mass. 2000). Further on the brazen treachery of the comic wife, see Porter [7] 427-31 and 447f.

her lover in the house, upbraids her husband for his sloth<sup>11</sup> and then proceeds to couple with her paramour in his very presence (Apul. *Met.* 9.5-7); or the wife who denounces to her husband a neighbour woman recently caught in adultery, at the very time that her own lover lies in the same room with them hidden under a tub (9.26).<sup>12</sup> And, as one might expect, Euripides gives his own peculiar twist to the motif, when Pasiphaë defends her transgression with the bull by blaming the whole affair on Minos (Eur. *TrGF* 5.1 *Cretans* F 472e 4-41). We know relatively little regarding the plot of this play or its dénouement, but enough survives to appreciate the cunning with which Euripides has recast the

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<sup>10</sup> See esp. R. W. Reynolds, ‘The Adultery Mime’, *CQ* 40 (1946) 77-84; C. T. Murphy, ‘Popular Comedy in Aristophanes’, *AJPh* 93 (1972) 184-86; P. Kehoe, ‘The Adultery Mime Reconsidered’, in D. F. Bright and E. S. Ramage (edd.), *Classical Texts and their Traditions: Studies in Honor of C. R. Trahman* (Chico 1984) 89-106; C. Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri: Theatrical Elements in the Satyricon of Petronius* (Leiden 1995) 130-35; S. Papaioannou, ‘The Staging of Adultery: Theatricality and Playwriting in Apuleius, *Met.* 9.14-30’, *CB* 78 (2002) 29-41; J. R. Porter, ‘Chariton and Lysias 1: Further Considerations’, *Hermes* 131 (2003) 439f.; and, more generally, A. Richlin, ‘Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome’, in H. P. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York 1981) 393-96; E. Fantham, ‘ΖΗΛΟΥΣΙΑ: A Brief Excursion into Sex, Violence, and Literary History’, *Phoenix* 40 (1986) 52-54; ‘Mime: The Missing Link in Roman Literary History’, *CW* 82 (1988) 153-63; E. Rawson, ‘The Vulgarly of the Roman Mime’, in H. D. Jocelyn and H. Hurt (edd.), *Tria Lustra: Essays and Notes Presented to John Pinsent, Founder and Editor of Liverpool Classical Monthly, by Some of its Contributors on the Occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Issue* (Liverpool 1993) 255-60. For further references, see Porter [7] 423 n. 10; [above, this note] 439 n. 23. An earlier equivalent of such performances may have been represented among the *παίγνια* (‘erotic mimes’) studied by J. N. Davidson, ‘*Gnesippus Paigniagraphos*: The Comic Poets and the Erotic Mime’, in D. Harvey and J. Wilkins (edd.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy* (London 2000) 41-64, who compares Ar. *Eccl.* 877-1111 and D. L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962) *Carmina Popularia* 853.

<sup>11</sup> Note, in particular, the wife’s brazen assertion of how much happier she would be were she to give over her own virtuous ways and emulate her corrupt neighbour Daphne, who *mero et prandio matutino saucia cum suis adulteris uolutatur!* (‘loaded to the gills with food and strong drink by mid-morning, thrashes about with her lovers!’, Apul. *Met.* 9.5.23f.).

<sup>12</sup> See E. Paratore, *La novella in Apuleio* (Palermo 1928) 89-126; G. Bechtle, ‘The Adultery-Tales in the Ninth Book of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’, *Hermes* 123 (1995) 106-16; B. L. Hijmans Jr. et al. (edd.), *Apuleius Madaurensis. Metamorphoses Book 9: Text, Introduction, and Commentary* (Groningen 1995); S. Mattiacci (ed.), *Apuleio: Le Novelle dell’adulterio [Metamorfosi 9]* (Florence 1996); S. A. Frangoulidis, ‘Role Changing in Apuleius’ Tale of the Miller’s Wife (*Metamorphoses* 9.14-31)’, *Scholia* 9 (2000) 66-77; D. Lateiner, ‘Marriage and the Return of Spouses in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’, *CJ* 95 (2000) 313-32; Papaioannou [10].

traditionally brazen wife in order to suit the dramatic and rhetorical ends of a tragic debate.<sup>13</sup>

Amphitruo's response is clearly in line with this well-established tradition: he dismisses Alcumena's protestations out of hand, as an example of precisely the sort of bold-faced effrontery that one is to expect of such women (Plaut. *Amph.* 836). But Alcumena's brazenness, as Amphitruo presents it, is not evinced as mere shamelessness of speech or the telling of simple falsehoods: the accusation that he levels against her focuses specifically on her abuse of an oath to effect her alleged deception, and charges her not with lying but with 'swearing boldly'. This present study will attempt to tease out the implications of this charge by reading it in light of a still more specific strand of the comic adultery tradition: accounts of the faithless wife's exploitation of an ambiguous or equivocal<sup>14</sup> oath to conceal her guilt.

Alcumena's solemn avowal of faithfulness (Plaut. *Amph.* 831-34) can be located within a widespread and quite ancient set of traditions involving chastity oaths—oaths sworn to provide ritual confirmation of a wife's fidelity to her husband. These traditions can be traced from the Amorite Dynasty of Old Babylon (eighteenth century BC) and early Jewish custom (as codified during the Babylonian Exile), to ancient Greece, Ptolemaic Egypt, Rome, India in the second and third centuries of our era, twelfth-century France, and beyond. In some instances, accounts of such oaths appear to reflect actual ritual practices, but, as we shall see, they more often come to be the stuff of folktale and literature, where they serve to provide humorous evidence of women's treacherous cunning. This study will offer a brief glance at these other traditions, before turning to instances of the equivocal oath in Graeco-Roman literature—with particular emphasis on the use of such oaths in erotic contexts—in an attempt to develop a background against which to appreciate the exchange between Amphitruo and his wife. The result is in part an overview of a particular literary motif, and in part an exercise in comparative folklore, with attention to a number of passages that have not been considered in such a connection by past studies. The main goal, however, is to provide evidence of

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<sup>13</sup> C. Collard (ed.), 'Cretans', in C. Collard *et al.* (edd.), *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays* 1 (Warminster 1995) 72f. notes that Pasiphaë's speech was probably not presented as part of a symmetrical ἄγών-structure. In its use of rhetorical devices, however, it is virtually indistinguishable from such formal defences as that of Hippolytus in the scene at Eur. *Hipp.* 932-1089. F. Jouan and H. Van Looy (edd. and tr.), *Euripide: Tragédies 8: Fragments 2 Bellerophon-Protésilas* (Paris 2000) 313 aptly refer to the speech as an ἀντέγκλημα ('counter-accusation').

<sup>14</sup> On the distinction between these two terms, see R. J. Hexter, *Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975) 3.



the antiquity and the durability of the motif that informs Plautus’ scene, and to establish a template against which that scene can be read. In the end, we shall find that Plautus puts his own particularly ironic spin on the motif in adapting it to the mood and themes of his play.

Because adultery is, by its very nature, easy to suspect but often difficult to prove, and because the stakes—from the husband’s point of view—are so high (given the general concern to perpetuate one’s family line through legitimate heirs), earlier societies regularly provided for ordeals of different kinds through which a woman suspected of adultery might prove her fidelity.<sup>15</sup> In one common type of ordeal, the woman is compelled to take a public oath, with various penalties prescribed should she forswear herself. Two distinct procedures are set out, for instance, in the *Code of Hammurabi*:

131. If the husband of a married lady has accused her but she is not caught lying with another man, she shall take an oath by the life of a god and return to her house.

132. If a finger has been pointed at the married lady with regard to another man and she is not caught lying with the other man, she shall leap into the holy river for her husband.<sup>16</sup>

(*Code of Hammurabi* 131f.)

In the second of these provisions, where the accuser appears to be someone other than the woman’s husband—and where the charge might, as a consequence, be taken to reflect the broader interest of the community—the woman is compelled to undergo an ordeal by water. When the charge is grounded solely in the husband’s suspicions, however, and could be regarded as reflecting no more than the suspicions of a possessive spouse, an oath alone is prescribed.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., R. M. Rattenbury, ‘Chastity and Chastity Ordeals in the Ancient Greek Romance’, *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society: Literary and Historical Section* 1 (1926) 64-69; R. Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford 1986) 16-20, 33, 131f.; more generally, K. H. Funkhanel, ‘Gottesurtheil bei Griechen und Römern’, *Philologus* 2 (1847) 385-402; G. Glotz, *L’Ordalie dans la Grèce primitive* (New York 1979); K. S. Chew, ‘Achilles Tatius and Parody’, *CJ* 96 (2000) 64; Lateiner [12] 314. For the evidence of folktale, see S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*<sup>2</sup> (Bloomington 1955-1958) H400.

<sup>16</sup> G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles (edd. and trr.), *The Babylonian Laws 2: Transliterated Text, Translation, Philological Notes, Glossary* (Oxford 1955) 53.

<sup>17</sup> G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles (edd. and trr.), *The Babylonian Laws 1: Legal Commentary* (Oxford 1952) 283f.; M. Fishbane, ‘Accusations of Adultery: A Study of Law

In the *Book of Numbers*, by contrast, a much more elaborate ceremony is set out (5:11-31). Once again, the grounds for the ritual consist solely of the husband's suspicions, with no corroborating evidence required by the rubric under which the rite is introduced:

Should any man's wife become errant and commit an act of betrayal against him, with the result that another man had carnal relations with her, and this was hidden from her husband's eyes, because she defiled herself in secret, there being no witness against her and she was not apprehended.

(*Numbers* 5:12f.)<sup>18</sup>

In this instance, the oath is administered by a priest, who first makes an offering of grain at the altar and has the accused woman drink a mixture composed of holy water, earth from the floor of the Temple, and the dissolved text of the ritual imprecation itself. Should the woman forswear herself, the terms of her oath—in combination with the effects of the 'bitter water'—will ensure that she become (according to the formula administered by the priest) 'an accursed oath-violator among [her] kin, even as YHWH causes [her] thigh to sag and [her] belly to swell' (*Numbers* 5:21).<sup>19</sup>

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and Scribal Practice in *Numbers* 5: 11-31', in A. Bach (ed.), *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (New York 1999) 493-95 (originally in *HebrUCA* 45 [1974] 25-45); J. Milgrom (ed.), *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text With the New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia 1990) 347; B. A. Levine (ed. and tr.), *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York 1993) 204f. A related procedure can be seen in divorce documents from Egypt, where the wife, in order to retain her dowry, must swear that she has not engaged in illicit intercourse during the time of her marriage: see, e.g., *oLouvre* E 8112 (Jeme, first century BC); U. Kaplony-Heckel, *Die demotischen Tempelleide* (Wiesbaden 1963) no. 1; J. Rowlandson (ed.), *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge 1998) no. 121b. See further P. W. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt: A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman* (Leiden 1961) 56; Kaplony-Heckel [above, this note] nos 5-14; C. J. Eyre, 'Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt', *JEA* 70 (1984) 98f.; H. S. Smith, 'Marriage and the Family in Ancient Egypt 1: Marriage and Family Law', in M. J. Geller *et al.* (edd.), *Legal Documents of the Hellenistic World* (London 1995) 55f.; P. Galpaz-Feller, 'Private Lives and Public Censure: Adultery in Ancient Egypt and Biblical Israel', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67.3 (2004) 152-61; and, on Egyptian oaths in general, J. A. Wilson, 'The Oath in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 7 (1948) 129-56. Similar provisions are set out in the Code of Gortyn (col. 2.45-3.16): cf. R. F. Willetts (ed. and tr.), *The Law Code of Gortyn* (Berlin 1967) 33f.

<sup>18</sup> All translations of *Numbers* are those of Levine [17] 11.

<sup>19</sup> For more detailed analyses of the ceremony and its imagined consequences, see G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers* (Edinburgh 1903) 43-56; Glotz [15] 114-16; Fishbane [17]; H. C. Brichto, 'The Case of the Sota and a Reconsideration of Biblical "Law"', *HebrUCA* 46 (1975) 55-70; J. Milgrom, 'The Case of the Suspected

Ritual practices of this kind might appear to have little relevance to a study of domestic relationships in Graeco-Roman antiquity, but a procedure similar to that set out in the *Code of Hammurabi* is clearly familiar to the sophist Alciphron (second/third centuries AD), who makes it the subject of a humorous fictional letter composed by the parasite Triclinosarax (‘Dining-room Moth’)<sup>20</sup> to one of his colleagues, Cossotrapezus (‘Cuff-at-Table’):

Τρικλινοσάραξ Κοσσοτραπέζω.

Ἐξηγόρευσά Μνησιλόχῳ τῷ Παιανιεῖ τὴν τῆς γαμετῆς ἀσέλγειαν· καὶ ὅς, δέον βασανίσαι δι’ ἐρεύνης τὸ πρᾶγμα ποικίλης, ὄρκῳ τὸ πᾶν ὁ χρυσοῦς ἐπέτρεπεν. ἀγαγοῦσα οὖν αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ εἰς τὸ Καλλίχορον τὸ ἐν Ἐλευσίνι φρέαρ ἀπωμόσατο καὶ ἀπελύσατο τὴν αἰτίαν. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀμογητὶ πέπεισται καὶ τὴν ὑποψίαν ἀπέβαλεν· ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν φλύαρόν γλῶτταν ἀποτέμνειν ὁστράκῳ Τενεδίῳ τοῖς βουλομένοις ἔτοιμός εἰμι παρέχειν.

(Alciphr. 3.33)

Triclinosarax to Cossotrapezus:

I told Mnesilochus of Paeania about his wife’s licentious behaviour. He ought to have investigated the matter by a cunningly devised inquiry; instead, precious fellow that he is, he consented to have the whole business settled by an oath. So his wife took him to the Callichorum, the well at Eleusis, and swore the report was untrue, and freed herself from the charge. He made no bones about accepting her word but dismissed the suspicion. And as for me I am ready to let any one who wishes take a Tenedian shard and cut out my tattling tongue.<sup>21</sup>

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Adulteress, *Numbers* 5: 11-31: Redaction and Meaning’, in Bach [17] 475-82 (originally in R. E. Friedman [ed.], *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text* [Berkeley 1981] 69-75); [17] 37-43, 346-54; ‘A Husband’s Pride, A Mob’s Prejudice’, *BiblR* 12.4 (1996) 21; T. Frymer-Kensky, ‘The Strange Case of the Suspected *Sotah* (*Numbers* 5: 11-31)’, in Bach [17] 463-74 (originally in *VT* 34 [1984] 11-26); A. Destro, *The Law of Jealousy: Anthropology of Sotah* (Atlanta 1989); A. Bach, ‘Good to the Last Drop: Viewing the *Sotah* (*Numbers* 5.11-31) as the Glass Half Empty and Wondering How to View It Half Full’, in Bach [17] 503-22 (originally in J. C. Exum and D. J. A. Clines (edd.), *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* [Sheffield 1993] 26-54); Levine [17] 181f., 192-212; H. Sivan, ‘Revealing The Concealed: Rabbinic and Roman Legal Perspectives on Detecting Adultery’, *ZRG* 116 (1999) 112-46. Cf. Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 3.52-63; Joseph. *AJ* 3.270-73; note the similar rite described at Paus. 7.25.13.

<sup>20</sup> Other editors prefer the reading τρικλινοσάξ (perhaps ‘Stuff-Couch’).

<sup>21</sup> This translation is by Benner and Fobes [2] 228-31. Cf. Glotz [15] 79; see further I. M. Calero Secall, ‘Las cartas de Alcifrón y los delitos relacionados con la conducta sexual’, *Prometheus* 27.2 (2001) 160-63. For the association of the ‘Tenedian shard’ (more regularly, an ax) with the punishment of adultery, see Arist. fr. 593, 611.24. Allusions can also be found to chastity oaths on the part of men: L. Sternbach (ed.), *Gnomologium Vaticanum* (Berlin 1963) 317; perhaps, Philonid. fr. 7.

Whether such practices were at all common in Alciphron's day must remain uncertain: Mnesilochus would appear to be presented here merely as a figure of fun—a naive simpleton who is willing to believe in the efficacy of such obsolete rites. Given the manner in which the anecdote is related, however, it would seem clear that the practice itself was familiar to a contemporary audience, whether in real life or in the realm of fiction.

As would make sense, such mechanisms are typically employed in cases where suspicions have arisen but (as in *Numbers* 5:13) the matter is 'hidden from her husband's eyes, because she defiled herself in secret, there being no witness against her and she was not apprehended'. This circumstance is particularly likely to arise in the case of suspect pregnancies (for example, the plight of the adulterous David and Bathsheba in 2 *Samuel* 11:2-15);<sup>22</sup> and, as it happens, we have an indication of how such cases might have been dealt with in the more bureaucratic Athenian legal system, from the pseudo-Demosthenic speech *Against Boeotus* 2. Plangon, the onetime wife and/or paramour of the plaintiff's father Mantias,<sup>23</sup> promises—for a fee—*not* to undertake an oath before an arbiter at the Delphinion regarding Mantias' paternity in the case of her two adult sons, and binds herself to this promise with an oath that is described as μέγιστος . . . καὶ δεινότατος ('the greatest . . . and most dreadful', [Dem.] 40.10); once in court, however, she blithely forswears herself and submits her oath that these men are in fact Mantias' sons (40.11).<sup>24</sup>

Passages such as those examined above suggest that chastity oaths and related procedures could play an important role in resolving actual domestic disputes; it is the folktale and literary traditions inspired by such practices, however, which are the principal concern of this study. In the course of the first millennium AD, in both Europe and the East, there arose a number of popular tales regarding oaths of this sort. These tales rarely deal with the pragmatic question of paternity: instead (as in the book of *Numbers*) the focus is usually on the jealous suspicions of a husband and the issue of his wife's fidelity. In the

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hdt. 6.62f. (which does not, however, concern a case of adultery); Plaut. *Amph.* 486-88; see also E. Stärk, 'Die Geschichte des Amphitryonstoffes vor Plautus', *RhM* 125 (1982) 284f. Levine [17] 181f., 202-05 is probably incorrect to associate *Numbers* 5.11-31 principally with cases of suspect pregnancy: see, e.g., Frymer-Kensky [19] 467. Gray [19] 48 posits a shift in the focus of the rite over time.

<sup>23</sup> See C. A. Cox, *Household Interests: Property, Marriage Strategies, and Family Dynamics in Ancient Athens* (Princeton 1998) 181; C. Leduc, 'Mère et fils dans la cité démocratique des Athéniens', *Itaca* 16-17 (2000-2001) 97-118.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Dem. 39.3f. (*Against Boeotus* 1); Hdt. 6.67-69 (on the parentage of Demaratus). See further C. Carey and R. A. Reid (edd.), *Demosthenes: Selected Private Speeches* (Cambridge 1985) 160-67; Cox [23] 181; S. Johnstone, *Disputes and Democracy: The Consequences of Litigation in Ancient Athens* (Austin 1999) 75-77; Leduc [23].

world of popular folktale, however, straightforward dishonesty of the sort displayed by Plangon is simply too prosaic: instead, it is the cunning device through which the adulteress manages to circumvent such tests that comes to the fore, and the favourite such device is the equivocal oath. The best known and most influential instance of this motif (in the western tradition, at least) occurs in Bérout’s account of the Tristan legend, although the specific form in which Bérout has cast it can be traced back to older, eastern sources.<sup>25</sup> In this version of the legend, Isolde is compelled to journey to King Arthur’s court in order to take an oath of fidelity to her husband King Mark. This is something of an inconvenience, given that she and the handsome young Tristan have been conducting a clandestine affair for some time now. Along the way, Isolde’s entourage must pass over a muddy stream. Isolde crosses the stream last, riding on the back of a wretched leper, who is actually her lover Tristan in disguise. As a result, at the ceremony she is able to swear truthfully:

Qu’entre mes cuises n’entra home,  
Fors le ladre qui fist soi some,  
Qui me porta outre les guez,  
Et li rois Marc mes espousez.

(Bérout, *Tristan et Iseut* 4205-08)

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<sup>25</sup> Virtually the same tale as that told by Bérout is found, with minor variations, in the Pali *Tripitaka* (second/third centuries AD) and (perhaps earlier) the *Jataka* tales, the collection of Ardschi Bordschi Chan (a Mongolian derivation of the Indic *Sinhasana Dvatrincaka*), the Sanskrit *Sukasaptati*, and numerous other works of eastern origin: in each instance, the woman contrives to touch her disguised lover, to reveal some part of her body to him, and/or in some way to single him out before employing him as the basis for a seemingly unassailable oath. See E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*<sup>3</sup> (Hildesheim 1960) 515 n. 1; J. W. Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer: Studies in Virgilian Legends* (Cambridge, Mass. 1934) 398f.; Thompson [15] K1513; Hexter [14]; K. Ranke, ‘Bocca della verità: 2’, in Ranke [8] 2.1/2.545-49; C. Kasper, *Von miesen Rittern und sündhaften Frauen und solchen die besser waren: Tugend- und Keuschheitsproben in der mittelalterlichen Literatur vornehmlich des deutschen Sprachraums* (Göttingen 1995), esp. 342-46, 410-27; more generally, R. Hirzel, *Der Eid: Ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte* (Leipzig 1902) 41-52; J. Plescia, *The Oath and Perjury in Ancient Greece* (Tallahassee 1970) 83-91. The oaths told by lovers to their beloveds are of course notoriously untrustworthy (e.g., Pl. *Symp.* 183b, with schol.; cf. Tib. 1.4.21-26; Ov. *Ars Am.* 1.631-58; see also Hirzel [above, this note] 62 n. 1), but this is quite a different matter. On the similar unreliability of oaths sworn by women to their lovers, J. L. Ussing (ed.), *T. Maccii Plauti Comoediae* (Copenhagen 1875-1888) 315 *ad* Plaut. *Amph.* 829, and A. Palmer (ed.), *T. Macci Plauti Amphitruo* (London 1906) 215 *ad* Plaut. *Amph.* 204, cite Prop. 1.15.25-42, 2.28.5-8, Hor. *Carm.* 2.8, Ov. *Am.* 1.8.85f., 3.3. Whether ὄρκους ἐγὼ γυναικὸς εἰς ὕδωρ γράφω (‘the oaths of a woman I write on water’, Soph. *TrGF* 4 *Incertarum Fabularum* F 811) is to be classed with this group, or alludes to perjury of a more general sort, is uncertain.

. . . that no man has ever entered between my thighs  
except the leper who made himself a beast of burden  
and carried me over the ford  
and my husband King Mark.<sup>26</sup>

A number of such stories come to be associated with a device called the *Bocca della Verità*, or the Mouth of Truth—a magical image crafted by the poet Virgil who, according to later tradition, was a frustrated lover and, it seems, a man to hold a grudge.<sup>27</sup> The accused woman would insert her hand into the image and, if she forswore herself, would find her hand trapped or, in some instances, have her fingers bitten off. Again, however, the cunning wives repeatedly prove more than a match for such devices.

Given the legalistic nature of oaths in Graeco-Roman antiquity,<sup>28</sup> and the general interest in duplicitous women, one might expect accounts of this sort to have ancient antecedents. There are certainly generic instances of the equivocal or deceptive oath that one can cite. In Macrobius, for example, we find the story of how a certain Tremellius got the cognomen ‘Scrofa’ and a free pig at the same time. When his slaves absconded with a neighbour’s sow, Tremellius had the dead animal placed in his bedroom, under a quilt on which his wife was reclining; when the neighbour made a search of the house and came to the bedroom, Tremellius *verba iurationis concipit: nullam esse in villa sua scropham, ‘nisi istam’, inquit, ‘quae in centonibus iacet’, lectulum monstrat* (‘swears a formal oath stating that there was no sow in his villa, except for the one, he says, lying on [or, in] the quilt, and he points out the bed’, *Sat.* 1.6.30).

In a much more famous passage, and one that might well have provided the inspiration for Macrobius’ anecdote, the infant Hermes affirms with equal candour, in his testimony before Zeus, ὥς οὐκ οἴκαδ’ ἔλασσα βόας, ὥς ὄλβιος εἶην, / οὐδ’ ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἔβην (‘that, so let me be blessed, I neither drove [Apollo’s] cattle home, nor did I cross my own threshold’, *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 379f.)—as, in fact, he did not, since (as the commentators note) the cattle

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<sup>26</sup> This translation is by Lacy [2] 196-99, with modifications by me. H. Newstead, ‘The Equivocal Oath in the Tristan Legend’, in F. Detier (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune, Professeur à l’Université de Liège* (Gembloux 1969) 2.1077-085 offers a useful analysis of the contrasts between Béroul’s version and that of Thomas Bretagne. See, further, G. Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt: A Study of the Sources of the Romance, Expanded by a Bibliography and Critical Essay on Tristan Scholarship Since 1912* by R. S. Loomis<sup>2</sup> (New York 1963) 223-26; Hexter [14] 18-26; Kasper [25] esp. 346-52. For the parallel tradition of the falsely accused queen, see Bartlett [15] 13-19.

<sup>27</sup> Spargo [25] 207-27; Thompson [15] H251.1; Schoepperle [26] 226; Hexter [14] 13-15; C. Riessner, ‘Bocca della verità: 1’, in Ranke [8] 2.1/2.543-45; Kasper [25] esp. 341-77.

<sup>28</sup> See esp. Hirzel [25].

had been taken to a cave near the river Alpheius, while on his return home the god had passed, not over the threshold, but διὰ κλήϊθρον (‘through the latchhole’, 146).<sup>29</sup>

In a similar fashion, Mestra, the daughter of Erysichthon, deceives her master in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Fleeing from the man to whom her father has sold her, she seeks the help of Neptune, who transforms her into the guise of a rustic fisherman. When confronted by her master, she replies:

quisquis es, ignoscas; in nullam lumina partem  
gurgite ab hoc flexi studioque operatus inhaesi,  
quoque minus dubites, sic has deus aequoris artes  
adiuvet, ut nemo iamdudum litore in isto,  
me tamen excepto, nec femina constitit ulla.

(Ov. *Met.* 8.864-68)

Whoever you are, forgive me; I have not turned my eyes in any  
direction from this part of the sea but have stayed here absorbed in this  
pursuit.

And that you may be less in doubt, may the god of the sea so help  
these skills as truly as no man has stood on this shore

for a long time now, except, that is, for me, and no woman at all.<sup>30</sup>

Prevarication of this sort presumably was something at which Odysseus’ grandfather Autolycus also excelled ὃς ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο / κλεπτοσύνη θ’ ὄρκῳ τε (‘who surpassed all men in thievery and the oath’, Hom. *Od.* 19.395f.).<sup>31</sup> And the modern age has certainly not been devoid of its own Autolycci, as demonstrated by the following well-known exchange:

Q. Did you have an extramarital sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky?

A. No.

Q. If she told someone that she had a sexual affair with you beginning in November of 1995, would that be a lie?

A. It’s certainly not the truth. It would not be the truth.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hirzel [25] 43.

<sup>30</sup> This translation is by D. E. Hill (ed. and tr.), *Ovid: Metamorphoses 5-8* (Warminster 1992) 139. See E. Fantham, ‘Sunt Quibus in Plures Ius Est Transire Figuras: Ovid’s Self-Transformers in the *Metamorphoses*’, *CW* 87.2 (1993) 30f.

<sup>31</sup> See Hirzel [25] 41-45; cf. the instances of deceptive and overtly false oaths discussed by M. Dillon, ‘By Gods, Tongues, and Dogs: The Use of Oaths in Aristophanic Comedy’, *G&R* 42 (1995) 135-51. Note, in particular, the witticism attributed to Polycrates of Samos and recalled by the Spartan Lysander, that one ought to cheat boys with ἀσπράγαλοι (‘dice’) and men with oaths (Plut. *Lys.* 8.4).

- Q. I think I used the term ‘sexual affair’. And so the record is completely clear, have you ever had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky, as that term is defined in Deposition Exhibit 1, as modified by the Court. . . .
- A. I have never had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. I’ve never had an affair with her.<sup>32</sup>

But, Autolycus and President Clinton to the contrary, it is women who are thought to be most particularly adept at such deception, especially when it comes to matters of sexual infidelity. As Chaucer’s Proserpina declares to her husband Pluto:

For lak of answeare noon of hem shal dyen.  
 Al hadde man seyn a thyng with bothe his yen,  
 Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,  
 And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly,  
 So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees.

(Chaucer, *The Merchant’s Tale* 2271-275)

Thus even the bumbling Diabolus is cunning enough to include a provision against deceptive double-talk (*ullum verbum . . . perplexabile*, ‘any obscure wording’, Plaut. *Asin.* 792) in the obsessively legalistic contract by which he proposes to bind the young courtesan Philaenium exclusively to himself.

Later antiquity provides a few interesting examples of such trickery, although not all of them involve verbal dexterity—or, for that matter, female characters. For example, the previously widowed Melite—who has suffered the misfortune of having her dead husband suddenly pop up alive and well, just as she was on the verge of consummating a long sought-after sexual relationship with the handsome young Clitophon—is able to swear truthfully that οὐδὲ εἶδον τὸ παράπαν μήτε πολίτην μήτε ξένον ἥκειν εἰς ὁμιλίαν καθ’ ὃν λέγεις καιρόν (‘I never allowed any man at all, whether citizen or stranger, to have intercourse with me during the specified period’, Ach. Tat. *Leucippe and*

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<sup>32</sup> Transcript of publicly available portions of the videotaped oral deposition of William Jefferson Clinton (17 January 1998): *Paula Corbin Jones v. William Jefferson Clinton, et al.* (US Dist Ct ED Ark No. LR-C-94-290), published in 106th Congress, 1st Session, Document 106-3: Impeachment of President William Jefferson Clinton, The Evidentiary Record Pursuant to S. Res. 16, vol. 22, p. 25 ([http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106\\_cong\\_documents&docid=f:sd003v22.106.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_documents&docid=f:sd003v22.106.pdf)—accessed 12 August 2009).



*Clitophon* 8.11.3.5f.) prior to her husband’s return, since she in fact only had sex with Clitophon *after* her husband had been found to be alive.<sup>33</sup>

In a similar vein and in the best Clintonesque manner, the Zeus of pseudo-Apollodorus in the presence of the newly transformed Io ἀπωμόσατο δὲ ταύτη μὴ συνελθεῖν (‘swore that he had not had carnal relations with *this* [my italics] beast/girl’, Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.7f.).<sup>34</sup> The adulterous Zeus is, of course, scarcely female, but it can be argued that consideration of this passage is appropriate in a study of feminine duplicity. Much of the humour in stories of the supreme deity’s erotic high jinks derives from their cunning use of role-reversal and inverted power relationships, as the ‘king of gods and men’ is reduced to the level of a henpecked husband living under the watchful eye of a domineering spouse. The resulting structural similarities yield a number of affinities between the amorous Zeus and the cunning wife of the traditional adultery tale, each of whom is compelled, by virtue of his or her subordinate position, to employ deception and verbal sleights of hand in order to circumvent the authority of a lawful wife or husband.

A similar connection informs the portrayal of the deceitful young Giton of Petronius’ *Satyrical*. When confronted by the frustrated Encolpius and compelled to declare, on his honour, whether he enjoyed carnal relations with Ascylos on a particular night, *tetigit puer oculos suos conceptissimisque iuravit verbis sibi ab Ascylo nullam vim factam* (‘the boy touched his eyes and swore a most solemn oath that no violence had been inflicted upon him by Ascylos’, *Sat.* 133.2.1-3). That Encolpius is satisfied with such an obviously irrelevant oath is a sign of his curious naiveté, particularly in matters relating to the handsome Giton.

Further, while it does not involve an equivocal oath, the contrivance through which an adulterous wife in Aristaenetus (fifth/sixth centuries AD) manages to come into contact with her lover, in her husband’s presence, might

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<sup>33</sup> Translation by J. J. Winkler (tr.), ‘Achilles Tatius: *Leucippe and Clitophon*’, in B. P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley 1989) 279. See Rattenbury [15] 67-69; Hexter [14] 16f.; L. R. Cresci, ‘La figura di Melite in Achille Tazio’, *A&R* 23 (1978) 74-82; C. Segal, ‘The Trials at the End of Achilles Tatius’ *Clitophon and Leucippe: Doublets and Complementaries*, *SIFC* 77 (1984) 83-91; Kasper [25] 415f.; Chew [15] esp. 63f.; S. Schwartz, ‘Clitophon the *Moichos*: Achilles Tatius and the Trial Scene in the Greek Novel’, *Ancient Narrative* 1 (2000-2001) 93-113.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the ruse of Clitophon, who tells his beloved’s father that εἴ τις ἄρα ἔστιν ἀνδρὸς παρθενία, ταύτην καὶ γὰρ μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος πρὸς Λευκίππην ἔχω (‘if one can speak of such a thing as male virginity, this is my relationship to Leukippe up to now’, Ach. Tat. *Leucippe and Clitophon* 8.5.7: tr. Winkler [33] 271). See also Newstead [26] 1082 for the ruse employed by Lancelot (Chrétien, *Charette* 4755-5006, a work inspired by the Tristan legend).

be taken to suggest a specific awareness of the tradition on which the Tristan legend builds:

Γυνή τις ἐν ἀγορᾷ προϊοῦσα τὸν τε σύνευνον εἶχε πλησίον, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκετῶν περιεστοιχίζετο κύκλῳ. ὥς δὲ προσιόντα τὸν ἑαυτῆς εἶδε μοιχόν, ἄφνω βουλεύεται δαιμονίως ἅμα τῇ θεᾷ, ὅπως ἂν εὐπροσώπως ἄψηται τοῦ ποθουμένου, καὶ τι τυχόν καὶ λαλοῦντος ἀκούσῃ. αὐτὴ μὲν οὖν ὤλισθεν, ὥς ἐδόκει, καὶ πέπτωκεν ἐπὶ γόνυ· ὁ δὲ μοιχὸς συμπράττων ὥσπερ ἀπὸ συνθήματος τῇ γνώμῃ τῆς γυναικὸς ὁρέγει τὴν χεῖρα καὶ διανίστησι πεπτωκυῖαν λαβόμενος τῆς δεξιᾶς καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνης δακτύλοις τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ περιπλέξας, καὶ ὥς οἶμαι πρὸς τοῦ ἔρωτος ὑπέτρεμον ἀμφοτέρων αἱ χεῖρες. ὁ μὲν μοιχὸς τῆς πεπλασμένης αὐτὴν παραμυθούμενος συμφορᾶς εἶπεν ἅττα δήπου καὶ ἔβη. ἡ δέ, ὥσπερ ἀλγοῦσα, λάθρα τῷ στόματι προσάγει τὴν χεῖρα, καὶ τοὺς ἑαυτῆς πεφιλήκει δακτύλους, ὧν ἐκεῖνος προσήψατο . . .

(Aristaenet. 1.9.1-14)

A certain married lady was proceeding through the marketplace in the company of her husband and surrounded by servants. When she saw her lover approaching, she immediately conceived a dreadfully clever scheme, the instant she caught sight of him, as to how she might touch her eager paramour without arousing suspicion, and perhaps even hear him speak a few words. She slipped, as it seemed, and fell down upon one knee. Her lover, working in concert with the woman's scheme as if by some prearranged plan, extended his hand and helped her rise from her fallen position, taking her by the right hand and wrapping his fingers around hers. (And, I believe, the hands of both trembled with their passion.) Saying something or other, as if consoling her for her feigned misfortune, the lover departed. But she, as if in pain, discreetly placed her hand to her mouth and kissed the fingers that he had grasped . . .

The passage offers a variation on the well-established motif that shows obsessive lovers devising some means, however artificial, to establish erotic contact with one another.<sup>35</sup> A possible connection to the tradition reflected in the Tristan legend is suggested not only by detailed similarities in the essential scenarios but also by Aristaenetus' comment that the woman's lover acted 'as if by some prearranged plan', as well as the relatively insubstantial motivation for the wife's elaborate contrivance in this instance, which here functions mainly to display her perverse delight in getting the better of her husband.

Turning to the pre-Plautine tradition, the fragments of Amphis offer an interesting possible example of an equivocal oath from Greek New Comedy. Amphis appears to have presented a treatment of the Callisto myth where Zeus

<sup>35</sup> C. Consonni, 'Aristeneto', in A. Stramaglia (ed.), *Eros: Antiche trame greche d' amore* (Bari 2000) 358f. Note in particular the concern of the obsessive husband Barbarus, who orders his slave Myrmex to guard his wife in his absence and threatens him with death *si quisquam hominum uel in transitu digito tenus eam contigisset* ('if anyone should so much as lay a finger upon her, even in passing', in Apul. *Met.* 9.17.4).

assumes the shape of Artemis in order to deceive the girl prior to raping her—a version also known to us from other sources (Amphis fr. 46 [Schol. Aratus 37-44]; Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.1.2; cf. Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.100f.; Nonnus *Dion.* 2.122f., 33.288-92, 36.66-74; Ov. *Met.* 2.401-530; Schol. Callim. *Hymn* 1.41; Schol. Lycoph. *Alex.* 481). When her condition becomes apparent and Artemis interrogates her about the matter, Callisto asserts that no one was responsible for her condition other than Artemis herself. It is generally argued that this claim could not have been offered in good faith, that Callisto could not have mistaken the embrace of Zeus for some form of lesbian encounter (although passages such as Nonnus *Dion.* 33.288-92, 36.66-74 might be taken to support the latter view).<sup>36</sup> If Callisto did attempt to brazen it out in the manner of Euripides’ Pasiphaë, she would offer a particularly apt precedent for the sort of feminine duplicity which Amphitruo suspects in Alcumena. It would be especially interesting to know whether the scene was enacted on stage or—as the wording of the above-cited passages implies—merely narrated. A mythological burlesque of the Callisto myth would not be unheard of: a work under that title is listed among the comedies of Alcaeus (fr. 17f.), although there is uncertainty about whether it dealt with the mythological figure or an ἐταίρα (‘concubine’, ‘courtesan’) of that name, such as the one mentioned in Aelian (*VH* 13.32).<sup>37</sup> It is possible that Alcaeus and/or Amphis employed mythological burlesque to

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<sup>36</sup> A. Henrichs, ‘Three Approaches to Greek Mythography’, in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (Totowa 1986) 262, n. 82; H.-G. Nesselrath, *Die attische Mittlere Komödie: Ihre Stellung in der antiken Literaturkritik und Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin 1990) 234f. The lesbian overtones in the tale are also stressed, for example, in the various studies of this theme by François Boucher in the eighteenth century such as ‘Jupiter, in the Guise of Diana, and Callisto’, 1763, oil on canvas (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art: Jack and Belle Linsky Collection 1982): see A. Ananoff and D. Wildenstein, *François Boucher* (Lausanne 1976) 1.108f., 111; 2.229f., no. 576, fig. 1557. On the sole depiction from antiquity, a silver *simpulum* (‘ladle’) of the third century AD, see I. McPhee, *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich 1990) 5.1.941 s.v. ‘Kallisto 4’.

<sup>37</sup> See Kassel and Austin [2] 8f. *ad* Alc. fr. 17f. While the name itself is not uncommon (see M. J. Osborne and S. G. Byrne [edd.], *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names 2: Attica* [Oxford 1994] 253 s.v. ‘Καλλιστώ’), there are no other citations of an ἐταίρα by the name of Callisto; see, however, L. McClure, *Courtesans at Table: Gender and Greek Literary Culture in Athenaeus* (New York 2003) 70, 195 n. 12, who notes the appearance of a young courtesan labelled ‘Callisto’ on the tondo of a red-figure cup attributed to the Brygos Painter (London, British Museum E68; Beazley Archive 203923). McClure suggests a possible reference to the well-known fourth-century ἐταίρα Callistion (Ath. 11.71.8-13, 13.45.33-38, 13.49.1-5: see also McClure 77 on J. Kirchner (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae* 2<sup>2</sup> (Berlin 1940) 11793 [J. Kirchner (ed.), *Prosopographia Attica* 2 (Berlin 1903) 468, 8109a]; cf. I. Peschel, *Die Hetäre bei Symposion und Komos in der attisch-rotfigurigen Vasenmalerei des 6.-4. Jahrh. v. Chr.* [Frankfurt am Main 1987] 183f.).

present a humorous conflation of the mythical virgin and a contemporary ἑταίρα<sup>38</sup>—a process that could have been aided by the practice, common among the Athenian *demimonde*, of assuming animal *noms de guerre*.<sup>39</sup> Such a scenario would, one imagines, have provided ample occasion for the brazen behaviour implied in the testimonia for Amphis' play. If such a scene were staged, the parallel with the Plautine Alcumena would have been all the stronger in that Callisto, too, would no doubt have been portrayed as grossly pregnant (whether she actually was so or was merely feigning this condition).<sup>40</sup>

A more interesting instance of feminine duplicity, because more oblique, is offered by Clytemnestra's famously problematic announcement in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* when, in the final lines of a speech that fairly drips with sinister irony, she proclaims before the openly suspicious chorus that during Agamemnon's absence she has had no more knowledge of carnal pleasure with a man than she has of the tempering (or, more literally, the 'dipping' or 'tingeing') of bronze: οὐδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίψογον φάτιν / ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς ('with no man else have I known delight, nor any shame of evil speech, more than I know how to temper bronze', Ag. 611f.).<sup>41</sup> If we accept that 'bronze' here is used broadly as a type of metonymy for 'weaponry' (since bronze, as it turns out, is not usually

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<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Nesselrath [36] 204-41 on the conflation, in the so-called Middle Comedy, of mythological burlesque with the mockery of contemporary society. On the role of the ἑταίρα in Middle Comedy, see Nesselrath 318-24, who notes, however (320f.), the paucity of evidence in the fragments for ἑταῖραι with speaking roles.

<sup>39</sup> Cox [23] 175-77; McClure [37] 59-78.

<sup>40</sup> As D. Christenson, 'Grotesque Realism in Plautus' *Amphitruo*', *CJ* 96 (2001) 244 notes, pregnancy is rarely portrayed on the ancient stage: see also G. Chiarini, 'Compresenza e conflittualità dei generi nel teatro latino arcaico (per una rilettura dell' *Amphitruo*)', *MD* 5 (1980) 121-24; J. E. Phillips, 'Alcumena in the *Amphitruo* of Plautus: A Pregnant Lady Joke', *CJ* 80 (1985) 122f. E. Flintoff, 'Naevius and Roman Satire', *Latomus* 47 (1988) 593f., and Christenson [above, this note] 244 n. 10, cite the possible evidence of Atellan farce (Novius' *Virgo Praegnans*; perhaps, Pomponius' *Satura*; cf. Plaut. *Amph.* 667), while Ar. *Lys.* 742-59 offers an example of an on-stage feigned pregnancy. Plautus' *Truculentus* points to the ease with which feigned pregnancies could be incorporated into the typical New Comic plot. Cf., however, U. Reinhardt, 'Amphitryon und Amphitruo', in U. Reinhardt and K. Sallmann (edd.), *Musa iocosa. Arbeiten über Humor und Witz, Komik und Komödie der Antike: Andreas Thierfelder zum Siebzigsten Geburtstag am 15. Juni 1973* (Hildesheim 1974) 106f.

<sup>41</sup> This translation is by R. Lattimore (tr.), 'Agamemnon', in D. Grene and R. Lattimore (edd.), *The Complete Greek Tragedies: Aeschylus* 1 (Chicago 1953) 53.

tempered),<sup>42</sup> the proclamation exhibits an ambiguity similar to that evident in the other passages examined here, but—as one expects of Aeschylus’ Clytemnestra—in a much more menacing vein.<sup>43</sup> Clytemnestra does not swear an oath, but this very formal and very public proclamation of her fidelity is directly reminiscent of the sort of oath-ordeals under consideration.

Finally, there is Homer’s *Iliad* 15.36-42, in the aftermath of Hera’s seduction of Zeus. When the latter awakens from his post-coital coma, he is far from pleased to discover that Poseidon has disobeyed his commands and helped the Greek forces to rout the Trojans. When he threatens Hera with punishment, she swears an imposing oath:

ἴστω νῦν τόδε Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε  
καὶ τὸ κατειβόμενον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ, ὅς τε μέγιστος  
ὄρκος δεινότατός τε πέλει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι,  
σὴ θ’ ἱερὴ κεφαλὴ καὶ νωῖτερον λέχος αὐτῶν  
κουρίδιον, τὸ μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ ποτε μᾶψ ὁμόσαιμι·  
μὴ δι’ ἐμὴν ἰότητα Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων  
πημαίνει Τρῳάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορα, τοῖσι δ’ ἀρήγει . . .

(Hom. *Il.* 15.36-42)

Now let

Earth be my witness in this, and the wide heaven above us,  
and the dripping water of the Styx, which oath is the biggest  
and most formidable oath among the blessed immortals.  
The sanctity of your head be witness, and the bed of marriage  
between us: a thing by which I at least could never swear vainly.  
It is not through my will that the shaker of the earth Poseidon  
afflicts the Trojans and Hektor and gives aid to the others . . .<sup>44</sup>

Although Hera’s mode of expression is somewhat oblique, it is generally accepted that she is in fact swearing an oath,<sup>45</sup> but is relying on a verbal quibble to keep herself off the hook (or, in this case, off Zeus’ anvils). She is technically correct in her claim that it was not by her will or command that Poseidon intervened in the battle after Zeus fell asleep: Hypnos had taken it upon himself

<sup>42</sup> E. Fraenkel (ed.), *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) 2.304f. *ad* Aesch. Ag. 612; G. Thomson (ed.), *The Oresteia of Aeschylus*<sup>2</sup> (Prague 1966) 2.54 *ad* Aesch. Ag. 611f.; G. Roux ‘Sur quelques passages obscurs de l’*Agamemnon*’, *REG* 83 (1970) 21-25.

<sup>43</sup> For the sinister implications of χαλκοῦ βαφάς, cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 1010f., *PV* 862f.; Eur. *Phoen.* 1577f.; Lycoph. *Alex.* 1121; Soph. *Aj.* 95. See further G. Markantonatos, ‘Dramatic Irony in Aeschylus’, *Platon* 31 (1979) 63; A. Moreau, ‘Clytemnestre et le Héraut: Un discours spécieux (Eschyle, *Agamemnon*, 587-614)’, *Pallas* 38 (1992) 166f.

<sup>44</sup> This translation is by R. Lattimore (tr.), *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago 1951) 310.

<sup>45</sup> Pace, C. Callaway, ‘Perjury and the Unsworn Oath’, *TAPhA* 123 (1993) 15-25. Cf. Schol. Hom. *Il.* 15.36-42; Eust. *Il.* 3.698 *ad* Hom. *Il.* 15.39f.

to inform Poseidon of Hera's stratagem and to urge him to aid the Greeks, without any overt direction from Hera (Hom. *Il.* 14.354f.). Still, it was clearly with this type of eventuality in mind that Hera undertook her scheme in the first place.

The nature of the deceptive oath is more benign here than in the other instances that we have examined: Hera is in effect merely signalling her submission to Zeus' will, via an oath that both are aware is only marginally true, as becomes evident in Zeus' reaction (Hom. *Il.* 15.47).<sup>46</sup> But the form in which her submission is cast is interesting, particularly in the sultry context of the seduction episode: once again we find a wife who betrays her husband's trust and then attempts to avoid the consequences of her actions via an elaborate oath that entails a legalistic quibble. Further, that oath is grounded again in a fervent protestation of her wifely fidelity.

Against this background, it seems reasonable to argue that Amphitruo suspects a similar form of feminine duplicity on the part of Alcumena—that the expression *audacter iuras* implies not straightforward perjury but a slippery use of language similar to those examined above.<sup>47</sup> Like Hera, Alcumena offers an elaborate protestation of her innocence—one that is meant to be solemn and imposing, but that Amphitruo regards as merely devious. Her moving invocation of Jupiter and Hera—the latter explicitly in her role as the goddess of marriage and the family—is intended to signal the strength of her conviction, but, regarded in light of the comic tradition, is all too readily misinterpreted as indicating the depths of her shamelessness; while the lofty tone of her statement, which should indicate solemnity and, on an extra-dramatic level, the high seriousness of tragedy, merely sounds underhanded—a cunning method of introducing some legalistic quibble that might permit her to conceal her guilt while technically speaking the truth. The expression *mi . . . nemo corpus corpore contigit* has a particularly suspicious ring to it: modern scholars readily recognize an instance of 'amorous polyptoton',<sup>48</sup> but from Amphitruo's perspective it is the sort of tortured expression that is all too likely to conceal some duplicitous ambiguity.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Schol. Hom. *Il.* 15.39-41, 15.47. Note the similar reaction to Hermes' brazen deceptions at *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 389f.

<sup>47</sup> Contrast, e.g., R. Oniga (ed.), *Tito Maccio Plauto: Anfitrione* (Venice 1991) 220 *ad* Plaut. *Amph.* 836. The passages cited there concern misleading statements, however, rather than oaths proper.

<sup>48</sup> J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford 1996) 202-04; cited by Christenson [3] 273 *ad* Plaut. *Amph.* 833f.

<sup>49</sup> One might also detect a latent ambiguity in the concluding *quo* clause (Plaut. *Amph.* 834).

It has been noted that, at one level, the confrontation between Amphitruo and Alcumena suggests the potentially disastrous miscommunication of high tragedy. It should now be clear that part of this miscommunication is distinctly comic in nature. Here, as elsewhere, Plautus’ *Amphitruo* presents what is to a great degree a clash of genres, with an Alcumena who aims at the lofty seriousness of tragedy but is misunderstood by her husband, whose ears are too finely attuned to what is essentially a comic tradition of adulterous wives and their deceptive ways.

As it happens, Amphitruo’s instincts are sound, but in a sense that neither he nor Alcumena herself could possibly perceive. Through a cunning twist, Plautus has provided Alcumena with a form of expression that reflects the tradition of the equivocal oath perfectly: she can swear quite truthfully that *mortalis nemo* other than her husband has had intercourse with her, since her partner of the preceding night was in fact the divine Jupiter in mortal guise.<sup>50</sup> That she employs this ambiguity unconsciously and in good faith adds to the extra-dramatic humour of the scene, while enhancing our impression of the human agents in this work as unwitting players in a divinely staged farce.<sup>51</sup> It also confirms, through its very obliqueness, just how familiar the tradition of the wife’s duplicitous oath must have been in Plautus’ day and/or that of his Greek source.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Oniga [47] 220 *ad* Plaut. *Amph.* 831f.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. E. A. Schmidt, ‘Die Tragikomödie *Amphitruo* des Plautus als Komödie und Tragödie’, *MH* 60 (2003) 96-99. As one anonymous referee notes, the irony here is compounded by the fact that Alcumena invokes, as a witness of her chastity, the very god who has bedded her, while calling upon the notoriously unhappy divine couple Jupiter and Juno as the guarantors of marital fidelity.

<sup>52</sup> The ambiguity inherent in Alcumena’s oath would not have been out of place in Euripides’ *Alcmene*, but could equally be the invention of a fourth-century comic source (for those who believe that Plautus employed such a source).

# LIVY'S PREFACE AND ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This article endeavours to establish a precise date and political context for Livy's composition of the preface to his monumental *Ab Urbe Condita* in the light of recent discoveries about Livy's chronology of composition and new polyvalent readings of his text. The paper concludes that the preface was probably written *ca.* early 32 BCE.

Yet another study of the preface to Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* after more than a century of learned exegesis and debate<sup>2</sup> may seem hard to justify, but recent trends in Livian scholarship—including innovative polyvalent readings of the *AUC* and attempts to re-date its composition<sup>3</sup>—suggest that at least some revision has become necessary. Most of the standard talking-points surrounding the preface—its pessimistic tone, its literary antecedents, its relationship to the Augustan regime, and its seeming rhetorical paradoxes—will be revisited here

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<sup>1</sup> This article was based on a paper delivered on 31 January 2005 at the Twenty-sixth Conference and General Meeting of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies Conference held at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand and was submitted for publication shortly thereafter. I dedicate it to Jeannie Rutenburg, a dear departed friend and mentor.

<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive bibliography of items spanning 1933-1978 appears in *ANRW* 2.30.2 931f., to which add H. Dessau, 'Die Vorrede des Livius', in *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfeld* (Berlin 1903) 461-66; J. Korpany, 'Sallust, Livius und *Ambitio*', *Philologus* 127 (1983) 61-71; M. Coppola, 'Augusto nella praefatio liviana?', *AFLN* 26 (1983-1984) 67-70; A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London 1988) 128-40; M. J. Wheeldon, "'True Stories': the Reception of Historiography in Antiquity", in A. Cameron (ed.), *History as Text: The Writing of Ancient History* (London 1989) 33-63; J. Henderson, 'Livy and the Invention of History', in Cameron [above, this note] 64-85; E. Cizek, 'À propos de la poétique de l'histoire chez Tite-Live', *Latomus* 51 (1992) 355-64; E. Badian, 'Livy and Augustus', in W. Schuller (ed.), *Livius: Aspekte seines Werkes* (Konstanz 1993) 9-38; J. Moles, 'Livy's Preface', *PCPhS* 39 (1993) 141-68; G. B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca 1995) 14-19, 176-78; K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton 1996) 280-82; M. Jaeger, *Livy's Written Rome* (Ann Arbor 1997) 177-84.

<sup>3</sup> Polyvalent readings: e.g., Miles [2] 92f. n. 49 (cf. p. 176: Livy's preface has a 'studied ambiguity' about it).



with a view to resolving some of the more intractable problems that have plagued the text and its interpretation for over a century now.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Classical texts used are as follows (in order of appearance, other than to avoid repetition). The text of Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* is that of R. S. Conway and C. F. Walters (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 1 (Oxford 1955) [Books 1-5]; C. F. Walters and R. S. Conway (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 2-3 (Oxford 1919, 1950) [Books 6-10, 21-25]; R. S. Conway and S. K. Johnson (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 4 (Oxford 1953) [Books 26-30]; A. H. McDonald (ed.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 5 (Oxford 1969) [Books 31-35]; W. Weissenborn and M. Mueller (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 3 (Berlin n.d.) [Books 36-40]; W. Weissenborn and W. Heraeus (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 4 (Leipzig 1908) [Books 41-45]; of Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* is that of U. P. Boissevain (ed.), *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiarum Romanarum Quae Supersunt* 1-3 (Berlin 1955); of Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* is that of C. Mayhoff (ed.), *C. Plini Secundi Naturalis Historiae Libri* 37 1-5 (Leipzig 1892-1909); of Strabo, *Geographica* is that of A. Meineke (ed.), *Strabonis Geographica* 1-3 (Graz 1969); of Tacitus, *Annales* is that of C. D. Fisher (ed.), *Cornelii Taciti Annalium Ab Excessu Divi Augusti Libri* (Oxford 1906); of Seneca, *Controversiae* is that of M. Winterbottom (ed.), *The Elder Seneca: Declamations in Two Volumes* (Cambridge, Mass. 1974); [Demosthenes], *In Epistulam Philippi* is that of S. H. Butcher (ed.), *Demosthenis Orationes* 1 (Oxford 1966); of Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* is that of M. Winterbottom (ed.), *M. Fabi Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae Libri Duodecim* 1-2 (Oxford 1970); of Sallust, *Historiae* is that of B. Maurenbrecher (ed.), *C. Sallusti Crispi Historiarum Reliquiae* 2 (Leipzig 1893); of Sallust, *De Catilinae Coniuratione* and *Bellum Iugurthinum* is that of A. Kurfess (ed.), *C. Sallusti Crispi Catilina, Iugurtha, Fragmenta Ampliora* (Leipzig 1957); of Thucydides, *Historiae* is that of H. S. Jones and J. E. Powell (edd.), *Thucydidis Historiae* 1-2 (Oxford 1: 1970; 2: 1967); of Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidos Libros* is that of G. Thilo (ed.), *Servii Grammatici Qui Feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii* 1-2 (Leipzig 1878-1884); of Priscian, *Institutio de Arte Grammatica* is that of H. Keil (ed.), *Grammatici Latini* 1-8 (Hildesheim 1961); of Polybius, *Historiae* is that of T. Büttner-Wobst (ed.), *Polybii Historiae* 1-4 (Stuttgart: 1: 1962; 2-3: 1965; 4: 1967); of Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 1-20 is that of F. Vogel and K. T. Fischer (post I. Bekker and L. Dindorf) (edd.), *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica*<sup>3</sup> 1-5 (Leipzig 1: 1888; 2: 1890; 3: 1893; Stuttgart 4-5: 1964); of Tacitus, *Agricola* is that of M. Winterbottom and R. M. Ogilvie (edd.), *Cornelii Taciti Opera Minora* (Oxford 1975); of Justinian, *Digest* is that of T. Mommsen and P. Krüger (edd.), A. Watson (tr.), *The Digest of Justinian* 1-4 (Philadelphia 1985); of Justinian, *Institutiones* is that of J. B. Moyle (ed.), *Institutiones: Imperatoris Iustiniani Institutionum Libri Quattuor* (Oxford 1923); of Ulpian, *Epitome* is that of P. E. Huschke (ed.), *Domitii Ulpiani Quae Vulgo Vocantur Fragmenta, Sive ex Ulpiani Libro Singulari Regularum Excerpta* (Leipzig 1886); of Gaius, *Institutiones* is that of E. Seckel and B. Kübler (edd.), *Gai Institutiones* (Leipzig 1935); of *Mon. Anc. RG* is that of E. Malcovati (ed.), *Imperatoris Caesaris Augusti Operum Fragmenta* (Turin 1962); of Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* is that of M. Ihm (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Opera* 1 (Leipzig 1908); of Propertius is that of G. P. Goold (ed.), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, Mass. 1990); of Cicero, *De Republica* is that of C. F. W. Mueller (ed.), *M. Tulli Ciceronis Scripta Quae Manserunt Omnia* 4.2 (Leipzig 1890); of Tacitus *Historiae* is that of C. D. Fisher (ed.), *Cornelii Taciti Historiarum Libri* (Oxford 1911); of Horace, *Epodi* and *Carmina*, is that of

Several years ago, I argued in print that Livy actually began composing his monumental history of Rome slightly earlier than the canonical 27-25 BCE.<sup>5</sup> Building on earlier revisionist studies by Syme, Bayet and Luce,<sup>6</sup> I suggested that the forward-looking passages in Livy's first pentad (1.19.3 and 4.20.5-11, both of which mention the name Augustus) were—as Luce noted long ago<sup>7</sup>—later insertions to the first edition, and hence could no longer be legitimately used as evidence for a compositional *terminus post quem* of 27 BCE, when Octavian had his name changed to Augustus. I linked up this argument to another piece of evidence, hitherto overlooked, from Livy's first book (1.56.2), which looks ahead to the repairs on the Cloaca Maxima and Circus Maximus by Agrippa, in his capacity as *aedile* in 33 BCE (cf. Cass. Dio 49.43.1f.; Plin. *HN* 36.104; Str. 5.3.8 [235C]), in order to establish that Livy took up his stylus in 33 or 32 BCE. Livy was thus in no sense an 'Augustan' historian by motivation or orientation early on—nor perhaps at any point—in his writing career. He was, rather, a triumviral historian, deeply cynical and appalled at what was going on around him—if not more so than even Sallust, or Horace (*Epod.* 16).

Although scholarly consensus has now begun to move slowly away from the canonical date of 27-25 BCE for the composition of Livy's preface—and indeed of the entire first pentad—towards an earlier date, before Octavian

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F. Klingner (ed.), *Q. Horati Flacci Opera* (Leipzig 1959); of Plutarch, *Antonius* is that of K. Ziegler (ed.), *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae* 3.1<sup>2</sup> (Leipzig 1971). All translations are my own.

<sup>5</sup> P. J. Burton, 'The Last Republican Historian: A New Date for the Composition of Livy's First Pentad', *Historia* 49 (2000) 429-46. All dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated. For the canonical dating, see (*i.a.*) L. R. Taylor, 'Livy and the Name Augustus', *CR* 32 (1918) 159; L. Amundsen, 'Notes to the Preface of Livy', *SO* 25 (1947) 34; P. G. Walsh, 'Livy's Preface and the Distortion of History', *AJPh* 76 (1955) 369f.; 'Livy and Augustus', *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 4 (1961) 29, 36 n. 39; *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge 1963) 8, n. 2; H. J. Mette, 'Livius und Augustus', *Gymnasium* 68 (1961) 275; H. Petersen, 'Livy and Augustus', *TAPhA* 92 (1961) 451 n. 61; A. D. Leeman, *Oratoris Ratio: The Stylistic Theories and Practice of the Roman Orators, Historians and Philosophers* 1 (Amsterdam 1963) 194; T. Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm 1964) 73.

<sup>6</sup> R. Syme, 'Livy and Augustus', *HSPH* 64 (1959) 41, 45 believes that Livy began writing *ca.* 29 BCE; J. Bayet (ed.), *Tite-Live Histoire Romaine* 1.1<sup>7</sup> (Paris 1961) xvii-xviii argues that the first edition of the first pentad was written and published 31-29 BCE; T. J. Luce, 'The Dating of Livy's First Decade', *TAPhA* 96 (1965) 209-40 puts initial composition around the time of the battle of Actium in 31 BCE, perhaps before, and dates the first edition of the first pentad by 27 BCE.

<sup>7</sup> Luce [6] 210-18.

became Augustus,<sup>8</sup> several recent studies persist in treating Livy and his *magnum opus* in an Augustan context<sup>9</sup>—which is fair enough, of course, given that most of Livy’s four and a half decade-long writing life was lived under the new regime. But if the nuances are there, as indeed I believe they are, especially in the preface, which can allow us to track Livy’s intellectual and ideological development as a thinker and as an historian, then the attempt should at least be made to construct a portrait of the author when he began his project. By more precisely contextualizing the composition of the preface, it may just be possible to solve some of the longstanding interpretive and chronological difficulties raised by the text.

One such interpretive problem is that of the tone of the preface, which most scholars readily concede is extremely pessimistic.<sup>10</sup> A number of those who follow the canonical dating scheme have been decidedly uncomfortable reconciling this with the era of optimism and renewal that the Augustan dispensation of 27 BCE was supposed to have inaugurated.<sup>11</sup> One could argue, of course, that the new regime, especially in its early days, need not have prompted self-censorship amongst historians and intellectuals straightaway—as

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<sup>8</sup> Of recent studies, the following suspect that 27-25 BCE is too late for the composition of the preface: Woodman [2] 132; Badian [2]; Moles [2] 151, 166 n. 56; Miles [2] 92f. n. 49, 95; Galinsky [2] 281; Jaeger [2] 13 n.36.

<sup>9</sup> Despite his stance on the preface, Galinsky [2] 283 calls the *AUC* an ‘Augustan’ work. Defenders of the canonical dating scheme are E. Mensching, ‘Livius, Cossus und Augustus’, *MH* 24 (1967) 22; E. Gabba, ‘The Historians and Augustus’, in F. Millar and E. Segal (edd.), *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects* (Oxford 1984) 79; R. von Haehling, *Zeitbezüge des T. Livius in der ersten Dekade seines Geschichtswerkes: Nec Vitia Nostra nec Remedia Pati Possumus* (Stuttgart 1989) 19, n. 47; D. Sailor, ‘Dirty Linen, Fabrication, and the Authorities of Livy and Augustus’, *TAPhA* 136 (2006) 332.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dessau [2] 143 n. 5; F. Klingner, ‘Livius’, *Antike* 1 (1925) 86f. [= *Römische Geisteswelt* (Munich 1943) 293f.]; Amundsen [5] 34; O. Leggewie, ‘Die Geisteshaltung der Geschichtsschreiber Sallust und Livius: Nachgewiesen an den Vorreden ihrer Werke’, *Gymnasium* 60 (1953) 343; Walsh [5 (1955)] 170; [5 (1963)] 18; Syme [6] 42; Leeman [5] 32; R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5* (Oxford 1965) 23f.; Mensching [9] 25; von Haehling [9] 212; Badian [2] 19; Moles [2] 150-53; Jaeger [2] 181.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Dessau [2] 462-65, who in 1903 dates the preface to 27 BCE; but in H. Dessau, ‘Livius und Augustus’, *Hermes* 41 (1906) 143 n. 5, he notes that the pessimistic tone merits an earlier dating. Cf. Walsh [5 (1963)] 10: ‘There is no doubt that the *Ab Urbe Condita* was commenced in an atmosphere of renewed hope’, and yet ‘Livy seeks to depict the desperate condition to which the Romans have come’ (18). Amundsen [5] 34 states that ‘Livy gives no hint about the dawning of a new era, although he composed his preface later than 27 BC’. Leggewie [10] 347 believes that the preface recalls the dark days of civil war, but also reflects an Augustan mentality (349). For similarly contradictory arguments, see also Mette [5] 284; Mensching [9] 24; Leeman [5] 194.

indeed Tacitus suggests (*Ann.* 1.2). On the other hand, Livy was sufficiently overwhelmed (and apparently nervous, given the tortured prose of the passage) that he altered his text (4.20.5-11) sometime after 27 BCE when he heard that the *princeps* wished to correct him on a point of history that it was essential for the regime to suppress for propaganda purposes.<sup>12</sup> Thus, at first glance, the pessimistic tone of the preface would seem to indicate a pre-Augustan context.

One can perhaps best begin to build a stronger case by demonstrating what few scholars have ever sought to deny and what is seemingly in line with the preface's pessimism—its overwhelming debt to Livy's predecessor Sallust.<sup>13</sup> Although widely accepted, this proposition meets with inconvenient anecdotal evidence from the Elder Seneca, that Livy expressed strong distaste for Sallust's style, especially his *breuitas* and penchant for obscure archaisms (*Sen. Controv.* 9.2.26).<sup>14</sup> Despite this, Livy was nevertheless bound by ancient historiographical convention to make at least some acknowledgement of his predecessor's achievement.<sup>15</sup> But this is not all. Sallust apparently exerted a much stronger influence on Livy's thinking than mere convention would seem to demand, for his preface is saturated with Sallustian allusions, and these

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<sup>12</sup> Concerning Livy *AUC* 4.20.5-11, see Luce [6]; Burton [5] 431-33; Sailor [9]. The fact that Livy's interpretation in his history of some of the early heroic figures of the Roman republic does not cohere with the *elogia* ('epitaphs') of these same figures found in the Augustan forum (see T. J. Luce, 'Livy, Augustus and the Forum Augustum', in K. A. Raafaub and M. Toher (edd.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate* [Berkeley 1990] 123-38) need not cause a problem: Livy wrote these sections of the *AUC* long before Augustus' forum was built.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Amundsen [5]; Leggewie [10]; K. Vretska, 'Die Geisteshaltung der Geschichtsschreiber Sallust und Livius', *Gymnasium* 61 (1954) 191-203; H. Oppermann, 'Die Einleitung zum Geschichtswerk des Livius', *AU* 7 (1955) 90-95; A. D. Leeman, 'Are We Fair to Livy? Some Thoughts on Livy's Prologue', *Helikon* 1 (1961) 30-35; [5] 190-93; Ogilvie [10] 23-29; M. Mazza, *Storia e ideologia in Tito Livio* (Catania 1966) 70f.; Woodman [2] 130-34; Cizek [2] 359-61.

<sup>14</sup> Compare that Livy is reported to have accused Sallust of spoiling the perfectly good Thucydidean epigram δεινὰ γὰρ αἱ εὐπραξίαι συγκρύπτει καὶ συσκιάζει τὰ ἐκάστων ἁμαρτήματα ('success is wonderfully good at hiding and shading over everybody's faults') by rendering it as *res secundae mire sunt vitiis obtentui* ('success is a wonderful screen for vice', *Sen. Controv.* 9.1.14). There is some confusion here (whether by Seneca, Livy, or Sallust), since the Greek passage is in fact taken from pseudo-Demosthenes (αἱ γὰρ εὐπραξίαι δεινὰ συγκρύπτει καὶ συσκιάζει τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσὶν, 'success is wonderfully good at hiding and shading over the faults of men', *In Ep. Phil.* 13.3-5) rather than from Thucydides—perhaps an indication of the story's apocryphal origins. Servilius Nonianus characterized the two historians as *pares . . . magis quam similes* ('comparable [sc. in accomplishment] rather than similar [sc. stylistically]', *Quint. Inst.* 10.1.102).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Amundsen [5] 31, n. 1 (with bibliography).

clearly affect his presentation in terms not just of style and tone, but of content as well.

Verbal *comparanda* are the best place to start. In the very first sentence of the preface, Livy declares himself Sallust’s successor by making no fewer than three distinct allusions to two different Sallustian prefaces: *si a primordio urbis res populi Romani perscripserim* (‘if I have written about the affairs of the Roman people from the origin of the city’, Livy *AUC* 1 *pr.* 1) contains echoes of *res populi Romani M. Lepido Q. Catulo consulibus ac deinde militiae et domi gestas composui* (‘I have written about the achievements of the Roman people, both at home and abroad, during the consulship of M. Lepidus and Q. Catulus, and the years following’, Sall. *Hist.* 1 fr. 1), *a principio*<sup>16</sup> *urbis ad bellum Persi Macedonicum* (‘from the beginning of the city to the Macedonian War of Perseus’, 1 fr. 8), and *statui res gestas populi Romani carptim . . . perscribere* (‘I have decided to write about the achievements of the Roman people in a piecemeal fashion’, *Cat.* 4.2). Livy’s acknowledgement of other active historians (and thus the need to distinguish his own work from theirs)—*in tanta scriptorum turba* (‘in such a large number of writers’, 1 *pr.* 3)—may very well have been informed by Sallust’s having placed himself *in tanta doctissimorum hominum copia* (‘in such a large number of most learned men’, *Hist.* 1 fr. 3). The verbal echoes continue to accumulate in Livy’s conventional declaration of historical impartiality. Livy claims that although contemporary anxieties can disturb the mind of the historian, they nevertheless *non flectere a uero* (‘cannot divert it from the truth’, 1 *pr.* 5). Compare again the two Sallustian prefaces previously cited: *neque me diversa pars in civilibus armis movit a vero* (‘nor has the fact that I served on the opposing side in the civil wars diverted me from the truth’, *Hist.* 1 fr. 6), and *mihi a spe metu partibus rei publicae animus liber erat* (‘my mind was free from hope, fear and the factions of the state’, *Cat.* 4.2).

Sallust’s influence on Livy goes much deeper than this, however. The pragmatic value of history, especially for statesmen (a historiographical *topos* that goes all the way back to Thucydides’ κτῆμα . . . ἐς αἰεί, ‘monument for all time’, 1.22.4<sup>17</sup>), is a prominent theme in both Livy’s and Sallust’s prefaces. In Livy:

<sup>16</sup> Maurenbrecher [4]: *principio* (Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.30.15f.); cf. L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *C. Sallusti Crispi: Catalina, Jugurtha, Historiarum Fragmenta Selecta, Appendix Sallustiana* (Oxford 1991); *primordio* (*Gramm. Lat. Prisc. Inst.* 3.188.16).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also Polyb. 1.1.2, 2.61.3; Diod. Sic. 1.1.4; Tac. *Ann.* 3.65, *Agr.* 46.3—a partial list.

hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum. omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod uites.

(Livy *AUC* 1 *pr.* 10)

In the contemplation of history, this is above all healthful and fruitful, that you behold evidence of every kind of experience placed on an illustrious monument; from these you can choose for yourself and for your state what to imitate, and avoid what is shameful in conception, and shameful in outcome.

Now here is Sallust:

. . . ex aliis negotiis, quae ingenio exercentur, in primis magno usui est memoria rerum gestarum.

(Sall. *Iug.* 4.1)

Of the pursuits that use the mind, of great use above all is history.

. . . maiusque commodum ex otio meo quam ex aliorum negotiis rei publicae venturum.

(Sall. *Iug.* 4.4)

More profit will accrue to the state from my leisure than from the occupations of others.

pulchrum est bene facere rei publicae, etiam bene dicere haud absurdum est . . . et qui fecere et qui facta aliorum scripsere, multi laudantur.

(Sall. *Cat.* 3.1)

It is a beautiful thing to act well on behalf of one's country, even to speak well is not to be despised . . . The many who have performed the deeds as well as the many who record the deeds of others receive praise.

For both authors the study of history is designed to teach lessons—patriotic lessons: good examples to imitate (Livy) and the opportunity to speak well on behalf of one's country (Sallust).

One might be tempted to put this down to ancient historiographical cliché, were it not for the fact that the two authors also share a strikingly similar—and unremittingly bleak—view of the decline and fall of Roman *mores*. Both regard the earlier expansion of the Roman empire as the prime suspect in the recent downfall of the Roman character. Inordinate greed, luxury and ambition, in Sallust's view, have taken their toll on the moral virtues of the Roman people—once the source of their greatest strengths. An exhaustive list of passages could be compiled,<sup>18</sup> but I select the following two on the basis of their resonance in Livy's preface:

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. those listed by D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Chicago 1969), esp. 13-17; Korpanty [2] 62-66.

. . . ex divitiis iuventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere.  
(Sall. *Cat.* 12.2)

From wealth luxury and greed and arrogance assaulted the youth.

. . . iuventus luxu atque avaritia corrupta . . .  
(Sall. *Hist.* 1 fr. 16)

The youth was corrupted by luxury and greed.

It may seem unremarkable that Livy expresses himself in just such terms in his preface (cf. *tam serae auaritia luxuriaque immigrauerint*, ‘greed and luxury have come in very late’, 1 *pr.* 11), until, that is, the author begins to warm to the topic:

nuper diuitiae auaritiam et abundantes uoluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique omnia inuexere.  
(Livy *AUC* 1 *pr.* 12)

Recently, riches have brought in avarice and excessive pleasures the desire for destroying oneself and everything else through extravagance and lust.

The sentiment is pointed—and, upon closer inspection, also thoroughly Sallustian:

Ea tempestate mihi imperium populi Romani multo maxume miserabile visum est. quōi quom ad occasum ab ortu solis omnia domita armis parerent, domi otium atque diuitiae, quae prima mortales putant, adfluerent, fuere tamen cives, qui seque remque publicam obstinatis animis perditum irent.  
(Sall. *Cat.* 36.4)

At no other time has the empire of the Roman people been in a more pitiable state, it seems to me. Although the whole world, from the rising to the setting of the sun had been subdued by her arms and obeyed her, and peace and riches, which men consider to be of primary importance, were in abundance at home, nevertheless, there were citizens who would destroy themselves and the state through their own perverse wills.<sup>19</sup>

The parallels here are simply too close to be coincidental: both authors refer to the destruction of self and the larger community. It can perhaps stand as the strongest argument that Livy must have had the texts of Sallust in his mind—

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<sup>19</sup> Although not drawn from a Sallustian preface *per se*, this passage appears in a digression in Sallust’s own voice on the moral decline of the Romans (*Cat.* 36.4-39.5), which, in effect, amounts to a second preface at the mid-point of his monograph on Catiline, and at the same time provides a dramatic pause just before Cicero exposes Catiline’s plot; cf. J. T. Ramsey (ed.), *Sallust’s Bellum Catilinae* (Atlanta 1984) 163.

perhaps even in front of him—when he sat down to write the preface to his monumental history.

More interesting than the similarities are the differences, which point to Livy's originality and creativity as an historian. To start with the parallel just discussed (Livy 1 pr. 12; Sall. *Cat.* 36.4), closer scrutiny reveals that Livy has done much more than simply reword and recast his Sallustian model. In the Sallust passage, the author states that at the time of Catiline's conspiracy there were *fuere . . . cives, qui . . .* ('some [my italics] citizens who') were rushing to destroy *seque remque publicam* ('themselves and their state'). Livy, on the other hand, argues that in his day there is a more general desire for *pereundi perdendique omnia* ('destroying oneself and everything else [my italics]'). Thus, Livy has in view a wholesale destruction of self, the world and everything in it, as opposed to Sallust's more limited dysfunction. *Magis Sallustianus quam Sallustius*.

Temporal perspective is also important here. Whereas Sallust stresses that the Romans *ea tempestate* (that is, the 60s, specifically *ca.* 63, the year of the Catilinarian conspiracy) were thoroughly depraved, Livy is insistent that the moral rot set in only *nuper*, an assertion that reflects back to the passage where Livy says greed and luxury assaulted the state *tam serae* (1 pr. 11). Sallust's message seems to be that the damage has been thoroughly done by the time of writing, whereas Livy implies that the dysfunction is all too recent—a raw, open wound in living memory.

This same difference can be seen in another set of parallel passages. Here is Livy:

ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quae uita, qui mores fuerint, per quos uiros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit; labente deinde paulatim disciplina uelut desidentes primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites, donec ad haec tempora quibus nec uitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus peruentum est.

(Livy *AUC* 1 pr. 9)

I would ask each reader for his own sake to focus his mind keenly on what life and morals were like, through what men and by what practices, in peace and war, the empire was established and increased; then how, when discipline was gradually relaxed, morals first began as it were to totter, then disintegrated more and more, and then began to fall headlong, until it has come to this present age when we can endure neither our vices nor their remedies.

Now compare Sallust:



. . . maiorum mores non paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo praecipitati; adeo iuventus luxu atque avaritia corrupta, ut merito dicatur genitos esse, qui neque ipsi habere possent res familiaris neque alios pati.

(Sall. *Hist.* 1 fr. 16)

The morals of our forefathers now crashed down not gradually, as before, but headlong: the youth had been so corrupted by luxury and avarice that it is rightly said that men had been born who themselves were unable to hold their own possessions, nor could they endure others to hold theirs.

Thus Sallust here again suggests that Rome’s troubles began to gather before the 70s and 60s, then intensified in that period, until the time of writing—the 30s—when the damage had been well and truly—and irreparably—done. Livy’s account, on the other hand, although free of specific chronological markers, nevertheless suggests a smoother, downward slope *donec ad haec tempora* when the crisis is reaching its climax. However, this does not necessarily mean that Livy is more hopeful or complacent, in fact to the contrary: Rome *iam magnitudine laboret sua* (‘is now tottering under its own weight’, 1 pr. 4) and Livy is sounding the alarms, trying to make his readers feel the urgency of the impending crisis when the empire does indeed succumb to gravity and collapse. Whereas Sallust believes that he is writing in an era of denouement and decadence, Livy is sure that he inhabits a time of impending cataclysmic destruction.

One could account for the difference, of course, by arguing that Sallust’s chronological orientation is merely dictated by the scope of his *Histories*, which treats a bygone era and has strict chronological *termini*—78 to 67 BCE. Livy’s *AUC*, by contrast, is a full history of Rome down to Livy’s own day, and is thus more open-ended. In other words, Livy’s history is to some degree prospective, whereas Sallust’s *Histories* is entirely retrospective, and it is this difference—rather than any intrinsic difference in intellectual orientation—that dictates their different chronologies of decline.

And yet the impression lingers that something more is going on here. Because the two historians composed these passages at most a decade—perhaps only a few years—apart,<sup>20</sup> their respective chronological choices may be a function of deeper, more complex *ideological* choices. I suggest that the key to identifying such choices lies in the rhetorical paradox that ends the passages just discussed. Sallust’s assertion that men could not hold on to their own property, much less endure anyone else to hold on to theirs is clearly a comment on the post-Sullan era of the 70s and 60s, the period covered by his *Histories*, when the twin legacies of the Sullan proscriptions—the discontent of the heirs of the

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<sup>20</sup> On the likely chronology of Sallust’s works, see R. Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley 2002) 214–39.

dispossessed and the impoverishment of some of Sulla's partisans—precipitated further civil crises.<sup>21</sup> Most certainly the statement is an oblique reference to the revolt of Lepidus—the starting-point of the *Histories*—and may even look ahead to Catiline's later abortive coup as well.

Exactly what Livy is referring to at 1 pr. 9, on the other hand, is considerably less certain. One notices, to be sure, that he has made one significant change to Sallust's original thought: he has replaced the materialism of Sallust's *res familiaris* (*Hist.* 1 fr. 16) with the moralizing abstractions *uitia* and *remedia*.<sup>22</sup> But beyond this, all must be speculation. What exactly does Livy mean by the paradox *nec uitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*?

Insight can perhaps best be gained by focusing on the concepts of *uitia* and *remedia* themselves. Livy's identification of the vices of contemporary Rome are not hard to seek—indeed, the preface itself contains an itemized list of them: *iam pridem praeualentis populi uires se ipsae conficiunt* ('the strength of a very powerful people that is working its own destruction', 1 pr. 4); *malorum quae nostra tot per annos uidit aetas* (the seemingly endless cycle of civil wars, elliptically stated as 'the evils that our time has witnessed through so many years', 1 pr. 5); declining *disciplina*, sinking *mores* (1 pr. 9); *avaritia*, *luxuria*, *cupiditas* ('avarice', 'luxury', 'greed', 1 pr. 11); *voluptates*, *luxus*, *libido* ('pleasures', 'extravagance', 'lust', 1 pr. 12). Clearly these, almost exclusively *moral*, failings are the vices that have brought the Roman state to the brink of destruction.

Decoding the *remedia* is another matter entirely. The term is clearly derived from medical literature, but over a century of scholarship on the passage has yielded little consensus beyond that. Two views currently hold the field: that Livy's *remedia* refers either to legislation promulgated by Octavian *ca.* 28 BCE, or to the autocratic government that he established less than a year later. The former view was developed at length over a century ago by Jörs and Dessau,<sup>23</sup> who argued that Livy's *remedia* refers to an abortive 'first round' of moral

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<sup>21</sup> This is a refinement of Earl [18] 105, who believes that 'the exact point of time to which [Sall. *Hist.* 1 fr. 16] refers is not preserved, but a comparison with a very similar passage in the *Bellum Catilinae* [12.2] suggests Sulla's dictatorship'. The passage in Sall. *Cat.* turns out not to be very helpful at all in establishing a hard date and, if anything, suggests the same general *post*-Sullan period as *Hist.* 1 fr. 16.

<sup>22</sup> On the specifically moralizing quality of the *uitia* and *remedia*, see, most recently, Miles [2] 177f.; Galinsky [2] 281f.

<sup>23</sup> P. Jörs, 'Die Ehegesetze des Augustus', in P. Jörs *et al.* (edd.), *Festschrift Theodor Mommsen zum fünfzigjährigen Doktorjubiläum* (Marburg 1893) 1-65; Dessau [2].

legislation by Octavian (the precursor to the later *leges Juliae* of 18 BCE, and the *lex Papia Poppaea* of 9 CE<sup>24</sup>), also (apparently) referenced by Propertius:

Gauisa’s certe sublatam, Cynthia, legem,  
qua quondam edicta flêmus uterque diu,  
ni nos divideret.

(Prop. 2.7.1c-3)

In truth Cynthia rejoiced when that law was swept away  
at the passing of which we both wept for a long time  
lest it divide us.

Propertius also makes reference to the fact that the *lex* would have forced him to marry and beget children (Prop. 2.7.7-14). Arguing from the likely date for Prop. 2.7 (that is, the early 20s), Dessau suggests that Propertius is here alluding to marital legislation that was introduced by Octavian in 28 BCE, failed miserably and was summarily withdrawn soon afterwards. He then extrapolates from this that Livy’s *remedia* must refer to the same abortive legislation, since the historian’s preface was probably written around the same time.<sup>25</sup>

Although questioned from time to time,<sup>26</sup> Dessau’s thesis did not encounter any serious challenge until Badian’s systematic demolition in 1985.<sup>27</sup> Badian argues that the purported marital legislation of 28 BCE was nothing more than an elaborate scholarly fiction, entirely lacking ancient attestation (hence the ‘Phantom’ of his article’s title). The only ancient ‘evidence’ for the Jörs-Dessau thesis is Propertius 2.7, but the poet’s allusion to a *lex* is at least as obscure as Livy’s to *remedia*. Badian suggests that Propertius’ *lex* may be a special tax on *caelibes* (‘bachelors’) levied in Rome during times of fiscal crisis since the second century. Such a tax may have been imposed at some point during the triumviral period, but was later withdrawn in the face of stiff

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<sup>24</sup> For the *leges Juliae*, see Cass. Dio 54.16.1f., cf. 55.2.5f.; Just. *Dig.* 4.4.37, *Inst.* 4.18.2f. (*lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis*); Ulp. *Epit.* 13f. (*lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus*); for the *lex Papia Poppaea*, see Cass. Dio 56.10; Gai. *Inst.* 3.42-54; Ulp. *Epit.* 14, 29.3-7. For Augustan marital and moral legislation generally, see *Mon. Anc. RG* 2.12-14; Cass. Dio 54.16.3f.; Suet. *Aug.* 34, 89.2; full discussion and other sources in S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford 1991) 60-80.

<sup>25</sup> Dessau [2] 462f.; followed by Bayet [6] xx; Petersen [5] 440; Ogilvie [10] 28; T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History* (Princeton 1977) 291 n. 141; J. Deininger, ‘Livius und der Prinzipat’, *Klio* 67 (1985) 270.

<sup>26</sup> Syme [6] 42f.; Luce [6] 239 n. 86 (subsequently withdrawn: see Luce [25]); D. Kienast, *Augustus: Prinzeps und Monarch* (Darmstadt 1982) 137-39, n. 55; Woodman [2] 133.

<sup>27</sup> E. Badian, ‘A Phantom Marriage Law’, *Philologus* 129 (1985) 82-98.

opposition.<sup>28</sup> This does not definitively solve the problem of the meaning of Propertius' *lex*, of course, but at the very least Badian's argument has shifted the burden of proof for the thesis of abortive marriage legislation back onto its defenders. These have proven, not surprisingly, to be very few indeed.<sup>29</sup>

As for the 'political' interpretation of Livy's *remedia*, Syme believes that Livy's conundrum (1 *pr.* 9) represents 'a political crisis in terms of morality', and that *remedia* refers to 'centralized government'.<sup>30</sup> More recently, Woodman has endorsed this interpretation, adducing in support:

. . . Quinctius dictitabat . . . non ita ciuitatem aegram esse ut consuetis  
remediis sisti possit; dictatore opus esse rei publicae,  
(Livy *AUC* 3.20.8)

Quinctius kept insisting that . . . the state was sick not in such a way that it  
could be cured by the customary remedies; the republic required a dictator.<sup>31</sup>

Woodman argues that because Livy uses here the same term, *remedia*, as at 1 *pr.* 9, the dictatorship (or some form of autocratic rule) must be what he is referring to in the preface as well. It follows from this that Livy either endorsed the Augustan regime or, if the preface's composition pre-dates the settlement of 27 BCE, at least some form of permanent dictatorship as the solution to Rome's problems. However reluctantly, Livy regarded autocracy as the lesser of the two evils; the alternative—unending civil conflict—was much worse.

While perhaps preferable to the thesis of 'abortive marriage laws of 28 BCE', the political interpretation brings its own set of problems. First, it requires one to believe that Livy would seriously entertain the notion that autocracy was a viable solution to the current crisis, a solution that he himself had seen fail spectacularly once before—on the Ides of March, 44 BCE. Admittedly this is only speculative, but no more so than the dictatorship thesis itself. In addition, Woodman's supporting evidence (Livy 3.20.8) is deceptive, and in fact harms rather than helps his case. Strictly on grammatical grounds, it is hard to make the plural *remedia* of that passage refer to the singular nouns *dictator* or *dictatura* ('dictatorship'). The problem is compounded by the fact that what Livy reports Cincinnatus actually having said is that the state's illness

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<sup>28</sup> Badian [27] 95-98.

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Cizek [2] 361; cf. Miles [2] 93 n. 49: 'a Roman reading Livy's preface in, say, 27 BCE could still have found Livy's vague reference to contemporary remedies that are worse than the ills of the age relevant . . . to moral legislation that may have been contemplated or enacted in 28 BCE'.

<sup>30</sup> Syme [6] 42; followed by von Haehling [9] 219; Badian [2] 17; Moles [2] 151f.; (with some hesitation) Galinsky [2] 282.

<sup>31</sup> Woodman [2] 133.

cannot be cured by the *consueta remedia* (‘customary remedies’), so the *alternative* of a dictator is needed. Woodman’s interpretation of the passage, then, misses Livy/Cincinnatus’ point entirely: clearly the *consueta remedia* are preferred to, and thus *distinguished from*, the dictatorship—they are not reducible to it.<sup>32</sup>

But this still does not preclude the possibility that in the preface Livy may be referring if not to dictatorship *per se*, then to some other form of sole rulership—something like Cicero’s famous *rector* or *moderator rei publicae*, for instance (*Rep.* 2.29.51, 5.2.5, 5.4.6, 5.6.8, 6.13.13), which Livy would surely have known about. *Remedia* may even refer to some kind of permanent triumvirate: three autocrats (hence the plural) serving for longer than fixed five-year terms—*triumviri perpetui*. Whatever the date of the preface’s composition, it certainly did not require a clairvoyant to imagine an autocrat in charge of Rome—particularly since the empire had been ruled by three of them for several years already.

But even assuming such ideas were in the air and available to Livy, to say that the *remedia* in 1 pr. 9 amount to permanent autocratic rule seems decidedly out of step with the rest of the preface. Here it is useful to recall that the point of Livy writing his massive history was above all didactic. As we have seen, Livy asks his reader *acriter intendat animum* (‘to keenly focus his mind’, 1 pr. 9) on what men and national character were like in the old days, how the Roman empire expanded, and then how Roman morality declined over the centuries. It seems rather absurd to argue in the face of this, the clearest statement of his didactic purpose, that the important lesson that Livy had to teach his contemporaries was what sort of autocrat to appoint at Rome and when to do it. His teaching revolves around the larger, more complex issues of *uita*, *mores*, *uiri*, and *artes*. The *uitia/remedia* that he mentions (1 pr. 9.7), therefore, must be read—and interpreted—within that specific framework.

What I am suggesting here is that, just as the *uitia* are easily identified as Rome’s moral failings (*luxuria*, *avaritia*, and so on), so too the *remedia* must be of a specifically *moral* kind. These are most likely to be the *bonae artes* (‘good arts’) of civic responsibility, the principles of conduct that prevailed under the healthy, properly functioning republic of old.<sup>33</sup> Walsh recognized this solution long ago, suggesting that Livy’s *remedia* are, in particular, the *bonae artes* of *libertas* restrained by *modestia*, *disciplina* tempered by *moderatio*, *concordia* between citizens, *pietas* towards the gods, *fides* and *clementia* towards

<sup>32</sup> Von Haehling [9] 215; Moles [2] 151 make the same error (independent of Woodman [2], it seems).

<sup>33</sup> A good discussion of the *bonae artes*, particularly as they resonate in Sallust’s works, can be found in Earl [18] 11f.

conquered peoples, along with the classic Roman virtues of *prudentia*, *dignitas*, *pudicitia* and *uirtus*.<sup>34</sup> The chief attraction of Walsh's interpretation is that it fits much better with the didactic purpose of Livy's history, which is—explicitly—to instruct the reader in the *uita*, *mores*, *uiri*, and the *artes* of Roman statecraft.

Such an interpretation can be bolstered by comparative evidence from Livy's first pentad in a way that Woodman's 'dictatorship' interpretation cannot by invoking Livy *AUC* 3.20.8. In the midst of his narrative of the campaign of K. Fabius Vibulanus (*cos.* 484, 481, 479 BCE) against the Aequii in 481 BCE, Livy states that:

nec huic tam pestilenti exemplo remedia ulla ab imperatore quaesita sunt; adeo excellentibus ingeniis citius defuerit ars qua ciuem regant quam qua hostem superent.

(Livy *AUC* 2.43.10)

No remedies were found for such a destructive example by the commander; so true is it that outstanding intellects more often lack the skill whereby they rule the citizenry than that whereby they overcome the enemy.

The consul's troops had become so demoralized that no remedies—in particular the *ars* ('skill') whereby noble minds rule the citizenry—could be found. Here Livy explicitly equates *remedia* with *ars*—presumably a generalization of those *bonae artes* that cause the republican system to function properly.<sup>35</sup> This is shown in the sequel, in which the consul's brother, M. Fabius Vibulanus, is elected to the consulship of 480 BCE, restores the demoralized troops to *eximia uirtus* ('outstanding courage', 2.45.16) and reconciles the plebs. He did this, says Livy, *nec hoc ulla nisi salubri rei publicae arte* ('through no other skill than one perceived to be wholesome for the state', 2.47.12). The terminology used by Livy—*ars*, *uirtus* and so on (cf. *pudor*, 'shame', 2.45.5)—belong to the moral sphere and are, in fact, none other than the *bonae artes* of republican consensus, the *remedia* that turned the battlefield failure of 481 BCE into the rousing success of 480 BCE. This suggests that for Livy, the moral/political *uitia*, that is, the sources of civil discord, demand traditional moral/political *remedia*—the traditional *bonae artes* of republican politics. The comparative evidence of Livy 2.43-47 thus reinforces the view that Livy 1 pr. 9 endorses the

<sup>34</sup> Walsh [5 (1955)] 370; [5 (1961)] 28-30. More recently, Miles [2] 177 tentatively identifies the *remedia* as 'the old virtues'.

<sup>35</sup> The fact that *remedia* is in the plural and *ars* in the singular here causes no difficulty, since *ars* is often generalized into a plural sense. Indeed, B. O. Foster (tr.), *Livy: History of Rome Books 1-2* (Cambridge, Mass. 1919) 363 translates *ars* as the plural 'qualities'.

*bonae artes* rather than moral legislation or autocracy as the *remedia* for the republic’s current crisis.<sup>36</sup>

But of course Livy argues that *neither* the Romans’ vices *nor* their remedies can be endured, so the rhetorical paradox simply cancels out the endorsement, and the meaning of *remedia*, in the end, hardly matters after all. This is not to deny that Livy thinks that the *bonae artes* are intrinsically good—his entire history is monument to this sentiment. Rather, he doubts that they can work, given the shoddy material that they are dependent on—his Roman contemporaries (including, presumably, Octavian, the future Augustus). The crux of the matter, then, is why he introduces the *remedia* of the *bonae artes* at all, only to dismiss them as worthless to the current generation.

Part of the explanation, I think, lies in the rhetorical *persona* Livy adopts here—that of an abject pessimist, *magis Sallustianus quam Sallustius*. The other part of the answer must lie in Livy’s intended audience—his dissipated contemporaries for whose edification the *AUC* is written. Livy’s *persona* as teacher is thus also operative here. What I am suggesting, in other words, is that the *remedia* have nothing to do with Octavian/Augustus (or any other autocrat for that matter), as we would expect, but everything to do with Livy himself in the various roles he adopts in the preface and for the sake of his various agendas.

Livy’s didactic purpose is clear at several points in the text (cf. 1 pr. 10), no more so than at 1 pr. 9 itself, where he would have his readers pay attention to the *uita, mores, uiri* and *artes* of the old republic, as well as the reasons for its decline. Now if Livy the pessimist is suggesting that the political culture of his contemporaries has become so morally bankrupt that recovery is impossible, why does Livy the teacher ask these same readers, practically in the same breath, to pay attention and learn from the moral *exempla* of the past? The dilemma so posed indicates not so much a contradiction (which would make Livy a very muddled thinker indeed—and his massive work an exercise in futility) as a paradox (which is the mark of a complex thinker). The text is polyvalent, and its multiple voices should be construed as illuminating and reinforcing one another, rather than canceling each other out. Livy performs in the preface a kind of rhetorical high wire act, trying to strike the right balance between pessimism and pedagogy.<sup>37</sup> Indeed the historian even exploits this

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<sup>36</sup> For Livy’s history as a palliative for civil discord, see also Miles [2] 78f.; Leggewie [10] 346-48, 350; Vretska [13] 199. Moles [2] 153 agrees, but then inscrutably adds that ‘knowledge of *AUC* history’ is to be supplemented by ‘one-man rule’ if the civil wars are to end.

<sup>37</sup> On this tension, see Miles [2] 177; cf. 78f.

tension to heighten the anxiety that he is trying to instill in his readers over the coming crisis.

It is now time to turn to an issue about which much has been said—and assumed—already: the state of contemporary Rome at the time Livy set about writing his preface. As noted at the outset, the traditional dating scheme, which has Livy writing the preface along with his first five books between 27 and 25 BCE, is all but obsolete, and early datings are now gaining favour. For the preface, at least, the traditional dates are simply too late to account for what looks for all the world to be an artifact of an age of civil war—a cynical, bitter indictment of the savagery of an age whose violent end is imminent. In the remainder of this paper, I shall try to fix more precisely a dating for the composition of Livy's preface within the civil war era.

It will be appropriate to begin with the passage in which Livy assimilates the Roman state to a tottering colossus, about to collapse under its own weight (*AUC* 1 pr. 4). It has been convincingly argued elsewhere that the Romans of the 30s used the metaphor of the collapsing building as a coded way of referring to the civil wars of the period.<sup>38</sup> Horace, as is well-known, used the very same metaphor, probably in the early 30s:

Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas,  
suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.

(Hor. *Epod.* 16.1f.)

Already another generation is being worn down by civil wars  
and Rome herself is collapsing under her own weight.

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<sup>38</sup> Woodman [2] 131f. Admittedly Livy's phrase *res est praeterea et immensi operis, ut quae supra septingentesimum annum repetatur et quae ab exiguis profecta initiis eo creuerit ut iam magnitudine laboret sua* ('the subject' or 'the events' involved 'immense labour since it is traced back over seven hundred years and starting from slender beginnings it has so increased that now it strains under its own greatness', *AUC* 1 pr. 4) is ambiguous here: in context, *res* could refer either to the task of writing or to the Roman empire. H. J. Edwards (ed.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita Libri: Praefatio, Liber Primus* (Cambridge 1912) 80 argues for 'the Roman Empire [as the subject], to which the two relative clauses seem properly to refer'; while J. R. Seeley (ed.), *Livy: Book I*<sup>3</sup> (Oxford 1881) 101 suggests that 'in this sentence there is a sort of confusion between the history and the subject of the history, i.e. the Roman Empire', and notes the same confusion in Tacitus (*Opus adgredior . . . atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum*, 'I embark on a work/period of history fierce in battles, rent by sedition and vicious even in times of peace', *Hist.* 1.2). I agree with the recent polysemous readings of Livy's text, and shall suggest that there is a deliberate double meaning built into Livy's text here: the fact that more than one major Roman historian chose to adopt the ambiguity would seem to support such a reading. (I thank an anonymous referee for bringing this issue to my attention).



The appearance of this same metaphor in Livy’s preface seems to indicate that its composition should be dated to sometime in the 30s, when such discourse was in the air at Rome. This may be supported by interpreting Livy’s reference *malorum* in the sense of ‘contemporary evils’ (*AUC* 1 pr. 5) as an ellipsis for *mala ciuiliū bellorum* (‘evils of the civil wars’). Add to this the fact that Livy believes that the Romans are destroying themselves and everything else through their vices (1 pr. 12), and the picture is complete—and thoroughly consistent, as the Roman state still stands, but is about to collapse in the conflagration of total civil war. Such language, as I suggested at the outset, seems difficult to reconcile with an Augustan context, whether post-27 BCE and the Augustan settlement (the traditional *terminus post quem* for the preface), or post-Actium and the suicide of Antony (31 September – 30 August 31 BCE). The language of the preface would seem to demand a period of open civil war, or at least preparations for it.

Assuming, then, that 27 BCE is in fact a good *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the preface, the date can be made even more precise by considering the evidence for Livy’s dating of the end of the civil wars. The author declares his belief that the wars ended when in 29 BCE Augustus ordered the doors of the temple of Janus to be closed:

bis deinde post Numae regnum [Janus] clausus fuit . . . iterum . . . post bellum Actiacum ab imperatore Caesare Augusto pace terra marique parata.<sup>39</sup>

(Livy *AUC* 1.19.3)

Twice since Numa’s reign has [the temple of Janus] been closed . . . the second time . . . after the War of Actium, when peace on land and sea was established by the emperor Caesar Augustus.

That Livy believes that the civil wars ended in 29 BCE gains support from *Periochae* 133, where Livy’s epitomator preserves his view that the civil wars were officially ended with Octavian’s celebration of a triple triumph later that same year:

[Octavianus] Caesar . . . in urbem reversus tres triumphos egit . . . inposito fine civilibus bellis altero et vicesimo anno.

(Livy *Per.* 133)

[Octavian] Caesar . . . returned to the city and celebrated three triumphs . . . and put an end to the civil wars in the twenty-first year.

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<sup>39</sup> This passage was inserted before publication of a second edition of the first pentad after 27 BCE: Luce [6]; Burton [5].

Thus 29 BCE seems an even better *terminus ante quem* for the composition of Livy's preface than 27 BCE.

Of course, the possibility must remain open that Livy was not convinced right away—that is, in 29 BCE—of the permanence of the Augustan peace, and his retrospective opinion (*AUC* 1.19.3; *Per.* 133; both were written after 29 BCE) may say nothing about his view at the time of the events themselves. On the other hand, to have composed, to say nothing of having published the pessimistic preface in the atmosphere of relief and general rejoicing at Rome in 29 BCE seems unlikely. Though speculative, I suspect that the preface would have looked very different had it been composed simultaneously with, or shortly after, the capture of Alexandria and the death of Antony, the subsequent heaping of honours upon Octavian (which, after all, included the grand ceremony of the closing of the temple of Janus), the public sacrifices for his safety and his triple triumph.<sup>40</sup> Long before the settlement of 27 BCE, Octavian's power was undisputed, his adversaries and critics cowed (or dead), and every last Roman legionary was under his firm command: *pace terra marique parta*.

But the argument need not rest entirely on speculation. Once again, a look at the content of Livy's early books, specifically his *in propria persona* contemporary references, is of some help here. One such contemporary reference crops up amidst Livy's narrative of the year 342 BCE:

nondum erant tam fortes ad sanguinem ciuilem nec praeter externa nouerant bella, ultimaque rabies secessio ab suis habebatur.

(Livy *AUC* 7.40.2)

Men were not yet so inured to civil bloodshed, nor did they know anything beyond external wars, and secession from their own people was considered the worst form of madness.

Livy's tone here is trenchant and bitter, clearly exuding an aura of troubles only recently overcome, and still fresh in his mind.

Another passage similar in tone, but with a significantly different emotional emphasis, appears in Livy's famous 'Alexander Digression':

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<sup>40</sup> For the capture of Alexandria and Antony's suicide, see Cass. Dio 51.9.6-10.9; Plut. *Ant.* 76.7-80.1; Suet. *Aug.* 17. The honours heaped upon Octavian are listed extensively at Cass. Dio 51.19.1-20.5 (winter 30/29 BCE). The closing of the temple of Janus is included among these honours, and seems to date to January 29 BCE (Cass. Dio 51.20.4; *Mon. Anc. RG* 2.42-45; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 22). The triple triumph occurred on 13 August 29 BCE (Cass. Dio 51.21.4-9); and Cassius Dio places the public sacrifices for Octavian's safety shortly before this (Cass. Dio 51.21.2).

. . . ciuilia bella sileant . . . mille acies grauiiores quam Macedonum atque Alexandri auertit auertetque, modo sit perpetuus huius qua uiuimus pacis amor et ciuilis cura concordiae.

(Livy *AUC* 9.19.15-17)

Let the civil wars be silent . . . A thousand battle arrays more fierce than those of the Macedonians and Alexander have the Romans beaten off, and shall continue to do so, if only this present love of peace and care for domestic concord persist.

There has been, of course, a significant change in the historian’s outlook from the time he wrote *AUC* 7.40.2. Livy’s prayer, Luce notes, ‘suggests that the civil wars were recent and that Augustus’ rule was still quite new’.<sup>41</sup> This can be taken a step further: the use of such terms as *pacis amor* and *ciuilis cura concordiae* indicates a peace of some years’ standing, and perhaps even echoes the catchphrases of the new regime. Quite unlike the bitterness and fear of resurgent civil war indicated at 7.40.2, this passage suggests that peace has long since taken hold and Livy has greater confidence in Rome’s future: here his sense of relief is just as palpable as is his sense of dread at 7.40.2. The composition of 9.19 most likely belongs to *ca.* 27/26 BCE, while that of 7.40 should be dated *ca.* 30/29 BCE.<sup>42</sup> The passages manifest a clear progression in Livy’s emotional response to the bitter memory of the civil wars of the 30s as time increasingly intervened. The historian looks back initially with bitterness and trepidation, then with increasing (but measured) confidence and relief.

In contrast to the retrospective quality of these passages, the preface is entirely *prospective* in its outlook: the state is tottering *iam* (‘now’) under its own weight (1 pr. 4), and the desire to destroy the self as well as everything else is only *nuper* (‘recent’, 1 pr. 12). Such sentiments, unlike those at 7.40.2 and 9.19.15-17, look grimly forwards towards imminent destruction, not backwards with bitterness or relief. This suggests that the preface should be dated to a time when there was a threat of open civil war in the air, when Roman troops, resources—and public opinion above all—were being mobilized for an imminent and seemingly unavoidable conflict.<sup>43</sup> Given the range of options

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<sup>41</sup> Luce [6] 230.

<sup>42</sup> Burton [5] 444f.

<sup>43</sup> *Pace* Moles [2] 151 who believes that the preface’s pessimism does not require a civil war dating because Horace could maintain a pessimistic tone well after Actium (e.g., *Carm.* 3.6). But I have not argued that it is mere pessimism that requires such a dating for Livy’s preface. If this were the case, *AUC* 7.40.2, 9.19.17, and other pessimistic comments scattered throughout the remainder of the extant books would have to predate Actium as well—clearly a logistical impossibility. Rather, the crux of my interpretation of the preface is that Livy’s pessimism is compounded by anxiety over the immediate future that cannot be explained except with reference to open hostility that will soon erupt in civil war. The analogy between

during the triumviral period, a peaceful lull, such as occurred in the years immediately following the renewal of the triumvirate in 37 BCE, when Octavian, Antony and Lepidus went to their separate corners, would not seem to be indicated. The best fit would seem to be the period immediately preceding the Actium campaign, when both Antony and Octavian were openly preparing the ground, both militarily and rhetorically, for their last great conflict. A good candidate for the composition of Livy's preface, I suggest, is shortly after the new year 32 BCE, when Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus and C. Sosius, partisans of Antony, entered the consulship, and the triumvirs, according to Cassius Dio, οὐδὲν ἔτ' ἐπεκρύψαντο, ἀλλ' ἀντικρὺς ἐπολεμώθησαν ('were no longer secretive, but became openly hostile', 50.2.2). Sosius harangued Octavian in the senate, and Octavian, supported by a bodyguard, responded in kind (Cass. Dio 50.2.3-5). The consuls, together with 300 other senators, fled to Antony in protest (Cass. Dio 50.2.6f.; cf. 50.3.2 for the consuls' meeting with Antony at Ephesus). Then came the accusations of Antony's infidelity to Octavian's sister (Cass. Dio 50.3.2; Plut. *Ant.* 57.4), and Octavian's forcible removal and publication of the alleged contents of Antony's will (Cass. Dio 50.3.4f.; Plut. *Ant.* 58.5-8; Suet. *Aug.* 17). Following this was Octavian's infamous oath of Italian loyalty (Dio 50.6.3 ; *Mon. Anc. RG* 5.1-8; Suet. *Aug.* 17), his termination of Antony's triumviral rank and consulship and his declaration of war on Cleopatra (Cass. Dio 50.4.3-5; Plut. *Ant.* 60.1), and his brutal suppression of tax revolts in the Italian *municipia* that followed (Cass. Dio 50.10.4f.; Plut. *Ant.* 58.1f.).

It is in this context that the composition of the preface likely belongs—in early 32 BCE, when the antagonism between Antony and Octavian became a matter of public record and the preparations for war began. Further precision is unnecessary to demonstrate the thesis argued here that Livy's preface was composed in an atmosphere of civil crisis long before the era of the Augustan

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Horace's poem and Livy's preface is not a particularly compelling one in any event, since Horace is primarily concerned with Roman moral decline and its effect on overseas conquest, not with civil conflict *per se*. One also suspects that this 'Roman' poem is informed by Augustan propaganda, and is a good example of some rather well-rehearsed 'official' pessimism. Horace's demand that Augustus rebuild the temples and introduce moral legislation was without doubt exactly what Augustus wanted to hear (and was doing, or intended to do). Whatever the case, Moles' contextualization of Livy's preface gains little strength from the comparison with Horace since we simply cannot date *Carm.* 3.6 with any precision (Moles does not commit himself beyond 'the 20s').

peace and even before the final conflict between Antony and Octavian at Actium. It is a republican document by the last republican historian.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> One could suggest in addition, as indeed I and many others have already done (see Burton [5] 443f., with references), that the presence of a second preface at 2.1.1-6 indicates that *AUC* Book 1 was published separately as a discrete unit sometime in 33 BCE in order to test the literary waters at Rome; it was only after being assured of the work’s success that Livy wrote his major preface to the entire work (*ca.* early 32 BCE), the second preface and the books that followed (Janson [5] 73 indeed argues that such a sequence was standard practice amongst ancient historians). Why Livy did not retract his pessimistic preface after Actium, when peace was established and a second edition of his first pentad appeared complete with insertions (1.19.3, 4.20.5-11), is anybody’s guess. Given the sheer artistry of the piece, and the evident time and care lavished on it, I suspect it will have become entrenched rather quickly in the eyes of his readers as an integral part of the work, and thus too well-known—and probably too popular—to jettison.

# THOMAS HOBBS' POEM OF EXILE: THE VERSE *VITA* AND OVID'S *TRISTIA* 4.10<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** In 1672 the philosopher Thomas Hobbes wrote his autobiography *Vita Carmine Expressa* in Latin elegiac verse. This article considers Hobbes' reasons for writing his autobiography in that form and for choosing its particular structure. It argues that this enabled Hobbes to draw on Ovid's autobiographical *Tristia* 4.10: *Epistula ad Posteritatem* and thereby to compose a more succinct and memorable *apologia* with a trope of exile.

In 1672, at the age of eighty-four, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury<sup>2</sup> wrote his autobiography, the verse *Vita Carmine Expressa*.<sup>3</sup> Since the notorious author of *Leviathan* was at the same time supplying his life-details to vernacular prose biographers such as John Aubrey, we ought to ask what distinctive purposes and value Hobbes own composition of a poem in Latin elegiac couplets had for him. That is to say, alongside his evident concern to put on record his whole life and its many controversial ideas—a concern which it shares with the prose Lives by other people—why did Hobbes choose Latin, verse, and elegiacs as his own medium? And why did he structure his poem in the way that he did? I shall argue that his choices enabled him to compose a more succinct and memorable *apologia* than the other Lives could do because his *Vita* draws on Ovid's *Tristia* 4.10: *Epistula ad Posteritatem*, the poem in which the exiled Ovid creates his life-record, succinct and memorable; and that, furthermore, Hobbes' emulation of Ovid's autobiographical poem enables him to wield a strong new trope of exile.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article draws on different papers that I gave to the Department of Philosophy seminar at the University of Otago in 2002 and to the Cambridge Society for Neo-Latin Studies later that year. I record my thanks to both convenors and audiences for suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> The provenance gave satisfaction to Hobbes, and is included in the title of his poem and celebrated in its early lines.

<sup>3</sup> Hobbes' poem was published in 1679, the year of his death. The advance of old age and illness, perhaps Parkinson's disease, was presumably inducing him to compose while he could still dictate or write.

<sup>4</sup> Except as otherwise stated, the text of Hobbes, *Vita Carmine Expressa* is that of William Molesworth (ed.), *Thomae Hobbes: Opera Philosophica Quae Latine Scripsit Omnia* 1 (London 1839), which is the sole available printed text. This text is unsatisfactory because (*inter alia*) it reprints, without explanation or correction, the intrusively emending

This trope had attracted many Neo-Latin poets before Hobbes. IJsewijn notes how many Neo-Latin elegiac poems express *patriae desiderium* (‘longing for one’s homeland’), whether caused by a literal or metaphorical exile, and be it an enforced one like Ovid’s or a more voluntary one like prolonged expatriation for study or work or career reasons. IJsewijn also notes that Ovid’s *Epistula ad Posteritatem* prompted ‘scores of Neo-Latin poets to tell their lives in elegiac poems’, instancing Sannazaro, du Bellay, and Hobbes.<sup>5</sup> Nostalgia and life-record are not the same theme, of course; but they feed off each other in Ovid’s *Epistula*, and make for an equally mutual reinforcement in Hobbes’ *Vita*. The exile theme received powerful *variatio* (‘variation’, ‘diversification’), including extension and inversion, from poets like Du Bellay, exiled from home to Rome itself, a very witty paradox in view of the Ovidian archetype; or Milton, who *enjoys* being rusticated from Cambridge to London (Milton *Elegiae* 1), but in another set of elegiacs commiserates with a friend’s ‘exile’ to a dangerous pastorate in Hamburg by an ungrateful English establishment (*Elegiae* 4).<sup>6</sup> The life-record theme is by nature more open, so its combination with the theme of exile gives it edge and wit. And thus it is with Hobbes.

### *Ovidian Motifs*

In order first to show the debt straightforwardly, and thereby establish a framework for closer stylistic and thematic analysis, we can simply summarize the sequence and structure of Hobbes’ *Vita*, bringing out their points of correspondence with Ovid’s *Tristia* 4.10.

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version of Richard Blackbourn (1681). I refer to this edition as Molesworth/Blackbourn. I discuss Blackbourn’s ‘corrections’, especially regarding his catastrophic sanitizing of Hobbes’ ending. The printed version has 386 lines, so is much longer than Ovid’s poem. The extra length is explained by the fact that Hobbes’ poem must stand alone, not being (as in Ovid’s case) one of many poems within a ‘book’ of poems, but also by its circumstantial exactness as a life-record, indeed at points almost as a versified *curriculum vitae*. The text of Ovid, *Tristia* 4.10 is that of A. L. Wheeler and G. P. Goold (ed. and tr.), *Ovid: Tristia; Ex Ponto*<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge, Mass. 1988); of Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* is that of J. Martin (ed.), *De Rerum Natura Libri Sex* (1969); and of Virgil, *Aeneid* is that of R. A. B. Mynors (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (Oxford 1972). All translations are mine (except as otherwise stated).

<sup>5</sup> J. IJsewijn and D. Sacré, *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies 2 Literary, Linguistic, Philological and Editorial Questions*<sup>2</sup> (Leuven 1998) 80, 82.

<sup>6</sup> Both of these *Elegiae* by Milton are verse-letters. Milton is a notable example of the ‘exile theme’, in the sense that his later blindness and his political downfall at the Restoration can be seen as powerful tropes of exile. He himself sees the deprivation of his civic rights after 1660 as ‘expatriation’ (*Letter* 31). See also L. L. Martz, *Milton: Poet of Exile*<sup>2</sup> (New Haven 1986).

*Birth Date, Birth and Birthplace (Vita 1-28; Tr. 4.10.1-14)*

Hobbes expresses pride in the long history of his remote but Saxon town, after the manner of Ovid's Sulmo. What Hobbes' narrative lacks in Ovidian dexterity, it supplies by thematic force: his mother went into labour at the news of the Armada's arrival, and hence comes his lifelong insecurity, for she bore twins, *pareret geminos, meque metumque simul* ('gave birth to twins, namely me and fear at once', *Vita* 26). In the striking alliterative zeugma, Hobbes himself offers, as immediate self-diagnosis, the intellectual boldness joined with physical timorousness on which modern biographers remark.

*Education (Vita 29-62; Tr. 4.10.17-26)*

Hobbes overshoots Ovid in length even more for these phases of his young life, which enables him to develop a critical account of the scholastic training that he received in Malmesbury and at Magdalen College, Oxford. Growing beyond that training, and changing from critique to enthusiasm in his narration, he tells how he read for himself in physics and astronomy, using the elegiac couplet form charmingly to describe his enchantment with maps, stellar and terrestrial alike.

*Public and Personal Career Path (Vita 61-72, 73-84; Tr. 4.10.27-40, 41-64)*

Hobbes left Oxford in order to tutor the Earl of Devonshire's son. They studied together and travelled in Europe, continuing the theme of intellectual enquiry. He met and talked with the empiricist Francis Bacon. In his first book of many, he translated Thucydides, his favourite author and a catalyst for his political philosophizing. Ovid tells rather of his entry on a Roman public career, opposed and indeed ended by his preference for poetry and love; but the interaction between an external career and a writing vocation shows a similar life-patterning, including alternating 'paragraphs'.<sup>7</sup>

*Friendships and Loves (Vita 70-74, 125-42, 165-78; Tr. 4.10.65-92)*

Ovid, as one would expect of him, has more to record of sex, loves, marriages and family life, since Hobbes did not marry, cared much less about the hormones than Ovid did, and formed no deep sexual attachments. Yet, still in

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<sup>7</sup> Editors tend not to paragraph elegiacs, but instead edit them as undifferentiated miniature stanzas; but Hobbes and Ovid compose in paragraphs, in that they think in unified blocks, one thing at a time.



this segment of his poem, Hobbes records that his tutoring was also friendship (*Vita* 70), then soon that philosophy brought him the circle of friends that he loved best, in Paris with Mersennus (Marin Mersenne). He dwells long on this. He weaves in a self-defence against slanders and betrayals, as Ovid does more elliptically. Hobbes also mentions family, and he claims this sort of *pietas* for himself. But by this point what he is emphasizing is intellectual biography and *apologia* for his writings in philosophy, physics, geometry, church and state; and lamenting his vicissitudes during and after the English civil wars as not being his own fault. These are all paralleled in Ovid's poem, though the narrative interweavings work differently.

*Reflection on Life and Achievement* (*Vita* 285-386; Tr. 4.10.93-114, 115-32)

Finally, from exile, *canities . . . venerat* ('white-haired', Tr. 4.10.93f.) Ovid reflects on his life in its outward, Roman, exilic aspect, then turns to his Muse to assert his greatest achievements, those compensatory ones of his poetry. Hobbes too grieves, as he describes his forced return from Paris to London in 1652 in his early sixties. But the retrospections of old age move into compensatory satisfactions. He brings the record of his researches and publications up to date. He tells the dispositions of his will—and, nothing if not precise, he versifies the cash value of his estate. He looks at his life and himself with contentment: he claims that both manifest *iustitia* ('justice', 382). He looks at his own approaching death.

The fact that Hobbes' and Ovid's personalities, lives and life stories differ enormously goes without saying. On the other hand, their similarities are sometimes predictable, because all humans are born, live and die, and most poets get an education, work at something else, form attachments and have troubles. Granted, too, that Ovid is not the only exemplar in the case, as Neo-Latinist poets one and all worked by syncretism of thought and language: for instance, Hobbes naturally learns much from the kindred spirit Lucretius.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding these diverse reservations, however, the making of a life-record in Latin elegiacs by dwelling on the salient episodes and relations and themes, in the way and at the length each does, convinces me of a need for further enquiry, into how Hobbes used and expanded and changed his Ovidian model. If nothing else, it may be enlightening or serendipitous to all modern readers who know one poem or the other. It will rescue Hobbes' poem from its long neglect. It will demonstrate this prosaic writer and modest poet at his

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<sup>8</sup> While Lucretius wrote in hexameters not elegiacs, some of Hobbes' licentious, non-Ovidian prosody may have come to him from readings in Lucretius' verse, which preceded and differed from the regularizing or 'engoldening' of Roman metres by the Augustans.

surprising best. It will throw fresh light on a great and original mind. For ourselves, it should articulate the universality and intensity within a variety of feelings of exile, in the especially sharp form of alienation from one's own country even while living in it: as Milton or Kafka, or Camus or Solzhenitsyn or Breitenbach, so also Hobbes.

*Paradise Found and Paradise Then Lost*

Hobbes and Ovid both tell of a rise and a fall. With recollective joy, they tell of a coming to fame through achievement, in an ideal milieu of talented peers, among whom excellence for a time precluded envy. Then they tell how they fell among thorns of envy and backbiting; how the trajectory curved into decline, from which each had to salvage and uphold what most mattered. This is what motivates each poem. In examining the key passages where Hobbes recollects his joy and then its loss, we shall find Ovid in decisive exploitations of the medium, *pari passu* with the emotional trajectory and the troping of exile into a disconsolate homecoming.

Hobbes records some six arrivals in Paris. They come in an intensifying series, five of his own, then the arrival of royalist exiles.<sup>9</sup> The first three arrivals are muted, or only implied: *urbes externas . . . vidi, / Germanas, Francas, Ausomiasque adii* ('I saw . . . foreign cities . . . I visited German, French, Italian ones', 85f.); *Parisiisque moror mensibus octodecim* ('I stayed in Paris for eighteen months', 92); and *Italiae multas, Gallorum et vidimus urbes* ('we saw many Italian cities and many cities of the French', 106). When doing the Grand Tour with successive lordlings, he of course did Paris too, but in the poem he does not see reason to mention or enumerate those visits. We do note the emphasis on *urbes*, the homes of *civitas* ('civility', 'civilization', 'citizenship'). But we also note the contrasting fanfare of the fourth visit, in 1634, when he returns to Paris where he meets Mersennus:<sup>10</sup>

Linquimus Italiam, rursumque redimus ad alta  
Moenia Lutetiae,<sup>11</sup> tectaque magnifica.

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<sup>9</sup> This needs demonstrating, because in recording several visits, with and without a patron/pupil, we might discern nothing thematic or poetic, only an artless and diarizing exactitude, or a 'been-to' complacency.

<sup>10</sup> A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge 1999) 92; see 30, 84, 88 for earlier visits.

<sup>11</sup> Hobbes first names Lutetia here. Earlier, he did not mention Paris, then named *Parisii* (*Vita* 92). Is Hobbes reserving to this moment the grander name, echoing *Laetitia* ('joys') and *Lautitia* ('riches')? Length and sequence point more decisively to an ascending order of mentions.

Hic ego Mersennum novi, communico et illi  
De rerum motu quae meditatus eram.  
Is probat, et multis commendat; tempore ab illo  
Inter philosophos et numerabar ego.

(Hobbes, *Vita* 125-30)

Then leaving Italy, return we do  
To Paris, and its stately Fabricks view.  
Here with Mersennus I acquainted grew,  
Shew’d him of Motion what I ever knew.  
He both Prais’d and Approv’d it, and so, Sir,  
I was reputed a Philosopher.<sup>12</sup>

Let not Hobbes’ understated Latin (nor its prosodic expedients<sup>13</sup>) detract from the emphasis on this moment in the series. Cool as the language is, it aims higher for this visit. For why should he select the *alta / moenia* (‘high city walls’, *Vita* 125f.) and then the *tectaque magnifica* (‘magnificent buildings’, 126)—buildings by synecdoche for the city, or perhaps literally the ‘roofs’? And why not both? Is it because this is how the traveller saw Paris, coming towards it: first the walls, then the roofs? And then, better still, distinguishing this visit from previous ones, he met Marin Mersenne, a religious ‘whose monastic cell became the heart of a salon of learned men in Paris including Descartes, Pascal, Gassendi’ and now too Hobbes.<sup>14</sup> Hobbes’ ideas on the physics of motion proved to be his passport into this stellar company. He had ‘arrived’ indeed.

An even louder fanfare salutes Hobbes’ next and last arrival in Paris. This is the heart of the whole poem in terms of theoric beatitude. In 1640, he flees from the English civil wars to Paris: *Iamque in procinctu bellum stetit. Horreo spectans; / Meque ad dilectam confero Lutetiam* (‘And now the war stood ready to start. I shudder at the spectacle; and I take myself to my beloved Paris’, *Vita* 149f.). He began a prolific period of his writing there, recorded in 14 lines; then 14 more lines praise Mersennus, for his own qualities and for his circle, and for how he set them all going in a sort of planetary motion around him. That very apt and striking conceit is the witty climax of the plain-style praise, quite unlike Ovid in sense and sentiment but set going and sustained by Ovid’s metre.

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<sup>12</sup> This translation is anonymous doggerel from 1680: see J. C. A. Gaskin (ed.), *Thomas Hobbes: The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic 2 De Corpore Politico with Three Lives* (Oxford 1999) 257.

<sup>13</sup> Like the *ī* of *philosophos*, or the following *et* as metrical padding.

<sup>14</sup> Gaskin [12] 287 n.

The passage is given here in the manuscript (MS) version because of significant differences from Molesworth/Blackbourn:<sup>15</sup>

Hoc fuit in Minimis Mersennus tempore Frater,  
 Sed doctus, sapiens egregièque Bonus.<sup>16</sup>  
 Cuius cella Scholis erat omnibus anteferenda  
 Quotquot circuitus totius orbis habet<sup>17</sup>  
 Illi portabat, si dignum forte Porisma  
 Reppererat quisquam, Principiumve novum,  
 Perspicuo et proprio sermone carente Figuris  
 Rhetoricis, gnomis, ambitione, dolo  
 Ille dedit doctis qui vellent, rursus, ut illud  
 Vel statim possent vel trutinare domi.  
 Edit et ex multis inventis optima quaeque,  
 Signans Authoris nomine quidque sui.  
 Circa Mersennum convertebatur ut Axem  
 Unumquodque Artis sidus in orbe suo.

(Hobbes, *Vita* MS 171-84)

About this time Mersennus was (by Name)  
 A Friar Minorite, yet of Great Fame,  
 Learned, Wise, Good, whose single Cell might be  
 Prefer'd before an University.  
 To him all Persons brought what e'r they found  
 By Learning, if new Principle, or Ground,  
 In clear and proper Phrase, without the Dress  
 Of Gawdy Rhet'rick, Pride, Deceitfulness.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to the Chatsworth Librarian for supplying me with a photocopy of the MS. Its hand is mainly that of Hobbes' amanuensis, a Latin-less local baker named James Wheldon, with occasional corrections or changes in Hobbes' own shaky, disease-affected hand. For this passage, compare Molesworth/Blackbourn [4] lines 165-78.

<sup>16</sup> Blackbourn's omission of *sed* alters the tone and attitude: 'Mersennus was a friar *but* [contrary to expectation or stereotype] learned, wise and good'. Whether the prejudice is that of Hobbes or of his countrymen, the surprise conveyed by *sed* enhances the praise of Mersennus. As often, Hobbes uses rhetoric in order to enliven his narrative and train of thought, though he expressly decried its use.

<sup>17</sup> Molesworth/Blackbourn [4] reads *Professorum omnes ambitione tument* ('all of them swollen with ambitious professors'); but why would Hobbes be castigating those like himself who took their research ideas along to Mersennus? This crucial portion of the poem sorely needs a good collation and edition. Another difficulty hereabouts is the tendency by the scribe and printer alike to close off a couplet with punctuation, even where (as here and 172) the sense runs right onwards. I have discussed this fetish of printed texts in J. K. Hale, 'The Punctuation of Milton's Latin Verse: Some Prolegomena', *Milton Quarterly* 23.1 (1989) 7-19. It is true, and unfortunate, that the thought and expression and accidentals are rough and unfinished; but their smoothing out by Blackbourn is intrusive, blunting the sharpness of an exceptional mind by the ploddings of mediocrity.

Which he imparts to th’ Learned, who might there  
 Discuss<sup>18</sup> them, or at leisure, any where.  
 Publish’d some Rare Inventions, to the Fame  
 Of their own Author, with each Authors Name.  
 About Mersennus, like an Axis, here  
 Each Star wheel’d round, as in its Orb or Sphere.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, as a consequence of this unusual μαιευτική (‘midwifery’, ‘Socratic elicitation’), Hobbes invents a striking astronomical image, of a perfect and autonomous order in the intellectual motions of this whole ‘circle’, with *circa* introducing the summation: *Circa Mersennum convertebatur ut Axem / Unumquodque Artis sidus in orbe suo* (MS 183f.).

This is the climax of Hobbes’ wellbeing, presented with plain-style amplitude as philosophic and personal and communal beatitude. The next lines convey its complication, erosion, and final loss, when royalist exiles then the young Charles II himself arrive in Lutetia (*Vita* 183-234). Lutetia is named twice here (185, 205), for the sixth and last and most ruinous arrival of the poem’s arrival-passages. Hobbes’ own party—even his last pupil, the king—mistrusts and rejects him. He is ordered to stay away from the king, *Perpetuo iubeor Regis abesse domo* (‘I am commanded to stay away forever from the King’s household’, 230), like a first or internal banishment. We shall analyze the second climax of the poem, his bitter ‘homecoming’, exile upon exile. Let us first elicit the spiritual and stylistic aspects of the lost beatitude.

The entire poem has a deceptively busy traffic of comings and goings, arrivals and departures, presences and absences. Words like *adire* (‘approach’, ‘go to’), *redire* (‘return’, ‘go back’), *abesse* (‘stay away’, ‘be removed from’) and so forth abound, both verbs and nouns. So many and ordinary do they seem, that I propose that they gather to a central theme. Hobbes continually records his writings about motion, in physics or the body or the state. If motion is the law of life, and mobility and lability the law of his own up-and-down life, it can hardly be accidental that his first acquaintance with Mersennus thrives through his sharing his ideas on motion: *communico et illi / De rerum motu* (*Vita* 127f.; note the echo of Lucr. *De Rerum Natura*). Correspondingly, now at the poem’s climax—how Mersennus lived philosophy, how philosophy ought to be done—

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Discuss’ is a feeble rendering of *trutinare* (‘weigh up’): this is quite a rare word in Latin as a metaphor.

<sup>19</sup> Gaskin [12] 258f. I again quote the anonymous 1680 translation because, gawky though it is, its couplets catch some of the momentum of the elegiacs (and the poem does come from the heyday of English heroic couplets); but most of all because the anonymous translator has used the MS or the rare first printing of Hobbes’ text, as not yet ‘improved’ by Blackbourn.

Hobbes praises this mentor as the axis around which his best pupils revolve, planets to his sun, moving on paths which link them to him and which only thought can apprehend. It is a marvellous myth-image, worthy of Socrates, and to my mind excelling Ovid.

The series of preceding images support and prepare this climactic one; they too deserve notice and credit. The sage's 'cell' outstripped all the Schools: *cella* outweighs *scholis*, not by being grander or ampler but by the opposite, for plainness is upheld precisely here as closer to truth.<sup>20</sup> The planetary image is foreshadowed in the less colourful fill-up line *Quotquot circuitus totius orbis habet* (literally, 'whatsoever [schools] the circuit of the whole world has', i.e. 'all [the schools] in the whole circling earth', Hobbes *Vita* MS 174; corresponding to Molesworth/Blackbourn's uncomprehending line 168<sup>21</sup>). The chain of verbs which tell how Mersennus did things is again deceptively ordinary: *portabat* ('bring', MS 175) to Mersennus; *reppererat* ('find', MS 176); *carente* ('lacking', MS 177) rhetorical figures; *dedit* ('give', MS 179); and so *trutinare* ('weigh up', MS 180). Then going outside the circle (like an exoteric *logos* after the esoteric), Mersennus *edit* ('publishes', MS 181; or *edidit* in Molesworth/Blackbourn 175) the best *inventis* ('discoveries', MS 181): he lends his authority, to works clearly marked *Signans Authoris nomine* ('with the name of each author', MS 182). Here is no stealing or fudging of intellectual property rights: all is transparent, honest, plain dealing. The praise has the same clarity and harmony as the moving of the celestial bodies. Mersennus, in the world of thought in beloved Paris, is a governing principle analogous to motion as Hobbes' universal governing principle. It all has exemplary force, and overwhelmingly so in context, for next begins the backstabbing by Hobbes' own political allies.

### *The Paradox of Homecoming as Exile*

Backstabbing followed, literally. Hobbes names two of the Commonwealth's men, assassinated in Europe about this time (*Vita* 231). So rife and threatening did it become, at least in our fearful hero's mind, now vulnerable because doubly out of favour, that it induced him to abandon Paris and the court, and to slink home to make his peace with the rulers of England: *Tutelae non bene certus / Sed nullo potui tutior esse loco* ('unsure of my safety; but I could not be

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<sup>20</sup> Four lines later Hobbes is yet again decrying rhetoric (*Vita* MS 176f.). This is the central thesis of Q. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge 1996), an important study. Hobbes uses rhetoric to be reason against rhetoric, and not least in this *Vita*. Martinich [10] 97 summarizes Hobbes' oscillations.

<sup>21</sup> See above, n. 17.

safer anywhere else’, 235f.). He has a choice of evils, a choice of *exiles*: to remain in a Paris now turned disenchanting, or to return to a repugnant home regime.<sup>22</sup> However remote Ovid was from the preceding Mersennian θεωρία (‘contemplation’) and εὐδαιμονία (‘well-being’, ‘happiness’), Ovid and the exiled Hobbes each return with full force, at this second and contrasting poetic climax. Hobbes does not mention that Mersennus had died in 1648, but I suppose that he is simplifying, in the sense of keeping attention on his own life-record: there is a similar dearth of other characters in the later stages of Ovid’s *Epistula*.<sup>23</sup>

The climax is a quick one, as was the first: just four couplets. Though it might appear to support my claim better that this relatively brisk narration constitutes an exilic climax if it had received longer treatment, my claim instead is that Hobbes does the dire moment proud, in poetic terms, and by pulling out many an Ovidian stop. The briskness, first noted by Hobbes’ friend and biographer John Aubrey,<sup>24</sup> is a mark of the man and of his style:

In patriam *redeo* tutelae non bene certus,  
 Sed nullo potui tutior esse loco:  
 Frigus erat, nix alta, senex ego, ventus acerbus;  
 Vexat equus sternax et salebrosa *via*.  
 Londinum<sup>25</sup> *veniens*, ne clam *venisse* viderer,  
 Concilio Status conciliandus eram.  
 Quo facto, statim summa cum pace *recedo*,  
 Et sic me studiis applico, ut ante, meis.

(Hobbes, *Vita* 235-42)

I return to my homeland unsure of my safety;  
 but I could not be safer anywhere else.  
 It was cold, the snow deep, I was old, the wind bitter.  
 I am vexed by a horse liable to throw its rider and a rough and jolting road.

<sup>22</sup> There is no doubt of the repugnance; but it is piquant that Hobbes, the author of *Leviathan* which comes close to saying that might is right, judged that he would be safer under the illegal home regime than in the volatile gangland of the king in exile. He is acting consistently and rationally, rather than according to the dictates of emotion or honour.

<sup>23</sup> Gaskin [12] 283 says that ‘his [Mersennus]’ death was partly the occasion for Hobbes’ plans to return to England after his long sojourn in Paris during the Civil Wars’. We can just about infer this from the poem, but Hobbes dwells far more on the damage done to himself by the king setting up court-in-exile in Paris *comitante caterva* (‘with a rabble of’) royalists (*Vita* 183).

<sup>24</sup> H. Macdonald and M. Hargreaves, *Thomas Hobbes: A Bibliography* (London 1952) 67 item 91. Note Aubrey’s comment on the ending: he liked the first version better than Blackbourn’s, where ‘the sense is not so brisque’. Aubrey writes this in his copy of Blackbourn’s *Vita* (item 93).

<sup>25</sup> [*Sic*,] *Londinum* (‘so, coming to London’) in MS and Molesworth/Blackbourn.

Coming to London, lest I should seem to have come clandestinely  
 I had to conciliate the Council of State.  
 After doing that, I at once retire in a most peaceable way,  
 and apply myself just as previously to my studies.

The words that I have italicized alert us to the continuance of Hobbes' theme of motion, physical motions as a result or purpose of mental choices. For one who had criticized rhetoric before, he employs a wealth of its figures here: *tutelage . . . tutior* (*Vita* 235f.); *veniens . . . venisse* (239). Sound-patterns lend their weight to the rhetoric and the moment: *ventus* (237), *vexat* (238), *via* (238), alliterative dissyllables, precede the verb-figure *veniens / venisse* (239). Then *Concilio / conciliandus* (240) is not simply a further polyptoton but a bitter pun, and horrible irony, in that the philosopher must bow to the might of the military (*Omnia miles erat*, 'soldiery had all power', 245); and must avoid suspicion of being a spy for the exiles who had just exiled him (*ne clam venisse viderer*, 239)! Soon, too, the same *omnia* ('supreme power', the theme of *Leviathan*) will be *committier* ('entrusted', 245)<sup>26</sup> to one man, to Cromwell: another gruesome irony.

Hobbes wields his hexameter well, too, and the line *In patriam redeo tutelae non bene certus, / Sed nullo potui tutior esse loco* (*Vita* 235f.) swells to its caesura with potential patriotic pride, only to puncture this by the reasoning which follows, in the second half of this line and on into the whole of the next. The statement is mostly qualification and double negatives (dismal litotes) after all. He is returning from a soured Eden to a native land gone mad. Might there be twinges of latent guilt as well?

Hobbes' second couplet requires even closer attention, because it is strictly irrelevant to the narrative (*Vita* 237f.). It stands out in this spare passage through circumstantiality and ostensible superfluity; by poetic richness which contrasts with the surrounding briskness; and (of all things) by its consequent implicit emotionalism. A philosopher, of all people, should not be troubled by the ambient temperature nor the weather conditions; nor by any inconveniences of the mode of locomotion—not even in a poem which thinks philosophically and tropically about laws of universal motion, especially not there.

Accordingly, I think we should wince and shudder to read of this prior humiliation on Hobbes' part: *Frigus erat, nix alta, senex ego, ventus acerbus* (*Vita* 237). The sequencing has great expressive power: cold and snow make him recognize his age—sixty-three, his climacteric—and make him and us *feel* it, by imagining it. This is what rhetoric and poetry together do best. The hesitant parataxis and prosody enhance each other brilliantly. After snow and

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<sup>26</sup> This is a Lucretian form of the infinitive, handy at this place in a hexameter line.



cold, a bitter wind: a 'bitter' experience too, Hobbes is hinting. And if that be so, then the next two details will refer us further still, inwards, as well as painting the outward scene: the horse is *sternax* (238; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 12.364); and the way is *salebrosa* (238). The sheer digressiveness loads in the emotional and moral meanings, the despondency and self-doubt. And is not horse-riding an ancient emblem of self-government, the horse of emotions controlled by reason as rider? Hobbes uses poetic forms to convey his very low ebb. To this effect, the rhythms have a cumulative force in the hexameter—abnormally many pauses, lengthening the line, and so dwelling or brooding on the physical miseries. Then in the pentameter, the front half moves quickly then pulls up hard on a spondee, like the recalcitrant horse; sibilants hiss and whistle through the line, into *salebrosa*—oh, what a wretched *via* (238) this was. And Hobbes still has to go and grovel once the *via* has brought him to London (239-42).

Repeated reading convinces me, then, that the poetical thrust and Ovidian mimesis in this couplet (*Vita* 237f.) demonstrate Hobbes' sense of climax. Here he reaches rock bottom, mentally and spiritually. And this is his homecoming! *In patriam redeo*; yet joy there is none, none whatsoever. Home has become exile, just as exile in Paris had been paradise (*dilectam* . . . *Lutetiam*, 150). Nowhere does he praise London. He clears out of London as fast as he can, and goes into retreat (*recedo*, 241). Like millions who lived through this most unhappy time—does *anyone* record feeling happy during 1650-1660?—he sits out the time as best he may, namely in his case by writing, writing, writing, both in English and Latin.

Though we may detect clumsy or prosaic or unmetrical incompetences, and little liberties taken with Latin,<sup>27</sup> in the passage, they pale for me by comparison with the imaginative power and human force of this retelling of the losses of exile. It should be a *locus classicus*. Written just when Neo-Latin verse, too, was dying, and Milton for example had given it up, the passage has lacked its due recognition. Perhaps its Ovidian originality will yet achieve this for it.

### *The Ending: Facing Death*

Ovid has this to say about his own death: *protinus ut moriar, non ero, terra, tuus* ('even if I die straightaway, I shall not be yours, earth', *Tr.* 4.10.130), because fame has blessed him, and he has most readers—or, to quote Hilaire Belloc's epigram 'On His Books', 'When I am dead, I hope it may be said: "His

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<sup>27</sup> For example, Hobbes' participial usage of *veniens* (*Vita* 239) seems more Greek or English than Latin. But, as ever, he has something more pressing to express than to avoid faults, and the reader keeps attention on the dynamic 'brisqueness' of the life-record.

sins were scarlet, but his books were read”’.<sup>28</sup> Ovid is combining accuracy with a welcome flicker of defiant wit. Then he thanks the reader, addressed as *candide lector*—a cunning hint that readers should ‘candidly’ admit that they enjoy reading him. A criterion of pleasure is being insinuated.

Hobbes, if we follow Molesworth/Blackbourn, ends flatly and glumly: *Octoginta egi iam complevi et quatuor annos: / Pene acta est vitae fabula longa meae* (‘I have now completed four and eighty years: the long story of my life is nearly done’, *Vita* 385f.). The triteness, and wordiness, are dismaying, for could not anybody aged eighty-four say that their death was near? And does this truism need repeating in a second line? So it is a relief to find that the fell hand of Blackbourn has been ‘correcting’ again: perhaps to avoid a prosodic incorrectitude he has forfeited Hobbes’ truly memorable cadenza where the couplet reads: *Octoginta annos complevi iam quatuorque, / Et prope stans dictat Mors mihi, ne metue* (‘I have now completed four and eighty years and, standing nearby, Death tells me frequently that I should not be afraid’). The hexameter remains placid and factual, but the pentameter packs a huge punch. Personifying, Hobbes imagines death at his elbow, waiting. Death speaks, and tells this man of fear, *meque metumque simul* (26), that his fears are ended.

This befits a philosopher, not least one whose religious orthodoxy was and remains in doubt. It also recalls Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 3.894-1094). Indeed, it goes to the heart of religion itself, if religion can be defined as that which addresses and removes the fear of death. If exile is alienation, and if death is the ultimate alienation from life in this insecure world, the poem ends with the supreme example of its Ovidian theme. The *Vita* of a philosopher would end by practising what it preached, just what Hobbes had commended in Mersennus.

### *Quentin Skinner’s View of the Poem Weighed and Revised*

This study has touched on the theme of Hobbes’ lifelong tussle with rhetoric: Good thing? Bad thing? Necessary thing? And I have argued that the poem itself wields rhetoric dynamically. All of this has received magisterial discussion by Quentin Skinner, in the course of which he assesses Hobbes’ *Vita*, its variants and its use of Ovid.<sup>29</sup> I therefore conclude my own fuller and more cumulative analysis by testing it against Skinner’s conclusions. Observing that Hobbes ‘modeled his verse *Vita* . . . closely on Ovid’s autobiography’, he writes that ‘Not only does he imitate Ovid’s elegiac couplets, occasionally even

<sup>28</sup> H. Belloc, *Sonnets and Verse*<sup>2</sup> (London 1945) 165.

<sup>29</sup> Skinner [20].

echoing a turn of phrase, but he presents his personality in remarkably similar terms. Like Ovid he speaks in tones of mingled injury and self-justification [about] his many enemies and how he has learned to overcome or endure them; and like Ovid he lays particular emphasis on the sadness of exile and the embittering treachery of former friends'.<sup>30</sup>

This opinion fruitfully provokes qualification and extension. Hobbes does not imitate Ovid's metrics very closely, having both a Neo-Latinist licence to innovate and a briskness of his own for it to express. Nor have I dwelt on how Hobbes 'occasionally even' echoes Ovid's phrasing: any and every humanist elegist will do that, having been reared on Ovidian verse composition. The imitation which matters is more structural and sequential and thematic. In short, it is 'occasional' in the stronger sense that it seizes its own occasion, the occasion of imminent death. On the other hand, Hobbes does indeed use the form and occasion to speak for himself against enemies, though I have not been emphasizing these outward relations, because I value the truth of feeling more, and especially his paradoxical feelings about Ovid's theme of exile. 'Sadness' is precisely not the foremost truth of feeling about exile, if we respect the literal truths that Hobbes chose to escape the English civil wars by going into exile to his *dilectam* . . . *Lutetiam* (*Vita* 150); that he had the best time of his intellectual life in exile there while he could 'orbit' around Mersennus; and that his bitterest feelings were caused by being exiled home from exile. These, by the compensation typical of poetic art, received his most memorable poetic expression.

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<sup>30</sup> Skinner [20] 233.

## REVIEW ARTICLES

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### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ANCIENT GREECE

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Polly Low, *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece: Morality and Power*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. x + 313. ISBN 978-0-521-87206-5. USD90.

Ancient historians have paid scant attention to political scientists in general, and what has come to be called International Relations (IR) Theory in particular. In terms of classical antiquity and international relations, Adcock and Mosley's 1975 study deserves mention, but the first part of the book (written by Adcock) was historical narrative and the second (written by Mosley) was an analytical account of the forms and institutions of ancient diplomacy. Neither paid any attention to general theories in political science.<sup>1</sup> More recently, three exceptions to ancient historians' tendency to ignore IR Theory are noteworthy. A fine collection of essays by ancient historians and political scientists, focusing on Thucydides, appeared in 1991, but it received little attention at the time of its publication and is now out of print.<sup>2</sup> IR Theory informed Crane's monograph study of Thucydides.<sup>3</sup> Eckstein has recently made good use of Realist political theory to explain the rise of Rome in the Mediterranean world.<sup>4</sup> But overall classicists and ancient historians have not taken advantage of the insights provided by IR Theory. They have not studied classical antiquity as a system of states but rather have focused on individual states, most

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<sup>1</sup> F. E. Adcock and D. J. Mosley, *Diplomacy in Ancient Greece* (New York 1975). This book was as little informed by political scientists' theories as C. Phillipson, *The International Law and Custom of Ancient Greece and Rome* 1-2 (London 1911), published shortly before International Relations was first recognized as a formal academic discipline.

<sup>2</sup> R. N. Lebow and B. S. Strauss (edd.), *Hegemonic Rivalry: From Thucydides to the Nuclear Age* (Boulder 1991).

<sup>3</sup> G. Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley 1998).

<sup>4</sup> A. M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley 2006).

commonly Athens and Rome (what political scientists would call a restrictive 'unit-attribute' approach). Polly Low's theoretically informed study of interstate relations in ancient Greece is therefore a welcome addition to an emerging dialogue between ancient historians and political scientists.

Low's principal argument is that even though ancient Greek writers did not produce a sustained theoretical account of interstate behaviour, there was a developed (and embedded) normative framework shaping the conduct and representation of interstate society. As she states, 'an overarching aim of this book is to demonstrate that the absence of an explicit theory of interstate politics does not entail an absence of complex thinking about the subject, and, moreover, that the search for that complex thinking does not have to begin and end with Thucydides' (pp. 2f.). Insofar as Low believes that normative representations of interstate relations can and do have an impact upon the actual conduct of states in their foreign affairs, she has affinities with the 'Constructivist' school of IR Theory and is opposed to the so-called 'Realists' (compare her statement on pp. 28f. maintaining 'that the representation(s) of international relations can be just as, if not more, significant than the facts underlying . . . behaviour'). At this point it is necessary to outline the Realist position, since Low engages with it in some sense throughout her study and, in my opinion, the degree to which our evidence for interstate behaviour in ancient Greece supports it places her conclusions in proper perspective.

Realist theories posit as a universal condition of international relations brutal, zero-sum struggles for primacy and security, in which warfare and violence are ever-present threats and all too frequent realities. Thucydides has been the Realists' favourite ancient historian, since his grim narrative of the Peloponnesian War seems to corroborate their view of the nature of the international arena. Indeed, Thucydides' history has been foundational for this theory, since it presents human nature as immutable and anarchy as the default condition of interstate systems. According to the Realist view, all states must maximize their relative power in order to ensure survival.<sup>5</sup> Low is well-versed in IR Theory, and in chapter 1, 'International Relations and Ancient History' (pp. 7-32), she provides a fine summary account of the discipline's history, its relationship with ancient history, and the various strands of Realist theory and its 'Idealist' opponents. The latter were early liberal theorists, who 'believed, broadly, that moral judgment could be applied to the practice of international relations and that moral considerations could and did influence that practice' (p. 9). The 'Idealists' were the founders of International Relations as an academic discipline, and their liberal agenda for it were based on the idea of progress and the development of a stable world order, to be secured by moral considerations and international law. These notions are a far cry from what most IR theorists, and especially the Realists, have represented in more recent times. As Low notes, '[i]t is the reactions to, and against, this approach to international relations (and International Relations) which has [sic] set the agenda of the discipline for much of the rest of its

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<sup>5</sup> The foundational document for the Realists is K. N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass. 1979).

existence' (p. 10). But a unified group of utopian 'Idealists' is a historical chimera, largely created by the triumphant Realists in the 1950s to assure their dominance of the field. Low opposes the dominant Realist paradigm insofar as she concentrates on questions of interstate norms and international ethics.

Chapter 2, 'Structuring Interstate Relations' (pp. 33-76), has as its main theme the idea of reciprocity in interstate relations. In this chapter and throughout the rest of the book, Low marshalls a wide array of evidence, literary and epigraphic, going well beyond Thucydides. Yet a theoretical problem immediately arises: without a supreme hegemon and international arbiter, how can an international society exist, governed by a common set of reciprocal rules and obligations? Low suggests informal codes of civilization or culture, taking her cue from a famous passage in Herodotus (8.144). Moreover, the Greek ethical maxim of benefiting one's friends and harming one's enemies could evolve into a productive system of reciprocal relationships, a theme which is prominent in Xenophon's work (e.g., *Hell.* 6.5.41). Reciprocity in its positive sense (benefiting friends) could have obvious beneficial effects on the entire interstate system; in its negative sense (harming enemies) it could act as a deterrent against rogue aggression. Finally, the ideology of reciprocity could act generally as a moral constraint in the field of international diplomacy. Literary and epigraphic texts illustrate the centrality of reciprocity in diplomatic language—commonplace appeals to *philia*, *eunoia*, *isopoliteia*, grants of honorary citizenship, kinship claims and Panhellenic sentiments—but frequently diplomatic reciprocity (usually expressed in bilateral terms) concealed exclusive blocs or the superordinate power of the dominant party.<sup>6</sup> In their applications, these diplomatic instruments add up to a sociology of interstate relations, not a comprehensive system; they exhibit a great deal of 'slippage' (to use Low's term), often creating contradictory tensions rather than coherent patterns.

Chapter 3, 'An Anarchic Society? International Law and International Custom' (pp. 77-128), continues the quest for an international society in classical Greece. Here we come up against questions going back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: What is international society? Is it defined by a common culture or by natural law?<sup>7</sup> What is the relationship between law and society?<sup>8</sup> The study of ancient Greek international law, such as it is, has been plagued by the attempt to analyze it according to modern conceptions. Low eschews this approach and attempts to look at Greek international law in its own context by focusing not only on its sources and scope but also its application and enforcement. She examines instruments of Athenian domestic law to tease out conceptions of international law. In Athens, interstate agreements were drawn up as resolutions, proposed, and passed in the *ekklesia*; they 'can be

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<sup>6</sup> For kinship diplomacy (*sungeneia*), see C. P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass. 1999).

<sup>7</sup> On this question, see R. Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge 1979).

<sup>8</sup> See D. J. Bederman, *International Law in Antiquity* (Cambridge 2001).

described as *nomoi* or (more frequently) *psēphismata*' (pp. 85f.) In these ways they were identical to the mechanisms of domestic law. Moreover, domestic laws could and did affect the behaviour of the *polis* towards outsiders, as in grants of *enktēsis* or trade monopolies or regulations concerning Athenians and their allies. Finally, the Greek words *nomos* and *nomimos*, widely attested in interstate agreements, covered a wide semantic range in the domestic sphere, from formal legal processes to tradition and custom.<sup>9</sup> And so we do not have explicit evidence for international law proper, but rather another case of 'slippage', this time between the domestic and international spheres. The broad semantic range of *nomos* applied in international affairs as well. Rather vague notions of an unwritten, universal law predominated, and in applying and enforcing it (by sanctions, arbitration, hostage-taking, allegations of oath-breaking and religious imprecations, or military coercion), leading states (our evidence is of course mainly from Athens) strove to forge interstate consensus on the moral legitimacy of their actions.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 4, 'Domestic Morality, Interstate Morality' (pp. 129-74), and chapter 5, 'Norms and Politics: The Problem of Intervention' (pp. 175-211), examine further problems arising from the interaction between domestic and foreign: Can there be a clear demarcation between *polis* interests and outside interests? What constitutes the discrete *polis*? Are patterns of domestic behaviour always appropriate in external relations? In these chapters, Low seeks to elicit moral and ethical normative imperatives in the interstices between the domestic and external spheres. In domestic politics, we again come up against 'slippage'; moral language blurs what we should call interpersonal and political activity. In the domestic/external interface, either realm can produce morally evaluative language (*agathos*, *aretē*, *eunoia*, *dikaiosynē*, etc.) and transfer it to the other. Honorific decrees well illustrate this domestic/external transfer or overlap in moral vocabulary. In inscriptions, such moral language can be applied to entire political communities (e.g., *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.28.4f., 2<sup>2</sup>.233.6-9, pp. 140f.). Literary texts employ moral language in an even more expanded sense of interstate relations (e.g., positively, Agesilaus' philhellenism in Xenophon's encomium [*Ages.* 7, pp. 145, 148]; negatively, Demosthenes' castigations of his compatriots' supine policies regarding Philip II [e.g., *Third Phillipic* 10, 12, pp. 204, 208]). They also repeatedly frame problematic relationships in deliberative oratory between justice (*to dikaion*) and self-interest (*to sumpheron*), which Low examines primarily through the works of Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Aristotle. She argues that rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives, the just and the advantageous in Greek rhetorical texts

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<sup>9</sup> As Low notes, 'Formally created *nomoi* in fact form a minority of laws attested in interstate contexts in this period, and it is in the less formal, customary, sense that the majority of the references to international law or custom (usually under the description of *nomoi* or *nomimos*), and (more frequently) to breaches of law or custom (*paranomía*), have to be understood' (p. 96).

<sup>10</sup> Most epigraphic evidence for formal interstate arbitration is post-classical; see S. L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337-90 BC* (Berkeley 1996); A. Magnetto, *Gli arbitrati interstatali greci 1-2* (Pisa 1997).

should be seen as complementary, providing ‘a crucial insight into the shaping and reshaping of the boundaries of the many, often intersecting “communities” which participate in the Greek interstate system’ (p. 174).

Interstate interventions sharply underline problems between conceptions of international society and their conceits (reciprocity, justice, kinship fictions) and actual practices. They produce three issues in interstate diplomacy: the question of norms in intervention, the question of state autonomy, and the question of intervention as a path to imperialism. Unlike modern conceptions (e.g., UN Resolution 2625), classical texts (such as Lys. *Epitaphios*) frequently represent intervention in a positive light, as a duty and moral obligation to correct injustices. Ancient Greek has no word for intervention, but rather used the language of ‘helping, saving, and protecting’. Morally justified interventions in Greek conceptions were restricted to helping allies or friends having been wronged (*adikoumenoi*), whether it be the result of internal *stasis* or external aggression by a third party; in other words, the action must be what we would call counter-intervention. ‘Helping’ and ‘protecting’ could sit uncomfortably beside the cherished ideals of autonomy and *autarkeia*. These ideals, however, were always relative and negotiable between weaker and stronger states, since *autonomia* frequently meant nothing more than norms and customs, always open to subjective interpretation (perhaps most dramatically illustrated by the terms of the King’s Peace of 386 BC). Intervention on behalf of one faction in internal *stasis* could be couched in terms of justice and autonomy, since the opponent could be cast as unjust and usurping the freedom of fellow-citizens. By extension this sort of reasoning could be used as an apology for imperialism itself (as in, e.g., Isoc. *Paneg.* 104f.); and intervention seems to have been acknowledged as an indication of a state’s greatness (e.g., Aeschin. 3.134) and as an avenue to morally legitimate *archê* (e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.10, 14). As Low concludes on the ambiguities of Greek ideas on intervention, ‘[i]t is its indistinctness, its openness to perpetual redefinition and recharacterisation, which gives it much of its usefulness as a tool of practical interstate politics’ (p. 211).

In her final chapter, ‘Stability and Change’ (pp. 212-51), Low seeks to redress the static, synchronic approach of the previous chapters, taking into account diachronic progression (or regression), and assessing the degree to which historical developments influenced the framework of interstate interaction (with a focus on Thucydides and the Athenian empire). Overall she argues for stability of the interstate system (and the synchronic method of the earlier part of the study), warning against overestimating the impact of Athens’ convulsive historical experience (defeat in the Peloponnesian War and loss of empire) on the rest of the Greek world. Athenocentric distortions of our extant source material encourage this potential error. Thucydides is of course the most important of these Athenocentric sources, and Low argues that his history can be misleading as a guide to questions of morality and interstate behaviour in fifth-century Greece; we must approach his marginalization of normative, moral language and stress on motivations of power and self-interest with a certain degree of caution. The means by which the Athenian empire was maintained—its structure, institutions, and ethics—were not a sharp break with the past, even taking into account



the key Athenian imperial institution, tribute assessment and collection on an unprecedented scale. During the second half of the fifth century, Low concedes, Athens monopolized not only the sources of physical strength, but also the awarding of interstate honours, even to the point of exporting Athenian stonemasons to make sure honorific inscriptions got it right.

This is a fine book. In masterly fashion Low has employed a wide range of texts, both literary and epigraphic, in order to demonstrate that the language of ancient Greek international diplomacy was grounded in moral and ethical norms. Her argument that significant overlap among interpersonal, domestic, and international spheres in Greek moral conceptions, and the ancient Greeks' reliance on custom and tradition in foreign diplomacy, can account for the fact that the ancient Greeks never produced an explicit theory of interstate relations is persuasive. This, in my view, is a major contribution to our understanding of ancient Greek diplomacy, but it must be placed in its sobering historical contexts. In fact ancient Greek treaty-making was often dysfunctional: treaties guaranteeing inviolability (*asylia*) were frequently ineffective;<sup>11</sup> peace agreements could not be expected to endure their stated time periods (e.g., the Peace of Nicias); and attempts at third party mediation (*syllusis*) or arbitration (*krisis*) regularly broke down. Duplicity was commonplace in international behaviour, as is attested by the frequent anti-deceit clauses in Greek treaties and underscored by the story of the Locrian Oath (Polyb. 12.6.1-5). More important is the grim record of unrelenting human violence and warfare throughout ancient Greek history.<sup>12</sup> Thucydides alone records more than thirty states destroyed in the fifth century. Examples are ready at hand of breaches of customary international law: murder of foreign envoys (Plut. *Them.* 6.2; Hdt. 7.133); murder of Greek ambassadors without trial (Plut. *Per.* 30.2f.; Thuc. 2.67; cf. *Hell. Oxy.* 2.1); and murder of an Athenian *proxenos* at Ceos (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.111; cf. 2<sup>2</sup>.33; it is noteworthy that none of these references are to be found in Low's *Index Locorum*). In my view, the historical record demands that we consider ancient Greek ideological formations appearing in diplomatic contexts, couched as they are in moral and ethical terms, with the greatest scepticism; in the final analysis, it seems to me, the history of classical Greek interstate relations conforms to the most pessimistic of Realist paradigms. That said, Low's book emphasizes historical nuance and subtlety in ancient Greek interstate relations, averting the sort of flat, generalizing historical reconstruction to which simplistic Realist approaches might easily lead. And this is in itself a great service at a time when ancient historians are beginning to pay more attention to contemporary theories of international relations.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. K. J. Rigsby, *Asylia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley 1996).

<sup>12</sup> We return, then, to the problem of incessant bellicosity among the ancient Greeks, which Herodotus puts into the mouth of the Persian general Mardonius as a complaint (7.9) and with which Low opens her study (p. 1). See J. Rich and G. Shipley (edd.), *War and Society in the Greek World* (London 1993); H. van Wees (ed.), *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London 2000).

## THE RECEPTION OF HOMER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Barbara Graziosi and Emily Greenwood (edd.), *Homer in the Twentieth Century: Between World Literature and the Western Canon*. Classical Presences. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xiii + 322, incl. 7 halftone illustrations, index of Homeric passages and general index. ISBN 978-0-19-929826-6. GBP55/USD99.

Having recently completed a translation of the *Iliad* which attempted to bring out the parallels between Homer's epic and Southern African society, I read Graziosi and Greenwood's edited volume with keen anticipation. I was not disappointed. As with all such collective volumes (the book presents papers from a conference held in Durham in 2004) the quality of the contributions varies. But in this case, due to the scholarly standing of the contributors and the thoroughness of the editing, the standard is unusually high. In their introduction (pp. 1-24), the editors discuss the main issues raised in the body of the book, summarize the contributions, and try to find common threads that unite the four parts into which the original conference papers have been organized. They state: 'Our thesis is that shifts in the academic study of Homeric epic were part of a much broader re-positioning of Homer in the cultural landscape of the twentieth century' (p. 3). This 're-positioning', they argue, involved a move away from the notion of Homer as central only to the Western literary canon, and towards the idea of world literature; but it was precisely the 'discovery' by classical scholars of Homer as a poet who was oral (and thus comparable to oral poets of modern Africa or the ancient Near East) which helped bring about this shift. The editors suggest that their book is meant 'not only for classicists but also for students of comparative literature, postcolonial studies, and cultural history' (p. 15).

'Part I: Placing Homer in the Twentieth Century' (pp. 25-71) contains just two chapters. Johannes Haubold, 'Homer after Parry: Tradition, Reception, and the Timeless Text' (pp. 27-46), is concerned with the reception of Milman Parry's work not just by classicists but also, more widely, by twentieth-century literary and cultural theorists. Haubold points to a rift, since Parry, in the way in which Homer is studied. On the one hand, comparative linguists, folklorists, and even cognitive scientists, now approached him as a traditional oral poet, so that Homer entered 'a new arena of world traditions, where Achilles rubbed shoulders with Sunjata . . . and Gilgamesh' (p. 35). Such scholars made Homer, in a sense, a timeless author. On the other hand, students of literature, reception studies, and translation, continued to discuss Homer as the first Western canonical author. Haubold shows how, anticipating this rift, there was already present in Parry's work a tension between his sense of the profundity of the Homeric epics and his insistence 'that no meaning in the usual sense of the word

was encoded in the traditional aspects of Homeric poetry' (p. 36). Many of his followers, including Lord, shared Parry's ambivalence about the artistry of Homer. In a parallel but different way, European classicists with some reluctance accepted Parry's central thesis, but insisted that Homer *wrote* his epics, which made them comparable with masterpieces of the Western literary tradition. Thus they firmly situated Homer again in time.

Lorna Hardwick, 'Singing across the Faultlines: Cultural Shifts in Twentieth-Century Receptions of Homer' (pp. 47-71), discusses the work of contemporary writers whose reception of Homer is not straightforward, but raises problematic issues. Her first subject, the Anglo-Irish poet Michael Longley (b. 1939), often uses Iliadic material in his lyric poetry. Hardwick can be portentous in writing about this: 'The recognition is less an epistemological event than a performative transgression of the received frameworks of anthropocentrism, logic, and time' (p. 60). She makes her point more clearly on the following page: 'In Longley's work as a whole, Homer provides the intertext in which the cultural memory of the First World War and the political realities and violence of the Troubles intersect' (p. 61). Next, Hardwick examines Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A Stage Version*, arguing that the play preserves something of the Homeric epic while applying to it new cultural and moral norms—especially in the scene in which Penelope angrily refuses to countenance the maidservants' execution. The chapter also touches briefly on the work of two other Caribbean creative figures, the novelist Wilson Harris, and the collage artist Romare Bearden (a reproduction of whose *The Siren's Song* adorns the dust-jacket of this volume).

The first of three chapters in 'Part II: Scholarship and Fiction' (pp. 73-142), Richard Martin, 'Homer among the Irish: Yeats, Synge, Thomson, and Parry' (pp. 75-91) is mainly a literary- and cultural-historical essay. It looks at the ways in which the study of Homeric epic influenced and was influenced by the work of three Irishmen: the poet Yeats, the playwright Synge, and the classical scholar George Thomson. Martin discusses two styles of handling the Homeric model, which he calls 'import and export'. Yeats was an 'importer': 'What Homer represents for Yeats is a lost epoch, a greater age when heroic men and women (and, by implication, their devoted client bards) held sway . . . The poet *imports*—he takes Homer to Ireland and bestows him like a blessing on the select few' (p. 77). Synge, on the other hand, was an 'exporter' in the sense that when he wrote about the people of the Aran Islands he viewed them (though he never explicitly says so) through a Homeric filter. The final subject of Martin's chapter, George Thomson, is well known as a Marxist scholar of Greek culture. What is less well known is that he was a passionate Irish nationalist whose intimate knowledge of the inhabitants of the Blasket islands powerfully influenced his understanding of Homer as an oral-traditional poet.

Next a scholar of English literature, Stephen Minta, 'Homer and Joyce: The Case of Nausicaa' (pp. 92-119), reviews the problematic reception of Odysseus in Western culture, arguing that he was always polyvalent, difficult to 'read'. An indication of this is the different ways—positive and negative—in which translators

have rendered the hero's characteristic epithet, πολύμητις, as 'resourceful', 'versatile', 'sage', or 'crafty', 'of many wiles' (p. 95). Minta discusses in some detail Odysseus' sojourn among the Phaeacians, concluding: 'In general, the Homeric narrative suggests a range of contrasts: comedy and high seriousness, erotic possibility and formal propriety, pastoral fantasy and intruding realism, the touching and the cruel, experience and innocence' (p. 105).<sup>1</sup> He examines the reception of the Nausicaa episode from Pope on, showing how anxious (male) translators were to 'preserve' the virginal modesty of the Phaeacian princess. It was against this trend that Joyce reacted. Minta quotes the novelist's wonderful description of the tone he was trying to achieve in his Nausicaa episode: 'a namby-pamby jammy marmalady drawersy (alto là!) style with effects of incense, mariolatry, masturbation, stewed cockles, painter's palette, chitchat, circumlocutions, etc., etc.' (p. 109). In *Ulysses*, Nausicaa is transformed into Gerty, 'heroine' of a bad sentimental novel; Odysseus, into the furtively masturbating Bloom. Whereas Homer seems to have admired his Nausicaa, Joyce savagely undermines his. So savagely that, as Minta demonstrates, recent commentators have tried to 'rescue' Gerty, one even arguing, improbably, that 'Her voice is that of "her nation struggling to be born", of the everyday battle to keep going "in the face of domestic violence, social invisibility, and colonial repression"' (p. 114).<sup>2</sup> I found Minta's one of the most focused and interesting of the contributions.

The last chapter of this section, Barbara Graziosi, 'Homer in Albania: Oral Epic and the Geography of Literature' (pp. 120-42), falls into two distinct (and in my view insufficiently related) parts. In the first, she discusses the way in which Homer's place 'in the literary and cultural landscape of the twentieth century has been deeply contested' (p. 120). On the one hand, Homer is compared with epic poets of the Western canon; on the other, with oral poets the world over. Parry and Lord's assimilation of the Homeric epics to worldwide traditional oral narratives was explosive because it seemed to undermine their quality. And this tied in, later, with the extensive questioning of the Western canon in the 1980s. The discussion then shifts to recent ideas of the importance of performance in judging epic. Graziosi examines the debate, prompted by Ruth Finnegan, as to whether there is epic in Africa, and, if there is, how we are to evaluate it and other epic traditions. Graziosi argues that there seems now to be a convergence between different approaches: those who stress the oral-traditional aspect, and those who concentrate on the skill and artistry of the individual performer. The second part of her chapter deals with the fiction of the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, especially his novel *The File on H* (published in various editions 1980-1997), which had its origin in a brief meeting between the author and Albert Lord in 1979. Graziosi's view is that Kadare's novel engages with issues of modernity and

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<sup>1</sup> Minta makes much of the varying translations of παρθένος (*Od.* 6.33) as 'virgin' or 'unwed'. He writes as if παρθένος can *only* mean 'virgin', and as if translators have consciously or unconsciously suppressed the element of 'sexual awareness' here (p. 102). But the Greek word is itself ambiguous and can quite legitimately be translated either way.

<sup>2</sup> Citing J. Wicke, 'Joyce and Consumer Culture', in D. Attridge (ed.), *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Casebook* (Oxford 2004) 234-53.

with the politics of the Balkans—including the politics of the production of oral poetry there—in ways in which the work of Parry and Lord did not.

Emily Greenwood, 'Logue's Tele-vision: Reading Homer from a Distance' (pp. 145-76) leads off 'Part III: Distance and Form' (pp. 143-227) and is most welcome to those of us who teach the reception of the *Odyssey* by modern writers. Greenwood argues that, in his 'versions' of the *Iliad* comprising the series 'War Music' (1962-2005 and continuing), Logue tries to recreate the experience of reading Homer as poetry; but that, at the same time, his works measure the distance which separates us from the Greek poet. In a manner different from other translators of Homer, Logue does not try to conceal the relationship between Homer's and his own text, and he allows 'interference' in that text from the many already existing versions of Homer. Logue creates a sense of immediacy by frequently introducing 'anachronisms'<sup>3</sup> into his versions of Homer, such as space rockets, photographs, tungsten, references to twentieth-century wars, and by his use of cinematic technique: close-ups, long shots, jump cuts. Greenwood suggests this latter practice is appropriate, given that Homer's own narrative can often be effectively analyzed using 'film syntax' (p. 163). She sees Logue as taking into account scholarly views of Homer as an oral poet: 'War Music' is an 'oral/aural poem that proclaims itself as music' (p. 147). Greenwood's chapter also contains an interesting discussion of issues of 'ownership' of the Homeric text and 'fidelity' to it in translation; and a comparison of the synaesthetic quality (involving elements of seeing, hearing, and physical processes) of Logue's work with that of Keats' 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer'. (Logue, of course, shares with Keats the fact that neither knew Greek.)

A brief chapter by Oliver Taplin, 'Some Assimilations of the Homeric Simile in Later Twentieth-Century Poetry' (pp. 177-190), considers similes in the work of three contemporary poets: Christopher Logue in 'War Music', Derek Walcott in 'Omeros', and Michael Longley in his poetry published since 1991. Taplin proposes that Homeric similes do their work 'through *dissimilarity* no less than, or even more than, similarity' (p. 178); and that, far from referring to the poet's own world, most Homeric similes are 'neither fixed in time nor located in place' (p. 179). Taplin comes up with a useful term 'time-tension' (instead of the too blunt 'anachronism') to capture the procedure, very common among contemporary writers, whereby they juxtapose in their texts elements drawn from different historical periods. He discusses in Logue's similes the play of similarity/dissimilarity, as in Homer; characteristic 'time-tensions', as when contemporary practices and technologies are referred to; and Logue's manner of drawing readers into the world of his similes by 'buttonholing' them with such phrases as 'Consider how . . .' or 'You know . ..'. As for 'Omeros', Taplin points out that the poem achieves its effects more through striking metaphor than simile. But, he argues, the few developed similes that do occur serve to mark crucial points in the poem. In the case of Longley, Taplin examines two Homeric similes in his poems, one of which picks up the 'mismatch' between fertility and the

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<sup>3</sup> Greenwood prefers the less blunt term 'time-tensions', which Oliver Taplin uses in chapter 7 (pp. 177-190).

sterility of death in the poppy simile beginning at *Iliad* 8.300, while the other introduces the specificity of County Mayo place names into the poet's reworking of the famous starlit night simile at the end of *Iliad* 8.

Gregson Davis' contribution, "'Homecomings Without Home': Representations of (Post)colonial *Nostos* (Homecoming) in the Lyric of Aimé Césaire and Derek Walcott' (pp. 191-209), aims to explore links between four compositions: 'Cahier d'un retour au pays natal' and 'Spirales' by Aimé Césaire, and Walcott's 'Homecoming: Anse La Raye' and 'Omeros'. Davis states: 'I shall be concentrating on the broader strategies by which certain central Homeric motifs are recodified in contemporary terms' (p. 192), especially the motifs of homecoming and *katabasis*. He prefaces his account with some rather nebulous observations on *katabaseis* in ancient Near Eastern epic, the movie *Orfeu Negro*, Walcott's 'Omeros' and Virgil. Discussing Césaire's 'Cahier', which traces the poet's return from Paris to Martinique, Davis argues that although we might expect this journey to be towards a sunlit land of the living, all the metaphors and images of the poem make the island seem like a land of the dead, the journey like a *katabasis*. In Walcott's poem 'Homecoming: Anse La Raye', Davis finds a combination of *katabasis* and the *nostos* of a disillusioned returning poet, unrecognized by his own people: 'Derek Walcott's dazed poet-hero whose *nostos* is marred by alienation and rejection has deep affinities with Aimé Césaire's disillusioned speaker who confronts a moribund human landscape in his native Martinique' (p. 206). I feel that Davis tries to do too much in this chapter, which consequently becomes somewhat 'bitty' and disjointed.

Françoise Létoublon's, 'Theo Angelopoulos in the Underworld' (pp. 210-27), one of two chapters dealing with cinema, identifies motifs of the Odyssean *nekuia* (*Od.* 11) in Angelopoulos' films—such as mist, rain, rivers, encounters with dead figures, punishment of offenders—blended with motifs from the *katabasis* of Orpheus. In a detailed discussion of the Greek director's *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), Létoublon finds in the movie 'two different models for the reception of antiquity' (p. 216), one static and frozen, the other dynamic, as the past is taken up and reused: 'It is possible that Angelopoulos' model of Homeric reception lies somewhere between these two poles, and that meaning is to be found in the tension between a frozen, static, lost past, and a past that nonetheless continues to be used and resonate in the present' (p. 217). In her account of the same director's *Eternity and a Day* (1998) and *Voyage to Cythera* (1984), Létoublon points out further Odyssean elements such as the importance given to the protagonist's dog (in the latter film, explicitly named Argos). But, for me, this chapter and the preceding one have a similar weakness: both discuss any reference by their respective artists to 'death' or a 'journey' in terms of an Odyssean *nostos* or *nekuia*—even where the connection with Homer seems very tenuous. (Létoublon's title at least acknowledges this, in that it includes no mention of Homer or his epics).

The book's final section, 'Part IV: Politics and Interpretation' (pp. 229-85), opens with David Ricks, 'Homer in the Greek Civil War (1946-1949)' (pp. 231-44). Ricks had already traced Homer's influence in Cavafy, Sikelianos, and Seferis in *The*

*Shade of Homer* (Cambridge 1989): 'The aim of the present chapter is to introduce some main lines of the story as it developed during what has been called a Thirty Years War, 1944-74' (p. 232). He quotes a wonderful poem of Aris Alexandrou which warns, through the image of Troy in ashes, against macho nationalistic identification with Greek heroes such as Achilles. Ricks poses the question: 'If adopting certain personas . . . was a mark of false consciousness, then to which Homeric figures might recourse be had during or after a civil war . . .?' (p. 233). He discusses the poet Frangopoulos' use of a Lycaon-figure to evoke ideas of hostage taking and reprisals in civil war, and analyzes the way in which the same writer's novel *Teichomachia* (1977) rather clumsily endows a student, killed in the clash between Left and Right, with all the characteristics of a very human Hector. In Ricks' view, the hapless Odyssean Elpenor was the most significant Homeric figure in the period under discussion: 'There is little doubt that Elpenor in post-war Greek literature . . . has had staying-power precisely because of his lack of character; and perhaps for his operating as a symbol of the miscarrying of tradition, a case of a figure who does not benefit from—but who also escapes the trammels of—a grand narrative' (p. 242). Finally, Ricks reads the well-known poem, 'Penelope's Despair' (1968) by Yannis Ritsos, 'as a post-Homeric postscript to the Civil War' (p. 243) in which 'the blood-spattered hero of *Odyssey* 23 takes on some of the characteristics of the political detainee of the 1940s and after' (p. 244). A satisfying and stimulating chapter.

Simon Goldhill's contribution, '*Naked and O Brother, Where Art Thou?* The Politics and Poetics of Epic Cinema' (pp. 245-67), raises thought-provoking questions about the 'reception' of Homer in late twentieth century and early twenty-first century Western culture. By way of introduction, Goldhill writes 'It is striking that in ancient literature the *Odyssey* feeds into both tragedy and comedy . . . This is matched by my two films, where one is as brutal and difficult to watch as any modern film, the other a successful mainstream comedy' (p. 245). He asks *à propos* these films 'how much Homer is being cued and by what cues?' and 'how much Homer is being received and by whom . . . ?' (p. 246). In the discussion of Mike Leigh's *Naked* (1993) which follows, Goldhill points out the many Odyssean references in the film. These may be as blatant as the protagonist holding up to the camera Rieu's Penguin *Odyssey*, or they may be more subtle and indirect. So too, the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) emblazons the first lines of the *Odyssey* in its opening credits, but also, much more subtly, alludes to the oral transmission of Homeric epic through the hero's recording of his own song for radio. But no single audience member will pick up all the allusions: 'What is fascinating to me' (Goldhill writes) 'is that in this comedy, no less than in Leigh's epic, there is a game with split audiences: fragmented comprehension' (p. 264). And he concludes with the challenging assertion: 'This is why "reception" is a poor model for Classics today, unless reception can escape from an assumption of a passive or necessary receptivity of an audience, uniformity of comprehension, and unidirectional transmission of unified meaning' (p. 267).

In the final chapter, Seth L. Schein, 'An American Homer for the Twentieth Century' (pp. 268-85), examines the uses and abuses of Homer in the USA over the

last century or so. He examines the role played by the Homeric epics in the growth of the 'humanities' as a discipline from the late nineteenth century on, and in the development of 'great books' courses. Schein interestingly shows that a 'main reason for the rise of great books courses was not so much academic as ideological' (p. 273), since they came into being during the First World War as part of an educational programme designed to explain why the war was being fought and how it represented a struggle of civilization against barbarism. After the war, 'These courses continued to serve patriotic purposes, presenting Western Civilization, especially the civilization of the United States and western Europe, as in effect the *telos* of world history' (p. 274). At the same time, classical learning came increasingly to be regarded as a commodity of high social value. Hence the popularity of series of uniform 'sets' of classic texts, including the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which could be purchased by middle-class families to display their culture and status. Schein points out that very often, in great books courses in the USA, the Homeric epics are taught as expressions of very generalized 'values of Western culture'—such as 'freedom' or 'individuality'—without history or context; and he calls for a more nuanced and contextualized historical reading of the Homeric epics in such courses.

Taken all in all, this is a rich and stimulating collection of essays which should open many avenues for future research into the uses (and abuses) of the Homeric epics in contemporary culture—not just in the West but worldwide. The extensive bibliography on its own will prove most useful. It is a pity that the high price of the book will put it out of reach of many individual scholars (certainly those in the developing world); but all should ensure that their library orders the volume.

### **WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: A BLACK CLASSICIST IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Michele Valerie Ronnick (ed.), *The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey from Slavery to Scholarship*. African American Life Series. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005. Pp. xvi + 425, incl. 16 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 0-8143-3224-2. USD29.95.

Michele Valerie Ronnick (ed.), *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader*. The Collected Black Writings Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xlvii + 508. ISBN 978-0-19-530962-1. GBP43.

The name William Sanders Scarborough certainly rings a bell today because of the prize that the MLA established in 2001 to honour him, a short time after Ronnick identified him as its first African-American member. But his life and his work have



not been accessible outside specialist circles before now.<sup>1</sup> Ronnick's work has opened up these at times very dark, but nevertheless extraordinarily interesting, chapters of the history of the Classics in the United States. She has edited the autobiography of Scarborough and his minor works.<sup>2</sup> The former is published now for the first time eighty years after the death of its author. This review will focus on those aspects which are relevant for classical philologists, commenting first on the *Autobiography*, then on the *Works*, and finally on the editorial work done by Ronnick.

*The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough*

Scarborough describes his life in twenty-eight chapters, which show both his wide interests and his abilities as a writer. The basic data of his life are quickly summarized: Scarborough was born in 1852, in Macon, Georgia. His parents, who despite official interdictions had learned to read and write, were Jeremiah, a manumitted slave, and Frances Gwynn, a nominal slave whose owner William K. DeGraffenreid permitted her and her family many liberties (chapters 1 and 2). Thus, although he himself was legally a slave and consequently subject to the same restrictions,<sup>3</sup> he nevertheless was given basic education by other educated blacks and an otherwise overtly racist white neighbour. After learning carpentry and shoemaking, he studied at Atlanta University and Oberlin College, Ohio (1869-1875; chapters 3 and 4). He then became a teacher at Lewis High School where he met his future wife Sarah Cordelia Bierce, a white divorcée, but when the school was burned down (p. 59), he abandoned the south and resumed his studies at Oberlin College (chapters 5 and 6). Upon receiving the MA, he became professor at Wilberforce University<sup>4</sup> in Greene County, Ohio (chapter 7). From 1891 to 1897 he taught New Testament Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from brief notes here and there, such as B. Brawley, *The Negro Genius: A New Appraisal of the Achievement of the American Negro in Literature and the Fine Arts* (New York 1966) 169.

<sup>2</sup> See also C. Conybeare, 'Review: Michele Valerie Ronnick (ed.), *William Sanders Scarborough. The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey from Slavery to Scholarship* (Detroit 2005)', *BMCRev* 2005.05.12. I have no reason to repeat her comments here.

<sup>3</sup> One must keep in mind that in those days 'a learned black man was a walking oxymoron, a contradiction in terms, both preposterous and frightening' (*Autobiography*, p. 1). Cf. K. R. Manning, *Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just* (New York 1983) for more details about the struggles of blacks in the academic world. For other black classicists, see R. Fikes, 'African American Scholars of Greco-Roman Culture', *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 35 (2002) 120-24; M. V. Ronnick, '12 Black Classicists', *Arion* 11 (2004) 85-102; 'Early African American Scholars in the Classics: A Photographic Essay', *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 43 (2004) 101-05.

<sup>4</sup> On Wilberforce University in general, see E. E. Beauregard, 'Wilberforce University: Black America's Oldest University', in J. W. Oliver *et al.* (edd.), *Cradles of Conscience: Ohio's Independent Colleges and Universities* (Kent, Ohio 2003) 489-508.

at Payne Theological Seminary (chapter 12). After his return to Wilberforce University, he became its Vice-President and later President (1908-1920; chapters 15-18). His presidency, however, was overshadowed by severe financial restraints and the First World War (chapters 20-24). Finally, he held a position at the Department of Agriculture (1921-1924; chapter 26). Two years later he died at home in Ohio (chapter 29, written by his wife).<sup>5</sup>

This impressive career was achieved under the constraints of a society which forced him to fight on three frontiers at the same time. First, he had to suffer preposterous acts of racial discrimination. While still a young man, he was forbidden to enter an omnibus (p. 57). Later in life it was mostly hotels, for example, in Williamstown (p. 134) and Ohio (p. 157), which insisted on segregation and refused to accommodate him. In Baltimore the Hotel Belvedere would 'not undertake to serve a dinner at which members of [his] race might be present', though he was a speaker at the APA meeting held there (p. 207). The disarming ironic humour, which Scarborough applies to these descriptions of otherwise unbearable acts, will win him the sympathy of every reader. In London, however, a courageous hotel manager decided rather to see his white American guests leave under protest than to permit any maltreatment of Scarborough (pp. 173-75, 185). Moreover, the captain of the *Carmania* 'had informed the waiters that if [he and his wife] were not properly served he would wait on [them] himself' (p. 215). Secondly, when Scarborough was a student, Calhoun had publicly asserted 'that no Negro could learn Greek' (p. 44; cf. the index). Scarborough was proud that he proved him wrong twice (p. 78), once by learning Greek and a second time by writing a teaching book about Greek. Scarborough had made himself living proof that blacks were indeed able to achieve the goals of higher education. Thirdly, Scarborough struggled with the then prominent anti-classicist position among blacks. Its most prominent propagator was Booker T. Washington, who held that practical skills were more important for African-Americans than the classical curriculum. Scarborough, however, clearly saw that this unnecessarily limited the chances of blacks by effectively excluding them from key positions in society and, in the long run, from a more prosperous future.

Scarborough's autobiography helps the reader to contextualize his philological works. His renown was to rest exclusively on two books: *First Lessons in Greek*, which had become in his day a standard work in Greek tuition of both black and white students, and *Birds of Aristophanes*.<sup>6</sup> No other book-length study of his on Classics

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<sup>5</sup> For more about Scarborough's life, see his obituary by J. F. Slater, *Journal of Negro History* 11.4 (1926) 689-92. Being one of the few African Americans who had the opportunity to travel, Scarborough also used his narrative talent to describe the deep impression that these travels left on him (*Autobiography*, chapters 16, 19, 21, 25; *Works*, pp. 141-57).

<sup>6</sup> W. S. Scarborough, *First Lessons in Greek: Adapted to the Greek Grammars of Goodwin and Hadley, and Designed as an Introduction to Xenophon's Anabasis and Similar Greek* (New York 1881); *Birds of Aristophanes: Theory of Interpretation* (Boston 1886).

was ever published.<sup>7</sup> Financial pressures forced Scarborough to abandon the publication of his edition of Andocides, which was otherwise ready for press (p. 105; see also *Works*, p. 328). And publication of his *Questions on Latin Grammar* was preempted by a similar work published at the same time (pp. 93, 355 n. 10).

### *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough*

The second book to be reviewed here hosts a selection<sup>8</sup> of the minor works of Scarborough (p. xxv). The majority of articles pertain to African-American issues. Ronnick has arranged them thematically into the following categories: 'Military' (pp. 1-8), 'Speeches' (pp. 9-36), 'Journalism' (pp. 37-46), 'Introductions to Books' (pp. 47-64), 'Book Reviews' (pp. 65-90), 'Obituaries' (pp. 91-96), 'Biographies' (pp. 97-140), 'Travel Narratives' (pp. 141-58), 'Education in General' (pp. 159-84), 'Education of Blacks' (pp. 185-232), 'Philology in General' (pp. 233-70), 'Classical Philology' (pp. 271-332), 'Politics, Policy, and Prejudice' (pp. 333-484), and 'Farming' (pp. 485-92). Although there is a special section on Classical philology, some classics-related works are categorized elsewhere: for example, the introduction to his own *First Lessons in Greek* (pp. 49f.), a review of a book on how to teach Latin (pp. 78-81), a discussion of the utility of studying Greek which probably will still help motivate many a teacher of that language (pp. 159-66), and two contributions on *Iphigenia* plays (pp. 255-60, 267-70). The section on Classical philology itself then contains the strictly philological publications.

To give a glimpse of Scarborough's achievements in the Classics, some examples will be summarized here. In his article 'On Fatalism in Homer and Virgil' (pp. 274-81), he establishes that the words μοῖρα, *fatum*, 'Fate' are polysemous and may indicate either 'the will of the Gods' or the 'blind impersonal force, behind the Gods and beyond their power' (p. 275). He holds—*pace* Grote—that ἀνέλπιστοι in Thuc. 6.17 (pp. 305-10; summarized p. 282) means 'hopeless of success' (p. 305), or in other words 'that the Peloponnesians were "hopeless" in the sense that they were not powerful enough, had not resources enough to make a successful resistance against the Athenian forces' (p. 310; see also pp. 322-25, 329f.). He establishes that *ancipiti* in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1.26.1 (pp. 289-93; summarized p. 283) 'means "doubtful" in the sense of "critical" or "uncertain"' (p. 283). In the question which author should be read in undergraduate reading courses, he prefers Andocides over Xenophon because of the ease of his language in combination with the interesting

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<sup>7</sup> One should, however, not fail to mention the authoritative pamphlet by W. S. Scarborough, *The Educated Negro and his Mission* (Washington, DC 1903).

<sup>8</sup> Hellenists will miss W. S. Scarborough, 'The New College Fetich', *AME Church Review* 3 (1886) 126-35, where he vigorously defends the usefulness of Greek studies. For the historical background see M. V. Ronnick, 'Three Nineteenth-Century Classicists of African Descent', *Scholia* 6 (1997) 11-18, esp. 15-18; M. V. Ronnick, 'William Sanders Scarborough: The First African American Member of the Modern Language Association', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 115.7 (2000) 1787-793.

subjects touched (p. 284). He adds that the fact that his colleagues chose Cebes' *Tablet* shows at least that the case against Xenophon was gaining momentum (pp. 287f.). Concerning the infamous reference to a child in Vergil, *Eclogues* 4 (pp. 297-301; summarized p. 286), he concludes (p. 286) that the reference is, if to anyone, to 'Marcellus, the son of Octavia by her former husband of the same name (Aen. vi.861 sqq.)'. 'On the Accent and Meaning of Arbutus' (pp. 294-96), he insists that the antepenultimate syllable is to be accented and 'that the meaning of the word is that of a tree, and *not the common Mayflower*, as popularly used' (p. 294). In 'Bellerophon's Letters, *Iliad* VI.168 ff.' (pp. 302-04), he demonstrates 'that σῆμα, aside from its ordinary meaning, may express the idea of written characters' (p. 302). On the phrase *hunc inventum inveni* in Plautus, *Captivi* 422 (pp. 311-14), he states that '[i]f we make *hunc* refer to the son of Hegio, Philopolemus, the meaning is clear and the interpretation is simple' (p. 313). In discussing the connotations of 'Cena, δεῖπνον, prandium, ἄριστον' (pp. 320f.), Scarborough determines that the former two referred to meals 'from noon to midnight and possibly later' and the latter two 'from early morn to midday' (p. 321). In his 'Notes on the Meaning and Use of φίλων and ξένων in Demosthenes, *De Corona*, 46' (pp. 326f.), he comes to the conclusion 'that φίλων and ξένων are used in a derisive sense' (p. 327), and paraphrases the passage thus: 'For at one time those (whom Philip had deceived and bribed, sc. φίλων καὶ ξένων) were regarded as friends (φίλοι)—friends in the ordinary sense—also friends (ξένοι) in the sense of parties mutually pledged by gifts or otherwise to support each other regardless of the nature of the cause or compact' (p. 326).

Even after a century has passed, Scarborough's contributions to classics have lost nothing of their value. They still provide inspiring reading and testify to the stylistic mastery<sup>9</sup> of their author. Most of the positions he takes and the conclusions he arrives at are such as one could adopt today without being old-fashioned, let alone wrong. Those who want to belittle Scarborough's philological output must not forget that all this was achieved under the greatest limitations and pressures—including constant shortage of money and abundance of workload.

### *The Editorial Work of Michele Valerie Ronnick*

In her introductions, Ronnick explains the difficulties that she faced in the process of editing. The original manuscript of Scarborough's autobiography, for instance, was lost early after its author's death. So Ronnick had to rely on copies made by Savoy and Robinson, and bases her edition on Savoy's manuscript. The printed text, thus, is

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<sup>9</sup> W. S. Scarborough, 'The Party of Freedom and the Freedman—A Reciprocal Duty' (*Works*, pp. 24-28) was published in A. M. Dunbar (ed.), *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence: 1818-1913* (New York 1914) 151-56 (rev. and repr. A. M. Dunbar-Nelson [ed.], *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence: 1818-1913* [Mineola 2000] 176-82). On Scarborough's style, cf. S. Mailloux, 'Thinking with Rhetorical Figures: Performing Racial and Disciplinary Identities in Late-Nineteenth-Century America', *American Literary History* 18.4 (2006) 695-711.

the result of philological efforts similar to the puzzling intricacies of a critical edition. Restoring the original text of the author, including the deciphering of abbreviations and clarification of unclear references, took Ronnick eight years (*Autobiography*, p. 21) and resulted in explanatory notes that fill almost seventy pages of the book (pp. 333-400). Similarly, the edition of Scarborough's *Works* took another eight years because they had appeared in a wide array of journals spanning a fifty-year period and no comprehensive bibliography of Scarborough's works had ever been made. Some of the material was nigh unreadable and in certain sections well corroded by time. Other articles, Henry Louis Gates Jr. informs us in his foreword (*Works*, p. xvii), would have been lost had not the paper versions been converted into microfilm during the 1930s. So the collection literally preserved them from extinction.

Ronnick consistently marks her corrections in the text by square brackets. The need for polishing up the editions is undeniable, and the readers need not know the nature of every misprint that typesetters have produced one hundred years ago. However, obvious but unbracketed errors in the edited text of the *Works* leave the reader wondering which publishers are responsible for them. Errors in the Greek script like ἀμθί (for ἀμφί) and ἀνὴν (for ἀνὴρ) (*Works*, p. 291) do not enable one to identify which publisher is the source of the error, but errors due to the old-fashioned German script (*Fraktur*) point to the 2007 publishers: 'näre' (read 'wäre'), twice; 'jetyt' (read 'jetzt'); 'zueier' (read 'zweier'); and 'enöchte' (read 'möchte') all on one page (*Works*, p. 306). Of course, no error is so grave that consultation of the original would seem necessary. And every scholar citing Scarborough's works will have the sense tacitly to correct these errors without further ado.

Both books are beautifully hardbound. The *Autobiography* comes with sewn pages at an incredibly cheap price, which makes it an affordable reading to any student of Classics or Black History. The *Works*, however, although they cost more, are not sewn. Lengthy indices, which include everything that the reader might look for, round off both books. One can only hope that the books attract many readers who pay more attention to the personality than to the skin colour of the original author and that they encourage more blacks to study Classics in the footsteps of Scarborough.

## A NEW COMMENTARY ON HERODOTUS

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David Asheri, Alan Lloyd and Aldo Corcella (edd. Oswyn Murray, Alfonso Moreno and Maria Brosius, trr. Barbara Graziosi, Matteo Rossetti, Carlotta Dus and Vanessa Cazzato), *A Commentary on Herodotus Books 1-4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. lv + 721, incl. 44 black-and-white maps and plans, and 8 tables. ISBN 978-0-19-814956-9. GBP165/USD320.

The publication of a commentary on Herodotus to replace the outdated How and Wells, which was published by Oxford University Press in 1912,<sup>1</sup> is greatly to be welcomed. With three authors, two editors (and one contributor), and four translators however, this commentary presents the reviewer with special difficulties associated with multiple authorship. The commentary was originally published in Italian under the auspices of the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla by Mondadori between 1988 and 1993, and so has been available to scholars for some time. In 1996 it was decided to produce an English translation using the example of the English translation of the Mondadori *Odyssey* commentary. This has resulted in a two-volume work of which this is the first. The original work of nine volumes, one for each book of the *Histories*, has been condensed into two in consultation with the authors. Volume I covers books 1-4 of the *Histories*.

Asheri 'checked and revised his commentary on Book III, and virtually rewrote the General Introduction and his commentary on Book I; he and his partner Dwora Gilula have revised the translation of these two books'; Corcella 'revised and updated the translation of his commentary on Book IV' (p. vii). Lloyd, whose three-volume introduction to and commentary on book 2 is familiar to all students of Herodotus, prepared a new edition for this commentary. In addition, Maria Brosius was asked to provide an English translation of the Bisitun inscription, which appears as an appendix to book 3. There is a second appendix to this book in the form of a list of satrapies and peoples in Herodotus and in the Persian inscriptions. There are also forty-four maps and city or site plans arranged in a group of eleven general maps—for example, the empires of the Assyrians, Medes and the Persians, the Greek cities and Asia Minor, placed before the main text; the rest are scattered throughout the text where most appropriate. The book begins with a brief account of the life of David Asheri, the Italian-born Israeli Herodotean scholar, by Oswyn Murray, one of the editors of the whole work. By the time of his death in 2000, Asheri had revised the English version of books 1 and 3 and had finished the Italian versions of books 8 and 9. Thus Asheri will be the author of the commentary on four of the nine books of the *Histories* when the second volume is published. This will obviate some of the problems of multiple authorship and make for a large degree of evenness and uniformity.

As the overall editor of the project, Asheri provides an excellent General Introduction on Herodotus and his work. In this Asheri traces what we know of Herodotus' life, which is in fact very little, but he brings out the idea that even so Herodotus' 'presence can be felt throughout: to read his work is like hearing him talk' (p.1). There are six chapters in the General Introduction dealing with Herodotus' life and travels; the aim of his work; his intellectual development, including his sources and his methods; his spatial and chronological framework; his aetiology or theory of causation; and finally the varying reception of his work during the twenty-five centuries since he wrote it, from Thucydides, who made history synonymous with war

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<sup>1</sup> W. W. How and J. Wells (edd.), *A Commentary on Herodotus 1-2* (Oxford 1912).

and politics, to the twentieth century, when he has been rediscovered not only as the father of history but also as the father of ethnography as a result of his enquiries into the customs of other peoples. Asheri does not believe that Herodotus began the *Histories* with ‘any sort of unifying plan’ (p. 12), but rather that he integrated several pre-existing *logoi* into the whole work, leaving traces of this re-working: this is particularly obvious in transitions between the main narrative and the various digressions, such as the famous digression on Egypt, which takes up almost all of book 2 and which is introduced by a brief linking chapter about Cambyses and his expedition against Egypt. Asheri argues that having begun by writing separate monographs on various topics, ‘[e]ventually, however, Herodotus abandoned the conventional canons, and in two stages shifted towards a new genre to whose creation he himself contributed, that of “great historiography”’ (p. 13). Asheri believes that Herodotus’ natural curiosity was the starting point for all his travels and enquiries, and that this led to his fascination for ‘wonders’, either natural or man-made.

Asheri is also responsible for the introductions to books 1 and 3. Book 1, according to him, ‘foreshadows the entire work and, in a sense, constitutes its quintessence’ (p. 59), while book 3 is largely concerned with Persian history in the form of the stories of Cambyses’ life and death and Darius’ rise to power, and includes the catalogue of satrapies of the Persian empire. Asheri argues that book 1 contains ‘all the characteristic features of the work’s content and form, thought and style’ (p. 59); and the two main *logoi* concerning Croesus (1.6-94) and Cyrus (1.95-216), while being wonderful examples of Herodotus’ skill as a storyteller, also allow him to illustrate the ‘relativity of the human condition . . . through a cyclical tripartite conception of the history of individuals and states: rise, climax and decline’ (p. 66). For Asheri, there is in this book ‘a clear sense of unity . . . at the level of historical and philosophical thought’ (p. 68). As is the case with the introduction to each of books 1-4, Asheri ends this introduction with a summary of the material contained in the particular book. Asheri’s commentary on book 1 is directed at the fluent reader of Greek and does not, on the whole, deal with matters of grammar. Indeed the ancient historian may benefit most from this detailed yet wide-ranging commentary, with its discussions of the identity of Gyges (1.12), the three ‘factions’ of sixth-century Attica (1.59), Persian ethnography (1.131-40) and the technique of caprification as applied to palm trees (1.193), amongst other matters.

Lloyd too provides an introduction to the separate edition of his three-volume commentary on book 2—the famous digression on Egypt—which he has prepared for this volume. There are six chapters in his sixteen-page introduction, dealing respectively with interactions between Greeks and Egyptians for more than two centuries up to the mid-fifth century BC; the date of and places visited during Herodotus’ visit to Egypt; the matters of interest into which Herodotus enquired; his sources and techniques; Herodotus’ own intellectual and moral background; and an assessment of book 2 as a whole. The commentary gives more grammatical help than Asheri, and indeed more than in Lloyd’s earlier commentary; but the discussions of various topics such as the calendar (2.4) and a discussion of Herodotus’ account of the

Egyptian class structure (2.164-68) are perforce much abbreviated from Lloyd's stand-alone commentary. In some instances, such as the inaccuracy of Herodotus' description of the hippopotamus, the reader is referred to his earlier commentary. On the plus side, however, this commentary also contains diagrams of the Pyramids of Giza, the Pyramid of Khufu and the temple of Bubastis as well as maps of the Fayûm and the site of Naucratis.

Asheri provides the commentary on book 3. As in the case of book 1, he provides an excellent introduction to this book, which he divides into several topics: the reign of Cambyses and the Persian conquest of Egypt (3.1-38); the first Samian *logos* (3.39-60); the revolt of the Magi and Darius' accession to the throne (3.61-88); the Persian empire (3.89-117); and the first years of Darius' reign (3.118-60); and so on. He sees the story of the revolt of the Magi and Darius' accession to the throne as the pivot of the main narrative of book 3, since it continues the *logos* of Cambyses, but also acts as a link to the description of the satrapies and the tributes of the empire, reorganized by this new Great King. The story of Darius' accession brings out all the characteristics of Herodotus' storytelling art through which, according to Asheri, he 'seeks a moral and divine significance behind the individual events' (p. 385). The centrepiece of this book is the constitutional debate held by the conspirators with Otanes, Megabyzus and Darius championing democracy, oligarchy and monarchy respectively. There has been much discussion about the Persian context of this very Greek debate, and Asheri's position is that 'Herodotus knew very well that the empire had undergone a radical change after a severe crisis; he therefore tried to understand the phenomenon within the limits of his own frame of reference: the constitutional changes of the Greek *poleis*' (p. 473). He also suggests that the placing of the debate in a Persian context allows for the possibility that the crisis in the Persian empire 'might have provoked dissent and internal debates among the members of the restored high nobility' (p. 472).

Corcella is responsible for book 4. He provides a twelve-part introduction to this book, along with several maps. He suggests that book 4 has much in common with the Egyptian *logos* in book 2, and goes on to point out several points of structural similarity between the two: Herodotus' comments on the ages of the Egyptians and the Scythians as peoples, one purportedly the oldest and the other the youngest of the nations of the world, with analysis and examination of their local traditions; moreover, while the Egyptian *logos* allows Herodotus to explore the southernmost reaches of the known world, the Scythian *logos* allows a corresponding examination of the northernmost regions. Corcella argues that the 'chaotic' nature of the Scythian *logos* is the result of Herodotus' dividing up material from a unified treatise, and goes on to say that 'We can thus catch glimpses of Herodotus' activity before he composed the final version of his work, and perceive the sometimes difficult amalgamation of different stages' (p. 559). With Herodotus' account of Darius' expedition to Scythia, according to Corcella, 'we enter into legend' (p. 561). Corcella points out the various inconsistencies and even impossibilities in this portion of the *Histories*, and says that for more than 300 years scholars have with difficulty been trying to identify the



peoples and the rivers mentioned by Herodotus. Throughout his commentary and in particular in the case of Herodotus' description of Scythian art and culture, which has largely been confirmed by archaeological finds and Graeco-Scythian art of the fifth and fourth centuries, Corcella provides details of research undertaken since the publication of the commentary by How and Wells, some of it emanating from the former Soviet bloc and consequently not well known in the West yet. The book ends with an excursus on Libya and a brief description of the Persian campaign against Libya. It seems that Herodotus may have collected the information on the ethnography of Libya before he had decided on the final shape of the *Histories*, and that having promised a Libyan *logos* in book 2.161 he fulfils his promise here, with an announcement of a Persian expedition and then a long excursus describing the land and the people against whom the expedition is sent.

There are only two aspects of this volume that one does not welcome. The first is the high price, which will restrict it to university libraries. This in turn will slow down the dissemination of new material contained in this commentary. One can understand that such a volume, with perhaps a limited circulation, would indeed be expensive to produce, but nonetheless one can only hope that there would soon be a more affordable paperback version. Secondly, the volume lacks a general index, which is a serious shortcoming, given the wide-ranging nature of Herodotus' work, since the reader may find it difficult to pinpoint items in the commentary for future reference. An index to the volume would also have assisted in cross-referencing items in the individual commentaries, thereby enhancing the unity of the whole.

In every other respect this is a volume to be welcomed and appreciated as a major contribution to Herodotean studies. The General Introduction and the individual introductions may be the areas most accessible to undergraduate students, particularly since only Lloyd gives anything in the way of grammatical help to the reader whose Greek is less than fluent, but they are also the portions of the commentary which will help such students to appreciate the multiple facets of Herodotus' work; he is by turns storyteller, teacher, scientist, philosopher and, perhaps most obviously to the modern reader, investigative journalist. Indeed, the introductions may help to dispel the image of Herodotus as a simple-minded, credulous storyteller who, though he may be called the Father of History, nevertheless needed Thucydides to put the final guidelines in place for his new genre, thereby restricting it to the discussion of the male sphere of war and politics for the best part of two thousand years. In the twentieth-first century, however, the pendulum has swung in favour of the techniques and interests of Herodotus in the field of historiography, and we find that anthropology and ethnography are being used to investigate the past. Herodotus' acknowledgement of the place of women in the world, completely absent in Thucydides, finds favour not only with feminists. His capacity for examining the customs and beliefs of the enemy without dehumanizing him likewise recommends Herodotus to the modern mind. It is therefore to be hoped that the interval between this volume and its successor will not be too great, since Herodotus has too long been undervalued, and his achievement is only now being fully comprehended.

## REVIEWS

*Scholia* publishes solicited and unsolicited short reviews. Short reviews to be considered for publication should be directed to the Reviews Editor, *Scholia*.

Victoria Emma Pagán, *Rome and the Literature of Gardens*. Classical Inter/Faces. London: Duckworth, 2006. Pp. 160. ISBN 0-7156-3506-9. GBP12.99.

This sinewously written gathering in the coming idiom of contemporary ‘cultural criticism’ makes a point of knowing it is way too soon to figure out how it’s to be appraised, and sets about relishing the licence to explore its own performance. The final chapter deliberately puts the business of reviewing up for reappraisal (and, so far as I am concerned, pre-appraisal), alongside the full range of the changing and (inevitably [?]) asymptotic precipitates generated by shifts in the conceptualization of what counts in and as classical studies—I mean the whole business, of works of scholarship, stonking journalism, hagiographic mythopoeia, glitzy retro-kitsch, and the rest. Rather than work an idea or three through an assembled bulk of more-or-less given material on, from, and about antiquity to make a story bidding for authority through occluded persuasion conducted in matt rhetoric, the novel mode works a saltatory trajectory that departs from one or two expected case-studies to fashion a loose-weave progression through ever more paradedly associative disquisitions that lead us anyhow-somehow through a vertiginous barrage of improv slogans, theoretic *aperçus*, infolded excursuses, toward an ever more salient self-reflection on where the old *récits* and the new incisions have come from, and where meditation on their interaction might take us—indeed where they have taken us already once we follow through these muscular pages. No ‘rose garden’.

No reader of *RLG* should expect any horti-pictures, let alone -plans—once they’re through the compelling (reverse ekphrasis) cover-design, which makes us see through the assembled greats of classical art and site of our fantasy repertoire, via a simultaneously superimposed/recessive picture-frame, to the irresistible invitation of one of our favourite ‘garden room’ murals from Pompeii à la Duckworth, toward the third-level centrepiece view into the woodland of Ian Hamilton Finlay’s godforsaken *Little Sparta* at Dunsyre, South Lanarkshire; our path (and in-sight-path, get it) wends past/off-centres a dreadful colossal ‘garden centre’ gold-painted head of Apollo—(woefully) dubbed *Apollon Terroriste*—frontal, staring but unseeing from the undergrowth right through *us*. (IHF’ll do for the purpose and in fact Pagán does a great slide-lecture on the site, not included here; but he was so naff, only gardeny types could *really* get off on his ready-mades all in a row. Today, back-to-naturally, *McSparta* is a nonsensical ‘heritage’ fiasco, like all monu-mentalized ‘processual art’. *That happening* . . .) Inside, thirty-six short sections chop up five chapters over 146 non-illustrated pages; or rather, five chapters to be imagined as responses sparked by

provocative inscriptions fixed/placed at turns in Pagán's garden-book, in the form of dicta/oracles from IHF such as stud the perishing *Little Sparta* stuntscape:

1. Columella's garden-poem is the initiatory anchor in what we were expecting. (Pagán still writes it down as 'seemingly innocent *and rather monotonous* [my italics]', but that's the fault of her intentionally dull chunks of translation—expect no Latin here—and she shows just how precisely Columella's empire produce digs us into sensorized coordinates for culture through textual gardening.) And this temporary poet's partnership with Virgil's apt sidelining of the kitchen-garden beside the farmhouse nucleus of the largescale sprawl of agrobusiness serves us notice alongside Columella's readers that the garden gate controls the scene as founded on boundary maintenance, highlighting exclusion/expulsion and the transformative marking of entrance-ment for the experience within. 'The Garden of Empire' (pp. 19-36).

2. The second location is unexpected but still delivers straightforwardly on the promised determination on Roman focus, and the post-nostalgia-trip of bloody-shovelling through the sancta to clear our ground for the real deal of cosmopolis: we're off for a sunny promenade in the swanky urban 'central park/centrepark' pleasure-gardens currently replacing/re-placing (re-cycling?) the mass paupers' graveyard courtesy of multi-coloured *éminence* Maecenas in the form of his nobody discovery Horace's eighth *Satire*; off, that is, for some paradise politics, the transformative experience of 'a trancelike mode that abandons rational analysis and revels in the moment', as the poet imagines himself as Priapus-prick set to expel witchyregression from the culture park/text pleasance. A moonlight horrorshow that Pagán works into a loss of consciousness/sense of self from which the garden gnome awakes—to incarnate the *RLG* experience and quasi-theme: 'the garden's potential to rob me of my senses'. Already the flatophiliac city-bound excursion/incursion around Horace's midriff plunks us right into a choice midden where Pagán can foreknow and pre-claim: 'at least I know where I have over-interpreted, under-theorized, and hyper-rhetoricized' (p. 123). 'The Garden of Politics' (pp. 37-64).

3. From t/here, we go where we go not because we're bound to, but because it will give us cause to attend to wandering/wondering why = 'The Garden of Representation' (pp. 65-92), where the temptation to cart Messylyna round in a mucky wheelbarrow before having her weeded from history by a hatchetman slips Tacitus' grand internal censor, and there she is, the hot refuse paragraph that inlaudes itself in just to show it can't be k-k-k-ept out. A 'garden scene' con-position we weren't exactly expecting, and one that jumps us into Forché's lacerating poem on the Hiroshima *Garden Shukkei-en* through the anxiety of representation—the impossibility of ever living up to putting the past in place, the historians' curse of incompetence when it comes to living up to their commission to write real true live writing this side of rhetoric or past mimesis. The compost in composition: Classics.

4. The final chapter will pick up the tab, with Augustine scrumping pears in 'The Garden of Redemption' (pp. 93-120). The inter/Milan reverie of *this* conversion-conversation will explain all, save the bacon. You'll come to, with a start, once it dawns that *this* unexpected tour is out to entrance, bewitch, slip the censor, as Pagán

plays spell-binding fiction-writer transforming the autographic understanding that has been thoughtwalking us through her garden of litter. ‘We have come a long way from Columella’s poem’. Truly—long, long ways round. So (got it yet?) think some more about that, with Coetzee’s novel novel, *The Life and Times of Michael K*: why? (Yes, ask:) ‘In the end, I set Augustine and Coetzee side by side not for their similarities, but to throw into sharp relief the clearest of their differences’ (p. 112). Pagán trusts us, now the book is done, as book, what she hopes she can call ‘two simple questions: “How much can an author afford to spend on a garden? And how much does it cost the reader to ask?”’ (p. 119).

5. But there remains outstanding ‘The Invention of Gardens’ (pp. 121-46). / But this is a fifth wheel on the cart. This starts by re-cycling: ‘A logical place to start . . . With Cato’s treatise On Agriculture . . .’ (p. 121). Pagán reviews her audacities, the leaps and boundaries her associative patches of forced blooming have dreamed up along the tour: Coetzee *and Rome*? ‘Such comparisons run the risk of attenuating the force of my argument about ancient Roman literature’ (p. 123). You just wait: for immediate launch into Stoppard, in his *Arcadia* and (you guessed) in *The Invention of . . .* (*Slugs*. See, *I’m dreaming the dream revel*.) She’s getting us to the point, the point of *RLG* in/and this INTER/FACES series, away from where Classics formerly trod, wandered, *and fantasized*. I wish she hadn’t, I suppose, wheeled out the Housmans on us (‘Yes, but . . . *is* Stoppard any good at women . . .’ [cf. pp. 137-40] doesn’t get my hedge trimmed), but here she goes: ‘. . . before the dawn of a new era of scholars who take as their starting question not the “what” but the “why”, and to my mind, obviously, go a step further toward understanding the past, even if only by inches’ (p. 133).

So. 146 pages to the inch. Pagán shows us (how) to think gardens—to think with gardens, to think her way round the thought-garden (in her patch it’s ‘*down* the garden path’ where my idiom goes ‘*up*’, but I’m just jealous), and though traditionally no one but classicists can stand classicists when they do this and it shows, her fresh go at showing that once you start inventing a place in/for culture, everything that grows or goes or wants to get in or mustn’t, or whatever, comes with Rome/Literature spread all over it envisages the now *factual* world in which classicists are, like dinosaurs, a novelty act without a past. But what she’s doing, and knows she’s doing as well as can be expected, so far as can be told, so far, is telling the as-we-say-postmodern story of thinking in a miso-historical world, where the positivist carapace has gone, the ‘logic’ of the expected is now simply done for, and we can’t even look to turn the other face to any ‘public’. The process of working over a plot so that what shouldn’t be in can turn out to belong, and set off the whole effect, however the ‘happening’ came about, is what we have now, the best we can see; and if that means fudging and faking and gilding to waymark the path, then that’s got to feature, prominent as these duff *gnomai* epigraphs, as the fallible condition of possibility for the exegesis, through self-reflection. Ditto, if harder, for what got left by the wayside, unincorporated for no

good reason or swept away with the other waste. Where she won't let it be missed, Pagán dares to let go, plenty, and let intelligence . . . roam.<sup>1</sup>

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Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Pp. xxvi + 574, incl. 25 black-and-white plates, 4 black-and-white maps, and 3 tables. ISBN 978-1-4051-2153-8. GBP95.

We live in an age when compendious volumes exercise an irresistible hold over publishers with, for example, series entitled 'The Complete', 'The World of' and, as here, Blackwell's 'Companions to'. The publisher offers a mission statement for the series (p. ii), that it provides 'sophisticated and authoritative overviews', written 'in a clear, provocative and lively manner, designed for an international audience of scholars, students, and general readers'. The army is one of the best-documented aspects of Roman society, especially for the early centuries AD, from a rich combination of literary, epigraphic, papyrological, sculptural, and archaeological evidence. Thus it is an easy topic to constitute a well-rounded survey in the 'Companions' series. The present volume, under the general editorship of Dr. Paul Erdkamp, has brought together twenty-nine contributors, based in Australia, Austria, Britain, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Republic of South Africa, and the United States. Each contributor was allocated a little under twenty pages, with a bibliography, and (in all but a few cases) has provided suggestions for further reading. The chapters cover a time-period of some 1300 years, from the early republic to the late empire and beyond, down to the reign of the emperor Justinian.

The contributions here are certainly not lightweight or superficial; indeed the non-academic reader could find them rather overpowering. Some are presumably translated into English, yet I have noticed only a few infelicities in the resulting phraseology, and none likely to mislead seriously. Several individual chapters provide all-embracing treatments of the army's institutions, covering upwards of two centuries each (especially Louis Rawlings, chapter 3, 'Army and Battle During the Conquest of Italy [350-264 BC]' [pp. 45-62]; Dexter Hoyos, chapter 4, 'The Age of Overseas Expansion [264-146 BC]' [pp. 63-79]; Pierre Cagniat, chapter 5, 'The Late Republican Army [146-30 BC]' [pp. 80-95]; Kate Gilliver, chapter 11, 'The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army' [pp. 183-200]; Karl Strobel, chapter 15, 'Strategy and Army Structure Between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great' [pp. 267-85]; and Michael Whitby, chapter 28, 'Army and Society in the Late Roman World: A Context for Decline?' [pp. 515-31]). The richly researched chapter on religion (Oliver Stoll, chapter 25, 'The Religions of the Armies' [pp. 451-76]) cites

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<sup>1</sup> And she told *me* already, *à propos* writing the critical (beastly) review: 'The critic cannot simply rave'. Aaah . . .

an impressive variety of primary sources, always to the reader's advantage. The interrelationships between military and civilian populations in the frontier provinces are usefully highlighted (Gabriele Wesch-Klein, chapter 24, 'Recruits and Veterans' [pp. 435-50]). There is a valuable contribution on the army's paperwork (Sara Elise Phang, chapter 16, 'Military Documents, Languages, and Literacy' [pp. 286-305]). Other subjects include a stimulating piece on the fleets (D. B. Saddington, chapter 12, 'Classes. The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Fleets' [pp. 201-17]), and discussions of the *limites* in both east (Everett L. Wheeler, chapter 14, 'The Army and the *Limes* in the East' [pp. 235-66]) and west (James Thorne, chapter 13, 'Battle, Tactics, and the Emergence of the *Limites* in the West' [pp. 218-34]). The latter offers an impressionistic assessment, hardly dealing in detail with any of the *limites*, while Wheeler conversely provides a valuably detailed citation of historical events and threats, and how the army was deployed to meet them. It is hard to discover, however, anywhere in the volume the army's multi-ethnic composition, its size at various junctures, or how it was distributed in the frontier provinces. We have to beware of seeing the army as perpetually in a state of high readiness, when clearly there were, as in all armies down to modern times, peaks and troughs, the latter most obviously in long periods of peace, despite what we may read in the literary sources about training regimes. In the early centuries, the Romans fought for hearth and home. Later, they proved keener to fight for cohort and century. The eponymous Private Ryan in the Steven Spielberg film (1998), when confronted with the news of the deaths of his siblings, responds that his only true brothers now are his immediate comrades in arms.

There is a stated emphasis on the socio-economic and political impact of the army on Rome, Italy, and the provinces. Those hoping for an adequate coverage of archaeological material could be disappointed. Little is said, except by Norbert Hanel in the welcome chapter 22, 'Military Camps, *Canabae*, and *Vici*. The Archaeological Evidence' (pp. 395-416), about the excavated remains of fortresses, forts, and camps. The dust jacket has a splendid photograph of the parade-mask from Kalkriese near Osnabrück, scene of some part of the Varian Disaster of AD 9 (the latter is not alluded to in the caption); the reader would never know from the text of the present volume that the battlefield had been revealed by archaeology, or indeed that it had been located at all. There is a strange absence of illustrations and maps, which are restricted to a few chapters. Some photographs are fuzzy and one is squint, surely unnecessarily. Above all, the Roman army is a visually exciting topic, where (for example) uniformed individuals are depicted on sculptured tombstones; the burgeoning study of military equipment, drawing on surviving weaponry, is likewise a helpful source of illustrative matter, though not here. The commissariat aimed to provide almost all of the soldiers' needs; the supply chain extended over very long distances. In wartime, elaborate procedures were put in place (see Peter Kehne, chapter 18, 'War- and Peacetime Logistics: Supplying Imperial Armies in East and West' [pp. 328-38]). Fitzroy Maclean observed the Russian army entering Belgrade in October 1944, supported by lorries carrying only petrol and ammunition, but nothing to feed the individual soldier, at a time when it was popularly believed that dentists' chairs and

filing cabinets were brought ashore in Normandy in the immediate aftermath of the landings there.<sup>1</sup>

The reviewer noticed few obvious factual errors in the text, though two well-known historical events are curiously misdated (pp. 209f.) and non-existent legions make an appearance (p. 352). *Pagi*, which are geographical sub-units, are imagined as cultic organizations (p. 468). *Aedes* is used correctly (p. 405) for the regimental shrine in a fort or fortress rather than the long outmoded *sacellum* (p. 187). ‘Albinum’, wrongly placed ‘north of Rome’ (p. 263) is surely the same as ‘castra Albana’ (p. 398), the modern Albano, lying to the city’s southeast. Presumably ‘militia’ (p. 64) should be ‘*militia*’. Galba’s only legion in Spain at the start of his attempt at power in AD 68 (p. 352) was VI *Victrix* rather than VII *Hispana* (soon *Gemina*), which was raised subsequently in his province and accompanied him to Italy. M. Valerius Maximus (pp. 331f.) should be M. Valerius Maximianus. It is simplistic to describe Sejanus (p. 352) as Tiberius’ second-in-command; his was not a formal position. There is some sloppiness in the index, but reference to the main text will show what was intended; on purely military matters, *legio XIV Gemina* and *legio XIV Martia Victrix* are listed as separate units, and a non-existent XX *Gemina* appears.

Inevitably in the case of such a vibrant topic, new books continue to roll off the presses, among them *The Army in the Roman Revolution*, *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 BC-AD 476)*, and the differently focused *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, of which part of volume 1 and the whole of volume 2 are devoted to the Roman period.<sup>2</sup> A new journal, specifically devoted to military affairs in antiquity (*Revue des Études Militaires Anciennes*) is gaining momentum. There is a strong feeling in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, often absent in similar overarching treatments, of a constantly evolving organization, and not one which remained static for long periods to suddenly re-emerge in a different form. Moreover, the late empire is not treated as some disappointing or errant episode in the long history of an otherwise glorious institution. The chapters on the late period are eye-openers, providing a deeper understanding for those who, like the reviewer, focus on earlier centuries. We must congratulate the editor on bringing the whole project to fruition in what appears a relatively short time-span. It is particularly valuable in providing up to date accounts of the army’s manifold aspects, and the bibliographies to support them.

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<sup>1</sup> Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London 1949) 505.

<sup>2</sup> A. Keaveney, *The Army in the Roman Revolution* (London 2007); L. de Blois and E. Lo Cascio (edd.), *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 BC-AD 476): Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects* (Leiden 2007); P. Sabin *et al.* (edd.), *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* 1-2 (Cambridge 2007).

Hanna Boeke, *The Value of Victory in Pindar's Odes: Gnomai, Cosmology, and the Role of the Poet*. Mnemosyne Supplementa: Monographs on Greek and Roman Language and Literature 285. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007. Pp. x + 230. ISBN 978-90-04-15848-1. EUR89.

In 1994 Hanna Boeke left the insurance industry after fifteen years to study for an MA in Classics. Pindarists should welcome her change of career since one of its products is this helpful book, which will be of value to scholars and students alike. The volume contains six chapters: chapter 1, 'Introduction' (pp. 1-10); chapter 2, '*Gnomai* as a Source of Cosmological Reflection' (pp. 11-28); chapter 3, 'The Gnostic Expression of Cosmology in Pindar' (pp. 29-102); chapter 4, 'Cosmology in Action: An Analysis of Selected Odes' (pp. 103-60); chapter 5, 'The Poet as Mediator of Cosmology' (pp. 161-94); and chapter 6, 'Conclusion' (pp. 195-98). As stated in the preface (p. ix), Boeke's aim is 'to investigate the world view revealed in the *gnomai* [of Pindar's poetry] and to determine how it influenced the way in which individual victors were celebrated'. 'World view' in that quotation is a synonym for the 'cosmology' of the book's title; Boeke later admits (p. 30 n. 7)—a discussion better put in the introduction—that her only reason for preferring the latter term over the former (and over the German *Weltanschauung*) is that it is better supplied with derivatives.

Chapter 2 sets out the idea that 'the *gnomai* of antiquity reflect the views of ancient communities on the nature of their world and how this world works with regard to both human and extra-human realities' (p. 13), before discussing some ancient remarks on the value of *gnomai*. While not an addition to knowledge, this nevertheless contains a useful collection of information. In the much longer chapter 3, Boeke collects and sorts Pindaric *gnomai* under the two headings 'The Elemental Forces: Fate, God, Nature, and Man' (p. 32) and 'Man in Society' (p. 72)—under which cluster various subheadings, without a numbering system to help readers find their way around—with a view to setting out the cosmology of his poems. Again, this is a helpful arrangement of various well-known Pindaric themes rather than a novel analysis. Chapter 4 draws on the preceding material 'to investigate how Pindar applies cosmological ideas for encomiastic purposes' (p. 103) in particular poems: after a brief discussion of *Pyth.* 7 and *Nem.* 2, Boeke moves onto analyses of *Ol.* 12, *Isthm.* 4, and *Ol.* 13. To give one example, in her discussion of *Ol.* 12, Boeke intelligently analyzes how Pindar makes use of the topic of the victor's family in a way which 'displays sensitivity to the circumstances of a particular *laudandus* and insight into the realities of his position' (p. 106). These carefully and clearly argued close readings form the best and most original part of the book. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the role and function of the Pindaric narrator, which again contains much to stimulate thought.

Boeke's ability to shed new light on hoary problems can be seen early on in her discussion of Elroy Bundy's contribution to Pindaric studies.<sup>1</sup> She points out (p. 5) that, while Bundy declared that the sole purpose of *Isthm.* 1 was 'the glorification . . .

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<sup>1</sup> E. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley 1962).



of Herodotos of Thebes', he qualified that statement with the words 'within the considerations of ethical, religious, social, and literary propriety'. As a result, she argues, Bundy's own text indicates that 'praise for an individual has to stay within certain boundaries which are not determined by rhetorical convention but by the practices and norms of society'. In the light of this, the opposition often drawn between Bundy's formalism and more recent approaches, which stress the importance of the historical context of a particular ode, breaks down somewhat. If Bundy had developed his work on Pindar after his *Studia Pindarica* of 1962, he might have gone on to explore the implications of that vital qualification.

Boeke writes well and is always easy to follow. The clarity of her exposition is all the more remarkable given her exposure to the corporate and academic worlds, both notorious for the use of jargon. She patiently and politely corrects a scholar whose linguistic (English, not Greek) errors lead her into absurdity (p. 162 n. 3). She is up to date not only with Pindaric scholarship (citing, for instance, the recent volume edited by Hornblower and Morgan,<sup>2</sup> even though it appeared in the same year as her own), but also with the latest work on other authors bearing on her argument (e.g., p. 16 n. 24 on Isocrates, p. 19 n. 27 on the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, and pp. 38f. n. 30 on the authenticity of a line in Hesiod). The book is accurately printed, well-bound and attractively produced—a credit to author and publisher.<sup>3</sup>

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Martin M. Winkler (ed.), *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Pp. x + 267, incl. 23 back-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-1405-1318-10. USD29.95.

Martin Winkler (who has already produced *Gladiator: Film and History* in 2004) edits here a series of essays about a film which, the back cover proclaims, 'has

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<sup>2</sup> S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (edd.), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons, and Festivals: From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Some points of detail: 'breathe at ground level' is an odd translation of Pind. *Pyth.* 11.30 (p. 79 n. 129); H. G. Evelyn-White (ed. and tr.), *Hesiod; the Homeric Hymns; [Epic Cycle;] and Homerica* (Cambridge, Mass.) was originally published in 1914, not 1959 (p. 201); for the convenience of readers, articles by Erbse, Lloyd-Jones, and Woodbury should have been cited from those scholars' *Collected Papers* as well as from their original place of publication (pp. 201, 204, 208). Barrett's papers too have now been gathered together in W. S. Barrett (M. L. West [ed.]), *Greek Lyric, Tragedy, and Textual Criticism: Collected Papers* (Oxford 2007), though that volume was presumably not available to Boeke; if it had been, she would have cited Barrett (West [ed.]) 162-67 in support of her (correct) decision to take *Isthm.* 3 and 4 as two separate poems (p. 113 n. 36), against their consolidation by, e.g., B. Snell (ed.), *Pindari Carmina Cum Fragmentis* (Leipzig 1953) 170-74.

enjoyed iconic status in cinema history and strongly influenced modern perspectives on ancient Rome'. A recommendation by Paul Murgatroyd states: 'Nobody teaching a Classics film course and no Classics library can afford to be without this book. It is a major contribution to our understanding of one of the most popular and important films on the ancient world'. And *Spartacus*—the film—does indeed have iconic status, albeit only at the sword and sandal level. The story of its making does indeed offer interesting insights into Hollywood politics. These are dealt with in two contributions by Duncan L. Cooper (chapter 1, 'Who Killed the Legend of Spartacus? Production, Censorship, and Reconstruction of Stanley Kubrick's Epic Film' [pp. 14-55]; chapter 2, 'Dalton Trumbo vs. Stanley Kubrick: The Historical Meaning of Spartacus' [pp. 56-64]), which deal with Trumbo, the blacklist, and so on. Some of the other contributions stick close to the topic of the film (Allen M. Ward, chapter 4, '*Spartacus*: History and Histrionics' [pp. 87-111]; chapter 6, 'Training + Tactics = Roman Battle Success' [pp. 124-27], with diagrams of Roman battle tactics from the souvenir programme; C. A. Robinson Jr, chapter 5, 'Spartacus, Rebel Against Rome' [pp. 112-23], from the same source). Others explain the ancient context for ideas such as slavery and sacrifice (W. Jeffrey Tatum, chapter 7, 'The Character of Marcus Licinius Crassus' [pp. 128-43]; Michael Parenti, chapter 8, 'Roman Slavery and the Class Divide: Why Spartacus Lost' [pp. 144-53]; Francisco Javier Tovar Paz, chapter 10, '*Spartacus* and the Stoic Ideal of Death' [pp. 189-97]. Another group looks at connotations for contemporary America (Frederick Ahl, chapter 3, '*Spartacus*, *Exodus*, and Dalton Trumbo: Managing Ideologies of War' [pp. 65-86]; Martin M. Winkler, chapter 9, 'The Holy Cause of Freedom: American Ideals in *Spartacus*' [pp. 154-88]). The editor wraps up the series with what amounts to a plea for the film to be taken seriously, with chapter 11, "'Culturally significant and not just simple entertainment": History and the Marketing of *Spartacus*' [pp. 198-232]. But this is not quite the wrap-up because, in the final fifteen pages of text of the volume, are reprinted in English the principal ancient sources (Plutarch, Appian, Florus, Livy and others) for those who believe the film has anything in particular to do with the historical record.

And here's the rub. A film, which the reading of this book would demonstrate to have but a tenuous connection with what might actually have happened, is used as a seductively attractive *entrée* into the classical world. The unstated implication is that no longer do students need to plough through all that Tacitus or Plutarch (let alone in Latin). Just sit in a darkened room and enjoy the blood, battles, and human sympathy, then read essays of the nature and reach of those presented in Winkler's book. Is the study of classics films a suitable academic pursuit? Yes, for students who have the background and breadth of knowledge gained through reading the ancient authors to balance what they depict—project—against the evidence. Is the study of the Hollywood film industry equally suitable? Yes, for students studying popular culture or the economics of capitalism, and well-read in these areas. But books such as *Spartacus: Film and History* seem to suggest to students that studying such films is a key offering entry to knowledge of the classical world—whereas surely no serious

classicist would see such films as anything other than a light and inevitably distorted diversion. Or would they? The reception of the classical past (really a new name for the study of the classical tradition) is growing in interest and offers, especially to the linguistically challenged, a different way of studying the past—that is, *via* popular culture.<sup>1</sup> But this decidedly should not mean that reception studies necessarily offer insights into original meanings or world-views. So by all means let us study the reception of *Spartacus* in the 1960s, but let us be clear what such an approach can and cannot deliver.

Instead, to view the slave revolt through the eyes of Plutarch and his fellow authors offers us something about the historical past. To do so through *Spartacus* inevitably misleads, because the requirements of filmmaking and the conventions used by the medium are not, and are not intended to be, historically truthful. So why use them in classics courses? Because, as Ullman wrote in 1915 (Winkler quotes him, p. 202), '[m]oving pictures are an excellent means of showing that the Classics are not dead'.<sup>2</sup> Nearly a century later, with the need to keep up enrolments in classics courses (naturally without Latin—who needs Latin?) we may assume that the same desire motivates teachers, and this has led to a profusion of supporting books.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we scarcely need 'straight' history any more, since we have *The Hollywood History of the World*.<sup>4</sup> Given the popularity of viewing reality through television, it is but a short chariot ride to view the classical world through films, and to discuss the context with solemnity and critical *apparatus*. Proof that it is the tail that is wagging the dog is seen in the plethora of books and television pieces spun off—the term is surely appropriate—from the popularity of *Gladiator*. Distortion continues, with *300* (Leonidas and Thermopylae) derived very closely from a comic, not from ancient accounts; the gap with the real past may be measured here in the clothing, but we may confidently look forward to learned disquisitions on those dinky black leather jockstraps which all the Spartans therein wear.

So for this reviewer books such as *Spartacus: Film and History* may offer interesting insights into the period in which the film(s) treated were made, because we can all accept that cinema is sometimes a mirror of society and its preoccupations and prejudices. But the notion that 'historical' films offer more than a diversion, indeed a serious window on the past, should be resisted in favour of the documents, whether these are texts, surviving buildings, or material retrieved through archaeology. As a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. Martindale and R. F. Thomas (edd.), *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (Oxford 2006).

<sup>2</sup> B. L. Ullman, editor's letter, *Classical Weekly* 8.26 (8 May 1915) 201f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Wyke, *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History* (London 1997); M. M. Winkler (ed.), *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema* (Oxford 2001); J. Solomon, *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New Haven 2001); S. R. Joshel *et al.* (edd.), *Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture* (Baltimore 2001); M. S. Cyrino (ed.), *Big Screen Rome* (Oxford 2005).

<sup>4</sup> George Macdonald Fraser, *The Hollywood History of the World: From One Million Years BC to Apocalypse Now* (London 1988).

study of a particular age and country in cinema history, the book does indeed make a contribution; but educators and their students who think such films are worthy of study as keys to the ancient world should be locked in a room without a television or DVD player and be given the texts of Plutarch, Livy and the others to read in the original Greek and Latin.

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S. Douglas Olson (ed.), *Broken Laughter: Select Fragments of Greek Comedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xviii + 476. ISBN 978-0-19-928785-7. USD175.

The fragments of the Greek comic poets are numerous but largely underexplored. Only Eubulus and Alexis have been treated to a traditional full-scale commentary, while Eupolis has been covered in a monograph by Storey.<sup>1</sup> Access to other comic authors must be gained through the formidable and, for the beginner, largely inaccessible edition of Kassel and Austin.<sup>2</sup> This is where Olson's work is a welcome and valuable arrival. As he states (p. 1), '[t]he corpus is . . . vast and difficult, and this book is intended to make some of the most interesting and important portions of it accessible to a non-specialist audience'. The book consists of three sections: a wide-ranging introduction on ancient comedy; text and commentary of 223 fragments in ten 'chapters' (A-J); and several appendices containing translations, biographical notes, and epigraphic evidence for the comic poets.

The introduction covers many prominent questions related to comedy. On the origins of Attic comedy (pp. 2-6), Olson has packed a lot of material into a short space, and the discussion loses clarity as a result. The obscure and confused nature of our ancient sources, of course, does not help matters. Perhaps mention of Susarion, or at least a cross-reference to the discussion (pp. 328f.) of Sus. fr. 1 [= Olson I1, p. 321], could have been included here. On fifth-century Sicilian comedy (pp. 6-12), Olson adopts what is largely a minority position: 'no positive evidence exists to suggest that Sicilian comedy . . . directly influenced any Attic author before the time of Plato and Xenophon' (p. 11). This puts aside the statement found in Arist. *Poet.* 1449b5-9 that Sicilian comedy supposedly influenced Crates. But Olson had earlier called the reliability of this passage into question during his discussion of origins (p. 2). While this reader is not fully converted to Olson's position, Olson makes a reasonable case which he follows up in his commentary when discussing individual fragments, arguing for broader thematic similarities rather than the direct influence of

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<sup>1</sup> R. L. Hunter (ed.), *Eubulus: The Fragments* (Cambridge 1983); W. G. Arnott (ed.), *Alexis: The Fragments* (Cambridge 1998); I. C. Storey, *Eupolis: Poet of Old Comedy* (Oxford 2003).

<sup>2</sup> R. Kassel and C. Austin (edd.), *Poetae Comici Graeci* 1-8 (Berlin 1983-2001).

Epicharmus over fifth-century Attic dramatists (including tragedy). Perhaps Olson could have included similar discussion on Epicharm. fr. 32 [A13], which many scholars believe influenced the depiction of the parasite in Eup. fr. 172 [B45].

On fourth-century Sicilian comedy before Rhinthon (pp. 13-16), Olson makes the interesting suggestion, based upon the evidence of the wrongly named ‘phlyax’ vases and the excessive number of known play titles by some Middle Comedy poets, that this was entirely imported from Attica (p. 15). On fifth-century Attic comedy (pp. 16-22), Olson endorses the view that five comic poets competed at the City Dionysia and Lenaia during the Peloponnesian War years rather than a reduction to three (p. 19). One minor observation here: in support of this view, Olson also cites Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 56.3, which treats five poets as the traditional number. However, he then weakens this evidence with the qualification: ‘although by this time the *choregia* had been abolished’. If we accept Rhodes’ dating of this work to the 330s,<sup>3</sup> then the *choregia* was still in full swing—it had only been reformed along tribal lines for comedy—and Olson unnecessarily diminishes his own argument.

In the section on Old, Middle and New Comedy (pp. 22-26), Olson shows up the deficiencies of such classifications, noting not only that the Alexandrian scholars seem to have left periods of classificatory limbo in the years between ‘Old’ and ‘Middle’ and between ‘Middle’ and ‘New’ Comedy, but also that they did not bother to classify contemporary comic poets of the late third and second centuries at all. Lastly in the introductory sections (pp. 26-32), Olson gives a useful overview of the history of Hellenistic scholarship on comedy, and notes that many of our sources, especially those from the Roman and Byzantine eras, often preserve the fragments only at second and third hand, having lifted them from excerptors’ compilations made during the Hellenistic period.

Olson’s text and commentary of the various fragments (pp. 33-377) are the meat of this book. Faced with the difficulty of how to arrange the material, Olson appears to have made the right choice. There are separate sections on Sicilian comedy, Old Comedy, and Middle and New Comedy (A-C, pp. 33-150), while the remaining sections (D-J, pp. 151-377) are grouped thematically, irrespective of chronology, covering the reception of other poetry, politics, philosophy, food and dining, wine and symposia, women and aspects of daily life. The sections on Old Comedy and Middle and New Comedy are further divided up thematically: Old Comedy fragments (section B, ‘Attic “Old Comedy”’, pp. 69-115) according to the structural elements of comedy (e.g., prologue, *parodos*, *agon*, *parabasis*), and Middle and New Comedy fragments (section C, ““Middle” and “New” Comedy’, pp. 116-150) according to stock characters (e.g., cooks, slaves, parasites). The remaining sections (D-J), which blend these various chronological eras, nicely emphasize the thematic continuities within Attic comedy.

A particularly welcome aspect of Olson’s book are the fragments of Epicharmus, with Sophron and Eupolis (section A, ‘Doric Comedy’, pp. 33-68) and

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<sup>3</sup> P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaeion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 9 n. 39.

the lion's share of fragments from Cratinus' *The Wineflask* (B1-B12, pp. 69-71, 80-88) and *Dionysalexandros* (B13-B20, pp. 71-73, 88-92), two plays of which we have a basic idea about the plot despite their fragmentary nature, and which have never been treated to a commentary before. In fact, the great majority of fragments in this book have not been discussed before, and Olson does a fine job in explaining them. The style of commentary is stripped down and avoids the cumbersome piling up of details typical of such works. For a work aimed at the non-specialist, this is the right approach. A comparison, for example, with Arnott on Alex. fr. 16 [G6] shows four pages in Arnott compared with just over one page in Olson (pp. 402f.). Instead, Olson often refers to other works, usually his own Aristophanic commentaries, if the reader wishes to pursue a matter further.

Olson's text for the most part follows that of Kassel-Austin, and provides a minimal critical *apparatus*. Where his text differs from K-A, it is usually for the better: for example, Cratinus fr. 342 [B41] (pp. 77, 110f.), where he removes the full-stop; Antiphanes fr. 189.5 [D6] (pp. 154f., 172-75), where his adoption of Coulon's text makes better sense; Alex. fr. 259.2 [G15] (pp. 261f., 285f.), where  $\tau\epsilon$  makes far better sense than  $\gamma\epsilon$ ; while at Eup. fr. 384.2 [E4] (pp. 188, 198f.), the case for Van Herwerden's  $\acute{\omicron}\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$  instead of  $\acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$  seems finely balanced either way.

A couple of minor observations on the commentary. At Cratinus fr. 360.3 [B37] (pp. 77, 108), could the  $\acute{\iota}\kappa\rho\iota\alpha$  not simply refer to the wooden seating in the fifth-century theatre of Dionysos? Hence the noise caused by spectators banging their heels against the bleachers (see Poll. 2.197, 4.122  $\pi\tau\epsilon\rho\nu\kappa\omicron\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ ). At Pl. Com. fr. 202 [E9] (pp. 189, 204), it is not at all clear that the politicians are being implicitly compared to vipers in the first two lines. What Plato Comicus means by  $\pi\omicron\nu\eta\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  in line 2 remains unclear. At Pherecr. fr. 76 [H10] (pp. 295, 309), we may have a *para prosdokian* joke. At line 4, one might have expected speaker B to make a water to wine ratio of 2:1 (already stronger than the more typical 3:1 or 4:1 ratios cited by Olson in his commentary). Instead, Pherecrates thwarts our expectations by substituting 'four' in place of 'one' at the end of the line (that is, a ratio of 1:2).

Rounding out the book are four appendices. Appendix 1 (pp. 379-91) deals with epigraphic evidence for victorious comic poets at the City Dionysia and Lenaia festivals (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.2325). This information is usually hidden away from the non-specialist, yet provides some of the best hard evidence available for the comic poets, making its presence here all the more valuable. Appendix 2 (pp. 392-401) provides a *Conspectus Numerorum* of all the passages in this book, one in chronological order and the other in alphabetical order. For a book in which the point of entry for many readers will be through the conspectus, it would have been better placed near the end. Here the utility of the chronological list is also doubtful. There are potential pitfalls in that it is arranged by poet rather than individual fragment. Many fragments of later authors, however, often precede chronologically those of older playwrights: for example, Ar. fr. 233 [D2] (p. 393) was produced earlier than Cratinus fr. 193-211 [B1-B12] (pp. 392f.). The list also puts Phrynichus *after* Aristophanes and Eupolis, although Phrynichus had certainly appeared on the comic scene before them (see *Suda*

phi 763), and had possibly won his first victory at the Lenaia before either made their dramatic debut (see the victors' list, p. 387). Appendix 3 (pp. 402-18) provides brief biographical information on all the poets within this book. This is a very useful feature, which far surpasses the often scanty biographical information to be gleaned from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.<sup>4</sup> Appendix 4 (pp. 419-66) contains translations of all the fragments. This was only added as an afterthought at the insistence of the press, and its presence here is welcome. The translations are unpretentious and stick reasonably closely to the Greek. When we wish Olson had said more on language in his commentary, we can usually gather this information from his translation. A Greek index and a general index close the book.

This book will be well placed in the library of anyone who is interested in Greek comedy. It has sufficient depth to interest specialist and non-specialist alike. It also brings benefits to the classroom, where students of comedy will no longer be restricted to reading Aristophanes and Menander now that they have such a guide at their disposal. The book is attractively produced and priced in line with similar works by Oxford University Press.<sup>5</sup>

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Art L. Spisak, *Martial: A Social Guide*. London: Duckworth, 2007. Pp. vi + 151. ISBN 978-0-7156-3620-6. GBP14.99.

'Professor uses new book to change image of popular Roman poet'—thus the caption of an online feature, published by the Office of University Communications of Missouri State, advertizing the book under review here.<sup>1</sup> Spisak's main thesis is neatly summarized on the book's back cover: he argues that 'Martial with his poetry played a serious and vital role in his community as a social guide or conscience' (whence the title); '[t]he book's unique approach to Martial's poetry places him within the reactionary tradition of Indo-European blame/praise poetry'. Spisak maintains 'that Martial certainly entertained with his poems, but that they, *in the main*, were also meant to instruct at a personal level' (p. 3; my italics; cf. pp. 97-99).

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<sup>4</sup> S. Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (edd.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Errors are relatively few and do not cause major difficulty for the reader. Those I noticed are as follows: 'thrity' should read 'thirty' (p. 22); 'Eub. fr. 172' should read 'Eup. fr. 172' (p. 55: A13, bottom of first paragraph)); breathing misprint for 'Ἡράκλεις' (p. 68: A22 line 1); ξενίζουσ(α) printed twice (p. 128: C2 lines 12f.); English text in Greek font (p. 179: D11 line 2); 'poltical' for 'political' (p. 205: E10-E14); 'after promising two' should read 'three' (p. 210: E15 line 2); '0' in the Greek text (p. 321: I2 line 1).

<sup>1</sup> The URL is <http://www.news.missouristate.edu/releases/37930.htm> (accessed 26 April 2007).

One of Spisak's goals seems to be to act as a sort of mediator between two interpretive extremes, that is, between those who have 'sighted [Martial's epigrams] as poetry not worth much consideration' because of 'the particular literary and social milieu that has influenced and shaped its form, content, and tone', and, on the other hand, those whose approaches reveal themselves as subject to 'over-interpretation of the text, for example, [by] attributing a politically subversive subtext to it' (p. 1). I cannot help but wonder who among the enlightened Martialists would seriously subscribe to either of these extremes? Be that as it may, in the introduction (pp. 1-13) Spisak briefly outlines what he considers to be the chief literary background against which Martial, the 'social guide', is to be read: the iambic tradition, Archilochus and, above all, Catullus, Martial's chief 'model' (p. 10). Spisak's favorite term is *vers de société* (e.g., pp. 8f., 11f., 35, 97, 104 n. 34), by which he characterizes what in reality is a much more diverse and complex genre. Hipponax and Simonides, for example, are hardly deemed worth mentioning (pp. 6, 18, 56); Hellenistic poetry (above all Callimachus but also Herondas) does not seem to exist; Horace's *Epodes* appear just implicitly through a quotation from Mankin's 1995 commentary (p. 6),<sup>2</sup> his *Epistles* and *Satires* are mentioned briefly (p. 20).<sup>3</sup> In short, the 'tradition' established here, namely Archilochus—Catullus—Martial is extremely problematic, if not simplistic. This impression, I must say, is confirmed in the actual first chapter, 'Invective' (pp. 15-33), where Spisak elaborates a little further on the 'Greek iambics', 'Roman invective', and finally 'Martial's invective'. Invective, abuse, and obscenity are said to be mere correctives: the poet 'claims the right or privilege to target examples of degenerative behaviour because he does it with no malicious intent, but rather to entertainingly *instruct* and *benefit* his social community' (p. 32, my italics); the 'effect . . . of Martial's obscene jokes was to open up the psyche for refreshment, renewal, and rebirth . . . and thereby maintain the community's health and productivity' (p. 33). Bakhtin (who is briefly touched upon at pp. 30, 112 n. 78) would be pleased, but this approach cannot possibly account for the diversity of Martial's verse.

Chapter 2, 'Amicitia' (pp. 35-51), after a brief review of ancient ethical definitions and discussions of various types of friendship (Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca), considers a handful of epigrams (2.55, 4.40, 5.18, 7.86, 10.58) in order to demonstrate that 'the line between altruistic and utilitarian friendship in Martial's poems is not at all distinct' (p. 42). The focus is on (the protocol of) reciprocity (pp. 35, 38, 40, 48, and so on). Spisak draws mostly from the well-known studies by Konstan, Saller, and White, spiced up a bit by 'social exchange theory' (above all, Blau),<sup>4</sup> to explain that

<sup>2</sup> D. Mankin (ed.), *Horace: Epodes* (Cambridge 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Spisak is not aware of more recent work in this area such as A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi* (Oxford 1999); esp. B. Acosta-Hughes, *Polyeideia: The Iambi of Callimachus and the Archaic Iambic Tradition* (Berkeley 2002) esp. 205-64; L. C. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford 2003) 4-19.

<sup>4</sup> D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge 1997); R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge 1982), *et al.*; P. White, 'Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry', *JRS* 68 (1978) 74-92; 'Positions for Poets in Early Imperial Rome', in



*amicitia* functions as a non-contractual bond between individuals, which holds the community together. Chapter 3, 'Poems of Praise' (pp. 53-71), continues in the same vein: it is argued that Martial's praise poems 'catalogued social views and practices but also in part had the effect of strengthening norms for his readership' (p. 53). The poet keeps guiding his fellow citizens (chapter 2), with praise being the counterpart of blame (chapter 1). From a social point of view, Spisak compares Martial's poems of praise to those of Pindar, his alleged 'model' (pp. 56-61); I have expressed my qualms about this anachronistic simplification elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> so this need not be repeated here. The imperial, or Domitianic, poems are seen in a light similar to the non-imperial epigrams of praise: they are 'Martial's currency in the process of exchange', and the poet 'plays the role of power broker between the emperor and the social community' (p. 61, cf. pp. 68-71). It comes as no surprise that Spisak argues vigorously against any subtext readings of Martial, above all subversive ones, because any such ambiguity or openness 'simply does not accord with what was normally the method and purpose of . . . the iambic tradition' (p. 70). The fact that Spisak focuses so much on reading these epigrams as performing speech acts rather than representing them sounds pretty dogmatic, in that it makes interpretive pluralism *a priori* impossible.<sup>6</sup> As to the non-imperial poems, Spisak acknowledges that, other than the two epigrams discussed by him (1.39, 6.25), the majority of 'the poems of praise are more subtle', thus 'leaving the reader to draw the inference' (p. 56). How does this accord with Spisak's own, rather dogmatic, stance? Who is this 'reader' of p. 56? Chapter 4 (pp. 73-95) aims to explore Martial's notion of 'The Good Life'. This includes a description of the urban-rural antithesis in the *Epigrams*, that is, the pros and cons of a rural *versus* an urban existence. Particular stress is laid on what Spisak calls the 'pastoral ideal' as expressed in 10.47 (pp. 81-90)<sup>7</sup> and Martial's idealized conception of a Saturnian Golden Age. Martial's representation of 'the good life is meant to address the seemingly inevitable ills that attend a complex and civilized society' (p. 95).<sup>8</sup>

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B. K. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage under the Early Empire* (Austin 1982) 50-66; *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, Mass. 1993); P. M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York 1964); *On the Nature of Organizations* (Malabar 1974; repr. New York 1983).

<sup>5</sup> F. Grewing, 'Review: A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik (edd.), *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden 2003)', *Plekos* 9 (2007) 83.

<sup>6</sup> See Spisak p. 120 n. 2 on Nauta vs. Lorenz; cf. B. Gibson, 'Review: R. Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons: Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (Leiden 2002)', *BMCRev* 2002.11.22 vs. S. Lorenz, 'Review: R. R. Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons: Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (Leiden 2002)', *Plekos* 5 (2003) 75-86.

<sup>7</sup> See also A. L. Spisak, 'The Pastoral Ideal in Martial, Book 10', *CW* 95.2 (2002) 127-141.

<sup>8</sup> For a more balanced view of the city-countryside antithesis in Martial, which takes into account a diachronic development of the author and his poet-persona, see E. Merli, 'Martial between Rome and Bilbilis', in R. M. Rosen and I. Sluiter (edd.), *City, Countryside, and the Spatial Organization of Value in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 2006) 327-47.

It makes me feel uneasy to see Martial reduced to a producer of *vers de société* much like, say, John Betjeman's *How to Get On in Society* of 1958, making fun of the middle class *nouveau riche*. It is surely true that Martial's *Epigrammata* form part of the contemporary social discourse, and I do not at all deny that it is possible to read a number of poems as 'social comment'. In major parts of his monumental *Martial: The Unexpected Classic*, Sullivan, too, views the literary through the social and anthropological, but his approach was much more versatile.<sup>9</sup> To posit that 'Martial . . . served a vital function for his audience and society' (p. 13), that is, that his epigrams were destined to *function as moral lessons* is as one-sided, if not dogmatic, a conviction as that of those who view Martial solely as a politically subversive poet. Ironically, the major drawback of this book is precisely its biased obsession with Martial as a social guide, which so blatantly dispenses with decades of literary criticism. But I am ready to admit that some of this is simply a matter of taste.

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N. M. Kay (ed. and tr.), *Epigrams from the Anthologia Latina: Text, Translation and Commentary*. London: Duckworth, 2006. Pp. vii + 388. ISBN 0-7156-3406-2. GBP45.

Following the publication of his seminal works on Martial's book 11 and the Epigrams of Ausonius,<sup>1</sup> Kay has again produced a commentary on a collection of epigrams. We do not know when the group of poems from the *Codex Salmasianus* numbered 78-188 in Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition of the *Anthologia Latina*<sup>2</sup> were written and by whom. We cannot even be certain that they were all written by one single author. Furthermore, there is no conclusive proof that all of these poems belong together and were ever intended to form a collection that, as a whole, has been incorporated into the *Anthologia Latina*. It is therefore inevitable that working on this text involves a great deal of speculation. Even though not everybody will agree with all of Kay's numerous theses and ideas, his commentary paints a coherent and overall plausible picture of a fascinating collection of epigrams from late antiquity. Kay offers a new text and very readable prose translation. That Kay's text is not based on a collation of the manuscripts and that all problems of textual criticism are discussed in the commentary (and not in a critical *apparatus*) are not problems. His comments on the individual poems and the collection are extremely helpful. The introduction

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<sup>9</sup> J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic: A Literary and Historical Study* (Cambridge 1991).

<sup>1</sup> N. M. Kay, *Martial Book XI: A Commentary* (London 1985); *Ausonius, Epigrams: Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London 2001).

<sup>2</sup> D. R. Shackleton Bailey (ed.), *Anthologia Latina 1: Carmina in Codicibus Scripta 1: Libri Salmasiani Aliorumque Carmina* (Stuttgart 1982).

(pp. 1-37) on the nature of the collection, its date and place of origin, the history of the text and its metrical features is concise and highly informative. Finally, the indices (pp. 377-88) are certainly not overloaded and contribute to the impression that this is a very useful piece of work.

Starting from the observation that *Anthologia Latina* 78 is the preface to a collection of an anonymous author's juvenilia, Kay believes *Anthologia Latina* 78-188 to be the work of a single author who wrote in North Africa in the sixth century AD, that is, under Vandal rule. In a thankfully clear manner, he provides short discussions on the nature of the prefatory poem, on the arrangement of poems in the *Codex Salmasianus* in general, on the collection's closure (or rather the absence of a closing marker), on the length of ancient books of epigrams, on typical epigrammatic topics as well as thematic and formal variation in epigrammatic collections, and on their structural arrangement. All of these factors lead Kay to the conclusion that *Anthologia Latina* 78-188 was originally 'a *libellus* like a book of Martial' (pp. 1-5). Kay goes on to discuss all of the evidence which can be adduced to determine the date and place of the collection's composition (pp. 5-7). He accepts Schetter's<sup>3</sup> suggestion of the early sixth-century Vandal North Africa. Kay acknowledges that there is not much evidence, but—as he puts it—'what there is either does not contradict or supports a likely North African genesis' (p. 5). It will be hard to find conclusive proof for this dating, and what Kay tells his readers about the political and cultural situation in Vandal Africa (pp. 7-13) offers no particularly strong support. The fact that Roman culture, as it features in this collection of epigrams, had a strong influence on Vandal Africa, and that 'the outward trappings of baths, circuses, hunting and gambling remained and were enthusiastically taken up by the Vandals' (p. 8), will not be doubted. Such popular topics as the baths, however, which play a crucial role in this collection, can certainly not be exclusively connected with one specific place or time; as we see from Busch's extensive study of the topic of bathing and the baths in epigrammatic poetry.<sup>4</sup> The fact that aspects of traditional Roman culture are treated in these epigrams may also be the result of the inspiration from the works of classical Latin poets, an influence that, as Kay makes clear, was indeed considerable (p. 12f.). However, even though Kay's arguments will not convince everyone, I doubt that it will be possible to come up with a more convincing date and place for the collection. There is just not enough evidence at hand.

No matter what their exact date and place of origin were, the epigrams in question are a fascinating collection, bearing the strong influence of other late Roman epigrammatists, as well as such classical authors as Virgil and Ovid and, of course, Martial. And Kay's manner of presenting these poems, explaining the relevant *realia*, discussing linguistic problems, and analyzing their intertextual content is admirably to

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<sup>3</sup> W. Schetter, 'Review: A. J. Baumgartner, *Untersuchungen zur Anthologie des Codex Salmasianus* (PhD diss. Zürich 1981)', *Gnomon* 58 (1986) 300-04.

<sup>4</sup> S. Busch, *Versus balnearum: die antike Dichtung über Bäder und Baden im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart 1999).

the point. Like Kay's earlier commentaries, this one is written for classicists rather than a non-specialist readership. Kay meets the needs of undergraduate students (for example, he retells Livy's account of the story of C. Mucius Scaevola [p. 271: *AL* 144]), but his commentary is not for absolute beginners (Kay expects his readers to be familiar with mythology, for example, with the story of Leda and the swan [pp. 240f.: *Anth. Lat.* 130). He certainly provides all necessary information needed by the specialist reader, for example, there is a long introduction to the ancient board game *tabula*, which is described in epigrams 182-85 (pp. 348-52). He does not, however, repeat facts that advanced scholars of epigram will have read many times before; often Kay sensibly refers his readers to his two earlier commentaries. A case in point is that he spares us yet another long list of passages to illustrate the use of the verb *ludo* in Latin epigrammatic poetry (p. 65).

Given the necessarily speculative nature of any work on these poems, Kay wisely refrains from offering excessively far-fetched interpretations whenever he can avoid them. It is typical of his approach that—apart from a few sceptical sentences on the possibility that the poems could be assigned to Florus (pp. 19f.)—Kay does not indulge in any speculations about the authorship of his collection. He is equally careful when it comes to questions of the composition of the *liber*. As in Martial's books,<sup>5</sup> there are recurrent themes and motifs in the epigrams, which may hint at the collection's unity. Of course, there is the danger that one may trace connections between poems just because one has been looking for them. Kay's examples, however, are very convincing. For instance, he points out that there are poems 'on animals and the natural world . . . and those which highlight the value and usefulness of things they describe'. Both groups, as Kay makes clear, connect in *Anthologia Latina* 96, that deals with 'the dual benefit of the cuttlefish as food and provider of writing-ink' (pp. 118f.). Further examples for epigrams advertizing the value of specific objects include, among others, *Anthologia Latina* 90 (on a sedan chair) and 95 (on a goose). And *Anthologia Latina* 95, of course, also belongs to the numerous poems on the natural world. Thus, the epigrams in the collection form a complex network of themes and motifs. No doubt more instances for such connections could be found. *Anthologia Latina* 90, for example, discusses the moral values of the Roman *matrona* (who is carried in the sedan chair), whereas the collapse of family values is portrayed in *Anthologia Latina* 91 on Medea murdering her children. On the unity of the collection—especially on metrical features and the structure of the book—see now Zurli's study<sup>6</sup> which appeared too late to be used by Kay.

*Epigrams from the Anthologia Latina* is an excellent commentary and it is a pleasure to work with it. As Kay tells his readers in the preface, one of the reasons he chose *Anthologia Latina* 78-188 for closer investigation was that 'at least

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. S. Lorenz, 'Waterscape with Black and White: Epigrams, Cycles, and Webs in Martial's *Epigrammaton Liber Quartus*', *AJPh* 125 (2004) 255-78.

<sup>6</sup> L. Zurli, *Unius Poetae Sylloge: Verso un' edizione di Anthologia Latina cc. 90-197 Riese*<sup>2</sup> = 78-188 Shackleton Bailey (Hildesheim 2005).

comparatively speaking, little has been written about them' (p. vii). His commentary is so inspiring that this will change soon.

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Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, *Words & Ideas: The Roots of Plato's Philosophy*. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2007. Pp. xv + 368. ISBN 978-1-905125- 20-3. GBP50.

Herrmann offers a stimulating and detailed study of those terms that seem key to the 'Theory of Forms' presented in Plato's *Phaedo*. The book is divided into three parts. In the first two, Herrmann traces the development of each of his chosen terms in (philosophical and non-philosophical) literature both predating and contemporaneous with Plato as well as in Plato's own early dialogues. Part 1 deals with the verbs μετέχειν, παρεῖναι (along with παρουσία and παραγίγνεσθαι) and ἐνεῖναι (along with ἐγγίγνεσθαι). Part 2 treats the nouns εἶδος, ἰδέα and μορφή. In the third and final part, drawing on the conclusions of this history, Herrmann attempts a reconsideration of the meaning and use of each word as it occurs in *Phd.* 95e-107b. This third part also includes a discussion of οὐσία as meaning 'the being of something', a sense which Herrmann argues is not found prior to Plato, but which may be informed by Philolaus' use of ἐστῶ. Herrmann's endeavour is to trace the philosophical and literary background of his key terms, and then to offer a reading of their occurrence in *Phaedo* that is sympathetic both to Plato's awareness of this background and to his status as philosophical innovator. Towards the end of his discussion, Herrmann asserts that '*Phaedo* is . . . from the start a dialogue in which Socrates does unusual things' (p. 247). Herrmann's argument is that Plato's Socrates is using his terminology in a way that is at once unusual, in trying to describe a 'radically different view of "what is"' (p. 278), and familiar, in building on the philosophy and vocabulary of his predecessors. This is a thorough and thought-provoking monograph of interest to anyone curious about the possible origins of Plato's metaphysical thought, particularly within *Phaedo*.

Philological spadework is not particularly glamorous, but, as here, it can serve to unearth a more nuanced understanding of Greek philosophical terminology. Thus Herrmann, in his introduction to his discussion of εἶδος and ἰδέα, proclaims that its 'aim is both to establish what εἶδος and ἰδέα *could* mean and also what εἶδος and ἰδέα did not mean and, to the best of our knowledge, could not have meant' (p. 93). The breadth and variety of sources discussed by Herrmann is prodigious, and his readings of the salient passages often quite intricate. Nevertheless, Herrmann's exposition is, in general, remarkably clear. The structure of the book, discussing the history of a term in the first two parts and then the possible influence of this background in the last part, necessitates some repetition of arguments and translations. Even with this aid, however, when faced, for example, with Herrmann's argument for Plato's engagement with the possible Democritean usage of ἰδέα in part 3, I found

myself having to flick back to his discussion of Democritus in part 2 in order to ensure that he and I ended up, as it were, on the same page. Although the philology might be off-putting to those without Greek, all passages are translated so that the dedicated Greekless reader should be able to follow Herrmann's argument without too much trouble.

Chapter 1 agitates against the translation 'participate' for μετέχειν on the grounds that 'unlike the Latin *parti-cipio*, derived from *pars*, "part", and *cipio*, "take", neither μεταλαμβάνειν nor μετέχειν is inherently or necessarily connected with μέρος or any other Greek word for "part"' (p. 23). Herrmann presents the evidence for understanding μετέχειν as meaning, in both pre-Platonic and early Platonic literature, "'having of" something together with somebody else' (p. 43), with any notion of parts being supplied purely by the context. Chapter 2's summary of the usage of παρουσία *et cetera* concludes that it carries the pretty uniform sense of various things 'being present' in various ways but that, with the rise of the sophists, 'the application of the verb was extended . . . so as to cover all those qualities which were said to "be present" with someone' (p. 75). Chapter 3 argues that ἐνεῖναι and ἐγγίγνεσθαι are relatively vague verbs for connecting things which, due to this lack of specificity 'were found suitable in particular in physical theory and speculation such as that of Anaxagoras, as well as in medicine' (p. 91). In chapters 10 and 11, Herrmann presents his reconsideration of these terms (along with κοινωνία) as they occur in *Phaedo*, and suggests that their meaning at *Phd.* 100c-d is intended to be read against their use in the Socratic dialogues, Anaxagorean physical theory, and Pythagorean doctrine. By adopting their terminology, Plato seeks to integrate aspects of Socratic and Presocratic philosophy into the Platonic view, whilst at the same time indicating his own innovations.

In chapter 4, Herrmann surveys the evidence and concludes that εἶδος can denote "appearance; guise; type; way(s); scheme" (p. 147). He argues against the translation 'form' because the latter's connotations of 'shape' are not found in the meaning of εἶδος (chapter 6 argues that 'form' is a better translation of μορφή since this does carry the sense of 'physical shape'); and because, although some senses of 'form' may correspond with some senses of εἶδος, such a translation will always require qualification. In chapter 8, Herrmann notes that εἶδος appears in *Phaedo* with a variety of non-technical senses up until 102a-b. At this point, however, *Phaedo* gives a summary of the discussion in which, speaking with his own voice, he uses εἶδη as a piece of philosophical jargon to refer to 'the just itself', 'the beautiful itself' *et cetera*. Herrmann's stimulating suggestion is that this switch in register is explained by the fact that *Phaedo* is addressing an audience of Pythagoreans. Herrmann points to the use of εἶδος to refer to opposites in Philolaus, and proposes that Plato may, with his own use of the term, be addressing and correcting Pythagorean attitudes towards the most fundamental elements of the world, which are not, for Plato, pairs of opposites, but things like 'the just itself'.

Chapter 5's survey of the background for the Platonic usage of ἰδέα indicates that this term shares many of the semantic extensions of εἶδος. In chapter 9 Herrmann

emphasizes the possibility that Democritus used ἰδέαι as a technical term for his atoms. He argues that Plato's own use of the term was motivated by the fact that his ultimate constituents share many of the qualities of Democritean atoms: immutability, indivisibility, invisibility *et cetera*. Although there are obvious differences between atoms and Platonic ἰδέαι, most notably in their corporeality (or lack of it), 'each Platonic "figure" is, like each of Democritus' figures, "that which is", "what is", τὸ ὄν' (p. 240). Herrmann offers a further suggestion that Socrates' interest in αἰτία at *Phd.* 95d-99d should be understood as an implicit reference to Democritus, the explicit criticism of Anaxagoras notwithstanding. Herrmann concludes by recapitulating the extent of the terminological debt that Plato owes to Philolaus, Anaxagoras and Democritus. He ends with the suggestion that *Phaedo* uses this background as a series of 'stepping stones' to establish, for the first time, 'the contrast between the world of stuff, the "bodily" . . . and the world of thought' (p. 278).

At several points within his treatment, Herrmann seems to present himself as working against the flow of a scholarly community who might be thought less scrupulous than he in worrying about the translation of key Platonic terms. I confess to feeling slightly uneasy about both this characterization of Platonic scholarship and some of Herrmann's methodological assumptions. He concludes his study of εἶδος in part 2 with the following: "Form" has been used as a translation of the word εἶδος in Plato so universally that—for the Ancient Philosopher—it has become wholly devoid of meaning, and there is a danger that this process is irreversible even if one is aware of this circumstance; using the word "form" to translate εἶδος prevents one from asking what is meant by the term' (p. 149). One might think, however, that the strength of the translation 'form' could lie in this very meaninglessness. It seems quite plausible that some ancient philosophers employ the translation 'form' as a fairly vague placeholder for εἶδος precisely *because* they recognize that Platonic εἶδη are difficult things that resist exact description. Likewise, although the word may appear to mean different things in, say, *Euthyphro* and *Phaedo*, using one underdetermined translation in both cases opens up but does not insist on the possibility that occurrences of εἶδος throughout the dialogues may be related. My point is not that Herrmann is mistaken in his belief that it is important to consider the range of possible meanings that εἶδος carries in its various appearances within the corpus, but rather that it does not seem to me to be any more problematic to ask 'what does "form" mean here?' than 'what does εἶδος mean here?'. Nor does it seem obvious that translating εἶδος as 'form' or μετέχειν as 'participate' necessarily prevents or has prevented readers of Plato from asking what we might mean by 'form' or 'participate' (or εἶδος or μετέχειν). Some might prefer a translation that requires qualification to one that proffers rigid specificity. There should be no doubt, however, that, whether one asks such questions in Greek or in English, anyone looking for answers will be greatly aided by Herrmann's book.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Books for review should be sent to the Reviews Editor, Scholia.*

- Sally-Ann Ashton, *Cleopatra and Egypt*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. xii + 219. ISBN 978-1-4051-1390-8. GBP19.99.
- Robert D. Ballard (ed.), *Archaeological Oceanography*. New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2008. Pp. 296. ISBN 978-0-691-12940-2. USD45.
- Anthony A. Barrett (ed.), *Lives of the Caesars*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. xvii + 322. ISBN 978-1-4051-2755-4. GBP17.99.
- Alan Beale (ed.), *Euripides Talks*. London: Duckworth Academic / Bristol Classical Press, 2008. Pp. x + 139. ISBN 978-1-85399-712-9. GBP12.99.
- John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan (edd.), *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. xii + 324. ISBN 978-1-4051-7579-1. GBP55.
- A. J. Boyle (ed. and tr.), *Octavia: Attributed to Seneca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. xc + 340. ISBN 978-0-19-928784-0. GBP70.
- Katrina Cawthorn, *Becoming Female: The Male Body in Greek Tragedy*. London: Duckworth Academic / Bristol Classical Press, 2008. Pp. ix + 188. ISBN 978-0-7156-3712-8. GBP50.
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- Jo-Marie Claassen, *Ovid Revisited: The Poet in Exile*. London: Duckworth Academic / Bristol Classical Press, 2008. Pp. xii + 292. ISBN 978-0-7156-3783-8. GBP25.
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- miriam cooke, Erdağ Göknar and Grant Parker (edd.), *Mediterranean Passages: Readings from Dido to Derrida*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. Pp. 416. ISBN 978-0-8078-3183-0. USD24.95.
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- Arthur M. Eckstein, *Rome Enters the Greek East: From Anarchy to Hierarchy in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, 230-170 BC*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. xi + 439. ISBN GBP60.
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- Anton Powell (ed.), *Virgil the Partisan: A Study in the Re-integration of Classics*. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2008. Pp. xi + 310. ISBN 978-1-905125-21-0. GBP45.
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## IN THE MUSEUM

*Scholia* publishes news about classical museums in New Zealand and articles on classical artefacts in museums. Information about classical exhibitions and artefacts is welcome and should reach the In the Museum Editor by 1 September.

### A CORINTHIAN HELMET: OTAGO MUSEUM, DUNEDIN

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A well-preserved, bronze, Corinthian helmet is displayed in the People of the World Gallery in the Otago Museum, Dunedin.<sup>1</sup> Although acquired a long time ago, it has not been appropriately published and deserves to be known better, not only for its value as an example of ancient armour, but also for its later history as an antique.

The helmet was presented to the University of Otago Museum (as it then was) in 1928 by a group of friends and former students in memory of the late Professor George Samuel Sale (1831-1922),<sup>2</sup> who held the chair in Classics from the

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<sup>1</sup> Figures 1-5: Dunedin, Otago Museum E28.355; formerly Laking Collection; maximum external circumference of crown 64 cm., height 23 cm., internal dimensions at base 27 cm. (front to back) x 17.5 cm. (side to side), length between outer eye-corners over the nose-guard 16 cm., width of nose-guard at break 1.5 cm., width between top corners of cheek-pieces 4.5 cm. widening to 6 cm. below (as far as preserved), depth of cheek-pieces below eye-holes 9.5 cm., width of horizontal neck-guard 2 cm., thickness of bronze generally 1 mm., thickness of left cheek-piece 0.5-0.7 mm., weight 1324.4 g. Christie, Manson & Woods, *Catalogue of the Collection of Arms and Armour and Objects of Art formed by Sir Guy Francis Laking, Bart.* (London 1920) 6 no. 9; Spink and Son Limited, *Supplement to the Antiquarian Quarterly* 1 (March 1925) 7f. no. 132: 'Greek Bronze Helmet, nicely patinated. 9" high. From the Sir Guy Laking Collection. (See illustration next page) £120'. The bronze helmet is well-preserved with a dark green patina; the crown, especially at the back, is uneven and dented with hairline cracks; the edge has cracked to the left of the centre of the neck-guard and at the eye-corners; and the tip of the right cheek-piece is missing. There is a brown stain on the left brow area from which two streaks run horizontally towards the back. I am extremely grateful to the Otago Museum for granting me permission to publish this helmet, to Moira White (Research and Interpretation Coordinator - Humanities) and to Scott Reeves (Collection Coordinator - Humanities) for arranging access, and also to Scott for taking the photographs and measuring the thickness of the metal.

<sup>2</sup> Accessions Register of the Otago Museum (H472) E28.355; The Association of Friends of the Museum, *Annual Report for the Year ending September 30th, 1927* (Dunedin 1929) no page number, unnumbered figure.

university's foundation in 1871 until 1908.<sup>3</sup> By 1926, the decision had already been taken to name 'the new classical department of the Museum . . . the "George Sale Department of Classical Archaeology"', and to prioritize the acquisition of Greek and Roman material,<sup>4</sup> of which about 400 items were added by purchase and exchange in 1928.<sup>5</sup> The Sale memorial gift attracted individual attention in the Museum's *Annual Report*: 'This well-preserved and splendidly patinated piece is an appropriate memorial to a man who was as great in action and affairs as in scholarship'.<sup>6</sup>

The helmet, unfortunately, lacks any archaeological provenance. It was sourced from Spink and Son Limited, 5, 6 & 7 King Street, St. James's, London SW1, who were better known at the time for dealing in diamonds, gems, coins and medals.<sup>7</sup> However, in 1925 they ran advertisements in *The Times* boasting the 'finest Collection in London' of 'Ancient Greek Art',<sup>8</sup> and between 1925 and 1927 they published twelve issues of *The Antiquarian Quarterly* with a series of supplements listing objects in stock. The Otago helmet featured in the first supplement.<sup>9</sup> Both the short entry there and the Museum's Accession Register note that it had previously belonged to the Laking Collection.

Sir Guy Francis Laking (1875-1919) was the son of the physician to King Edward VII, and a leading art historian with a passion for and special expertise in European arms and armour.<sup>10</sup> Among his public commissions, he was appointed Keeper of the King's Armoury at Windsor and first Keeper of the London Museum. He compiled catalogues for auction houses and private collectors as well as a definitive, five-volume work on armour,<sup>11</sup> which was published after his premature death at the age of forty-four in 1919.<sup>12</sup> His extravagant lifestyle, however, had apparently exceeded his income, and his own collection of arms, armour and antiques

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<sup>3</sup> Obituary in *The Times*, 27 December 1922, 13; J. Barsby, 'Sale, George Samuel 1831-1922', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (accessed 27 October 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Association of Friends [2].

<sup>5</sup> W. B. Benham, *Otago University Museum and Hocken Library: Annual Reports for the Year 1928* (Dunedin 1929) 4f.

<sup>6</sup> Benham [5] 5.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., the half-page advertisement in *The Times*, 19 June 1920, 10.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 27 June 1925, 12; 11 July 1925, 12; 18 July 1925, 10; 25 July 1925, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Spink [1].

<sup>10</sup> Obituary in *The Times*, 24 November 1919, 17; biography: <http://www.armouries.org.uk/collections/history-of-the-collection/early-scholars/sir-guy-francis-laking> (accessed 29 October 2009).

<sup>11</sup> G. F. Laking, *A Record of European Armour and Arms through Seven Centuries 1-5* (London 1920-1922).

<sup>12</sup> His son died at the even younger age of twenty-six in 1930, at which point the baronetcy also died out: obituary in *The Times*, 5 August 1930, 12.

was put up for sale within six months of his death.<sup>13</sup> The four-day auction at Christie's in London was reported in *The Times* on a daily basis, the various lots raising an unexpectedly high sum of about £30,000 from a body of international bidders.<sup>14</sup> Spink actually acquired two Greek helmets, ours and one other, on the first day (19 April 1920) for £57 15s and £68 15s respectively, along with a bronze dagger and sword.<sup>15</sup>

Intriguingly, a personal connection already existed between the Laking family and the city of Dunedin. Sir Guy's stepmother, whom his father Sir Francis Laking married in 1905 (after the death of his first wife, Emma, in March), was Eleanor Mary (or May) Hackworth, the daughter of James Hackworth of Rosslyn [*sic*], Dunedin, a collector of customs.<sup>16</sup> It was her second marriage also, and, although she predeceased her husband in 1912,<sup>17</sup> one may speculate that this family connection may have played some part in bringing the helmet to the notice of the New Zealand buyers.<sup>18</sup>

Greek helmets of this close-fitting type were invented before 700 BC and worn by both heavily armed infantry (hoplites) and cavalry (*hippeis*) for centuries. Surviving helmets bear witness to the highly skilled handiwork of bronzesmiths, who created them by hammering a thin sheet of bronze over a peg into a bowl-like shape, thus avoiding unreliable joins; strength and resilience were imparted by annealing.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The website for the Royal Armouries [10] states that 'The most remarkable feature of his collection was a series of 5 Italian 15th century Barbutes'; that is, the type of late medieval iron helmet closest in appearance to the ancient Greek Corinthian. Cf. D. Edge and J. M. Paddock, *Arms and Armour of the Medieval Knight* (London 1988) 106f., 111.

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 20 April 1920, 12; 21 April 1920, 10; 22 April 1920, 14.

<sup>15</sup> For help in tracing the details of the auction, I am very grateful to Lynda McLeod, Librarian, Christie's Archives, and to Anthony Spink: 'The Spink records are now very dispersed and indeed many were lost by enemy action in the last War' (personal correspondence, 28 October 2009).

<sup>16</sup> In the Otago Nominal Index, James Hackworth appears in the Electoral Roll for 1880 as living at Leven Street, Roslyn, but in Great King Street in 1884 and Melville Street, South Dunedin in 1887: <http://orac.otago.ac.nz.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/fmi/xsl/oni/recordlist.xsl> (accessed 29 October 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Obituaries in *The Times*, 23 October 1912, 11; 22 May 1914, 10. Oddly, Sir Francis' obituary states that Eleanor survived him.

<sup>18</sup> Several classical items now in the Otago Museum owe their acquisition to personal contacts who worked behind the scenes in England on behalf of the colonial university. Much of the A. B. Cook collection of Greek vases and other artefacts in Cambridge was acquired for the Otago Museum in 1948 through the efforts of Dale Trendall: R. Hannah, 'The "Otago Alexander"', in P. Wheatley and R. Hannah (eds), *Alexander and his Successors: Essays from the Antipodes* (Claremont 2009) 299 n. 1. Cf. Association of Friends [2] for members in England being asked to 'secure' the 'most desirable' electrotypes and casts.

<sup>19</sup> See W. J. Young, 'Technical Examination of Greek Helmets', *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 48 (1950) 83-86; P. H. Blyth, 'Metallurgy of bronze armour: use of work hardening in the late Corinthian helmet as evidence of mastery of material', *Praktika tou XII Diethnous Synedriou Klassikēs Archaialogias, Athēna, 4-10 Septemvriou, 1983* (Athens

The modern name 'Corinthian' is derived from the name of the city in which the prototype may well have been designed and thousands subsequently manufactured, although it is not certain that the Greeks themselves identified their helmet varieties in regional terms.<sup>20</sup> Protocorinthian vases of the seventh century BC provide some of the earliest artistic evidence for this helmet shape, as well as small bronze figurines dedicated at Olympia and Delphi.<sup>21</sup> Aphrodite on the coins of Corinth and some of her colonies consistently wears this shape of helmet from the late sixth century BC.<sup>22</sup> Judging from the substantial archaeological evidence, it was the most popular and widespread of the types worn wherever Greeks settled. It had a long life in real use and artistic representation, often with divine and heroic symbolism, from the Archaic

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1985-1988) 293-96. This novel process was captured in a small (5.1 cm. high) bronze figurine depicting a seated smith working on a helmet, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 42.11.42, ca. 720-680 BC: C. A. Picón *et al.*, *Art of the Classical World in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Greece, Cyprus, Etruria, Rome* (New York 2007) 50 no. 32. Cf. a worker in an Attic red-figure cup tondo, Paris, Musée du Petit Palais 382, ca. 500 BC: H. Pflug, *Antike Helme* (Cologne 1989) 3, fig. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Herodotos supplies the only original reference to a 'Corinthian helmet' (4.180.3), but he could simply mean a helmet made in Corinth (that is, from a well-known source), not a distinctive shape. Indeed, the context is extraordinary, since he is describing a Libyan custom, a ritual fight between girls armed with sticks and stones at a festival of Athena. Before the fight, the most beautiful girl is dressed up (as Athena?) in the helmet and a Hellenic panoply, and driven in a chariot around the local lake. He does not actually say that she fights wearing the equipment, but assuming that she did, and assuming that the armour was intended to give her maximum protection, then a Corinthian helmet, as we know it, sounds more likely than an open-faced 'Attic' helmet, elsewhere an attribute of Athena, or an 'Illyrian' helmet. Cf. Xenophon for the 'Boiotian-made' helmet recommended for cavalry for protection above the breastplate and all-round visibility (*Eq.* 12.3); that is, a reference to both place of manufacture and style. The standard, academic terms, 'Illyrian', 'Chalcidian' and 'Thracian' are convenient but misleading with regard to the origin of a type.

<sup>21</sup> One of the earliest pictures of men wearing Corinthian helmets is on a Middle Protocorinthian *aryballos* from Lekhaion, near the Huntsman Painter, Corinth Museum CP-2096, ca. 690-680 BC: J. Boardman, *Early Greek Vase Painting 11th-6th Centuries BC: A Handbook* (London 1998) 92, fig. 171. Bronze figurines from Olympia, Olympia Museum B5700, and Athens, National Archaeological Museum 6177, ca. 700 BC: E. Kunze, 'Kleinplastik aus Bronze', *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 8 (1967) 231-36, figs 86-90, pll. 110-13; from Delphi, Delphi Museum 3232: A. Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons from the End of the Bronze Age to 600 BC* (Edinburgh 1964) 10f., 26, pl. 8 (a).

<sup>22</sup> E.g., C. M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (New York 1976) nos. 225-53, pll. 13f.; see 80-82 for his date of ca. 515 BC for the addition of the female, helmeted head to the reverse. For the identification of the goddess as Aphrodite rather than Athena, see P. E. Blomberg, *On Corinthian Iconography: The Bridled Winged Horse and the Helmeted Female Head in the Sixth Century BC* (Uppsala 1996).

period into the Hellenistic and Roman, the shape undergoing chartable refinements over time.<sup>23</sup>

The distinctive characteristics of the Otago Museum's helmet, therefore, allow it to be assigned a fairly precise date of *ca.* 675-650 BC at the beginning of Pflug's Stage 2.<sup>24</sup> The earliest Corinthian helmets (Pflug's Stage 1) were simpler, proportionally taller, and straighter in shape without its gently concave profile from the broadest point of the rounded crown down to the bottom edge.<sup>25</sup> Significant details are also the out-turned neck-guard, which begins towards the back along the side edge, and the regularly spaced holes punched along the edges to take the rivets for a decorative trim or lacing of a padded lining.<sup>26</sup> Later in Stage 2, the designers added a definite curve near the centre of the side edge, where the angle of the cheek-piece changes to form the horizontal neck-guard,<sup>27</sup> and the edge itself was given a continuous pattern, especially in the so-called Myros Group, *ca.* 650-570 BC.<sup>28</sup> An alternative line of development, longer-lasting through the sixth century, marked the

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<sup>23</sup> See P. Connolly, *Greece and Rome at War*<sup>2</sup> (London 1998) 60f.; P. Dintsis, *Hellenistische Helme* (Rome 1986) 1.87-95; 2.Beil.6, pll. 35.11-40.2.

<sup>24</sup> For the typology of Corinthian helmets, see H. Pflug, 'Korinthische Helme', in A. Bottini *et al.*, *Antike Helme: Sammlung Lipperheide und Andere Bestände des Antikenmuseums Berlin* (Mainz 1988) 65-106, 384-417 cat. nos K7-37; Snodgrass [21] 20-28. Cf. Connolly [23] 61 no. 8 = Dintsis [23] 2.Beil.6 no. 211.

<sup>25</sup> See Pflug [24] cat. nos K7-12 (Stage 1), K16-23 (early Stage 2); cf. esp. Ol.2968: 400 cat. no. K22. For other examples of the first half of the seventh century BC, see Olympia Museum B56 (Stage 1): O. Vikatou, *Olympia: The Archaeological Site and the Museums* (Athens 2006) 63, fig. c; London, British Museum GR1920.3-31.1 (Stage 1): T. Everson, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: Arms and Armour from the Heroes of Homer to Alexander the Great* (Stroud 2004) 79, fig. 32; Olympia Museum B5615 (early Stage 2): P. Ducrey (tr. J. Lloyd), *Warfare in Ancient Greece* (New York 1986) 58, fig. 41a; Pflug [24] 77, figs 11f.

<sup>26</sup> The holes have a diameter of 2.2 mm. and are normally spaced 1.5 cm. apart (closer on the nose-guard where the break connects two holes diagonally). Traditionally, these holes have been explained as the means for attaching a lining, and it has been assumed that glue was used later, when there are no holes; but oddly no trace of leather or padding has ever been found inside a helmet. For the idea that the holes held pins for decorative trims, and that soldiers must have worn a separate cap under the metal, see Pflug [24] 104f. Ivory and silver pins and wire are still visible on Olympia Museum B2610: E. Kunze, 'Korinthische Helme', *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia 7* (1961) 84 no. 39, pll. 51.1, 52f. Cf. Olympia Museum M164, mid seventh to early sixth century BC: Vikatou [25] 63, fig. b. For medieval padded linings and internal leather straps, see Edge and Paddock [13] 182.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Basle Market, *ca.* 650 BC: Cahn Auktionen AG, *Auktion 4: Kunstwerke der Antike* (18 September 2009) 103-05 lot 190.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., London, British Museum GR1904.10-10.2, *ca.* 650-570 BC: Everson [25] 81, fig. 33. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, formerly Shefton Museum 98, late seventh century BC: P. Foster, *Greek Arms and Armour* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1978) 5f. For Corinthian helmets found at Olympia including the Myros Group, see Kunze [26] 56-128, pll. 13-55.

cheek-piece to neck-guard juncture with a pronounced notch,<sup>29</sup> from which by the early fifth century the cheek-piece extended further downwards to a point below the chin.<sup>30</sup> At the same time after *ca.* 550 BC, the crown was set off more sharply in a ridge, which either swept across in a low arch or rose to a central point at the front.<sup>31</sup>

Hybrid forms were also created by blending together characteristic elements of different types. A popular, Late Archaic-Early Classical variation borrowed the arched space at the ear from the 'Chalcidian' type, which had rounded or angled, fixed or hinged cheek-pieces.<sup>32</sup> While the restriction on hearing and lateral vision may not have been as bad as is sometimes claimed for the early helmets like the Otago one,<sup>33</sup> exposing the ear seems to have been seen as a positive improvement—a reflection perhaps of a new tactical need for better communication, facilitating coordinated manoeuvres in the phalanx formation on the battlefield.<sup>34</sup> In South Italy, the Corinthian helmet continued to be used longer than in mainland Greece, but its primary aim of encasing the head and face was abandoned. An echo of its former self, it lived on into the fourth century BC in a shape remodelled so that it could be worn back on the crown of the head (previously the 'at rest' position), and the once functional openings for eyes and mouth became mere surface decoration.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> E.g., Athens, private collection, early sixth century BC: J. Dörig, 'Ein korinthischer Helm in Athener Privatbesitz', *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 10 (1981) 109f., pl. 12.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Olympia Museum B5085, late sixth-mid fifth century BC: Vikatou [25] 63, fig. a.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., Munich, Antikensammlungen 4330, *ca.* 500-490 BC: Connolly [23] 62; Berlin, Antikensmuseum L24, *ca.* 500-470 BC: Pflug [24] 411 cat. no. K33.

<sup>32</sup> For Chalcidian-Corinthian hybrids, see E. Kunze, 'Chalkidische Helme IV-VII mit Nachträgen zu I und II', *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 9 (1994) 59-69, pll. 13-24.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., A. M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armor of the Greeks*<sup>2</sup> (Baltimore 1999) 52: 'for all its protectiveness, it must have made its wearer temporarily deaf, besides sharply restricting his vision'; P. Cartledge, *The Spartans: the World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece, from Utopia to Crisis and Collapse* (New York 2004) 67: 'a large bronze helmet . . . rendered the hoplite pretty deaf'. But see the drawing of Corinthian, 'Illyrian' and 'Chalcidian' helmets worn in a modern test in Foster [28] 9.

<sup>34</sup> Not being deafened by the din of battle (Tyrt. F19.10-16 West) may have previously been seen as desirable. The Middle Protocorinthian *olpe* from Veii, Chigi Painter, Rome, Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia 22679 achieves a fair impression of fighting hoplites in full panoply with shiny, bronze, Corinthian helmets, *ca.* 640 BC: Ducrey [25] 63, fig. 44; cf. Snodgrass [21] pl. 36; Connolly [23] 38f. For a thorough discussion of representations of battle at this time, see H. van Wees, 'The Development of the Hoplite Phalanx: Iconography and Reality in the Seventh Century', in H. van Wees (ed.), *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London 2000) 125-66.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Berlin, Antikensmuseum L30, *ca.* 500-450 BC: Pflug [19] 20, fig. 14. For Apulo-Corinthian helmets, see A. Bottini, 'Apulisch-Korinthische Helme', in Bottini [24] 107-36, 418-30 cat. nos K38-43.



Some later helmets carried incised, applied or relief decoration, commonly eyebrows,<sup>36</sup> but the outstanding feature for almost all helmets in art and life was a horsehair crest. The vast majority of crests ran from front to rear along the central line of the crown, ending in a long tail at the back.<sup>37</sup> The Otago helmet still bears evidence for a method of attachment in the form of little loops of wire on the exterior surface.<sup>38</sup> Surprisingly, these clips are not positioned symmetrically (the pair on the wearer's right side are lower than those on the left). These may have secured two stilted crests,<sup>39</sup> but they would have appeared lopsided.<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, if it had had the more common, low-lying crest, it must have stretched from side to side with two tails. Rare examples of this alignment are depicted in surviving sculpture and vase-paintings (usually on figures seen from the front or back, not the side),<sup>41</sup> but no explanation of the meaning which such a distinctive crest may have carried is recorded in the literary

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., the incised lotus and palmette florals and snake-eyebrows in relief on a helmet in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.11.10, *ca.* 600-575 BC: Picón [19] 91 no. 98.

<sup>37</sup> See Pflug [24] 106 for the construction of crests, their mountings and attachment by pins and loops; remnants seem particularly common on helmets contemporary with ours.

<sup>38</sup> Figure 5a-b: three of the original four loops pass through pairs of holes (roughly 3 cm. from its neighbouring loop), the ends bent over inside; only the holes survive for the fourth.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., in a battle including chariots on an Attic black-figure *dinos*, Painter of Acropolis 606, Athens, Acropolis Museum 606, *ca.* 570-560 BC: J. Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases: A Handbook* (London 1974) 45, fig. 47; on a helmet on the ground in an arming scene on an Attic black-figure *amphora*, Amasis Painter, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 06.1021.69, *ca.* 550 BC: Picón [19] 80 no. 79; worn by the hoplite beyond a chariot on an Attic black-figure *amphora*, London, British Museum B184, *ca.* 510 BC: H. van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London 2004) pl. IX; seen in frontal view at the death of Akhilleus on a Chalcidian black-figure neck *amphora*, now lost, Inscription Painter, *ca.* 550-500 BC: Boardman [21] 236f., fig. 469; frontally in the background at the death of Rhesos, Chalcidian black-figure *amphora*, Inscription Painter, Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AE.1, *ca.* 550-500 BC: Boardman [21] 241, fig. 475.4.

<sup>40</sup> For a sixth-century stilt (B4649) dedicated at Olympia, see E. Kunze, 'Waffenweihungen', *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 8 (1967) 87, pl. 31.1. Pflug [24] 106 n. 188 refers to another two unpublished examples (B5539 and B7680). Cf. Connolly [23] 63, figs 2f. for a diagram illustrating the use of split pins to secure attachments.

<sup>41</sup> E.g., originally on a bronze, mounted hoplite from Taranto, London, British Museum GR1904.7-3.1, *ca.* 550 BC: H. van Wees, 'War in Archaic and Classical Greece', in P. de Souza (ed.), *The Ancient World at War: A Global History* (London 2008) 108. Also on a (Lakonian?) bronze statuette, Hartford, Wadsworth Athenaeum 1917.815, *ca.* 500-480 BC: Connolly [23] 41; N. Sekunda, *The Spartan Army* (Oxford 1998) 10f. Shown frontally on Glaukos on a Chalcidian black-figure *psykter amphora*, Inscription Painter, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria 1643.a-b-D4, *ca.* 540 BC: A. Dunsmore *et al.*, *Ancient Civilisations in the International Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne 2004) 57; on a fallen hoplite seen in back view on an early red-figure Attic cup, Psiax, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 14.146.1, *ca.* 515 BC: Picón [19] 90 no. 97.

sources which we now have. Scholars have suggested that transverse crests may have distinguished officers, but that remains hypothetical at present.<sup>42</sup>

What is certain and confirmed by examination of the helmet in Dunedin is first that the method of attachment for the crest was deliberately weak so as to give way, if it were grabbed vigorously by an opponent;<sup>43</sup> and secondly, that the bronze material of the helmet could only have been worn comfortably with a thick layer of padding, whether lining or separate cap, to keep the clips inside away from the skull. The bronze shell may have provided the hoplite with some protection because of the thin, metallic cover, but what we now see is only a part of a once complex whole. The skill and craftsmanship of the ancient armourer are revealed in the successful combination of a practical design and the right materials.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. the following on the Wadsworth figurine: N. V. Sekunda, 'Classical Warfare', in J. Boardman (ed.), *Cambridge Ancient History 5-6: Plates* (1994) 169 no. 179: 'This bronze statuette . . . probably represents a Spartan officer. The unusual transverse crest is probably a badge of rank, as the Greeks generally wore insignia of rank on the helmet.' Connolly [23] 41: 'The transverse crest may be a sign of rank.' Cartledge [33] 68: 'In fact, as his unusual transverse crest may suggest, he is probably meant to be a general, perhaps even a king.'

<sup>43</sup> It is appropriately a crestless Corinthian helmet which Nike has set on a trophy after a battle on a red-figure *pelike*, Trophy Painter, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 30.187, ca. 450 BC: N. Sekunda, *Greek Hoplite 480-323 BC* (Oxford 2000) 31.



Figure 1. Otago Museum E28.355.  
Bronze Corinthian helmet. Front.



Figure 2. Otago Museum E28.355.  
Bronze Corinthian helmet. Back.



Figure 3. Otago Museum E28.355.  
Bronze Corinthian helmet. Left side.



Figure 4. Otago Museum E28.355.  
Bronze Corinthian helmet. Right side.

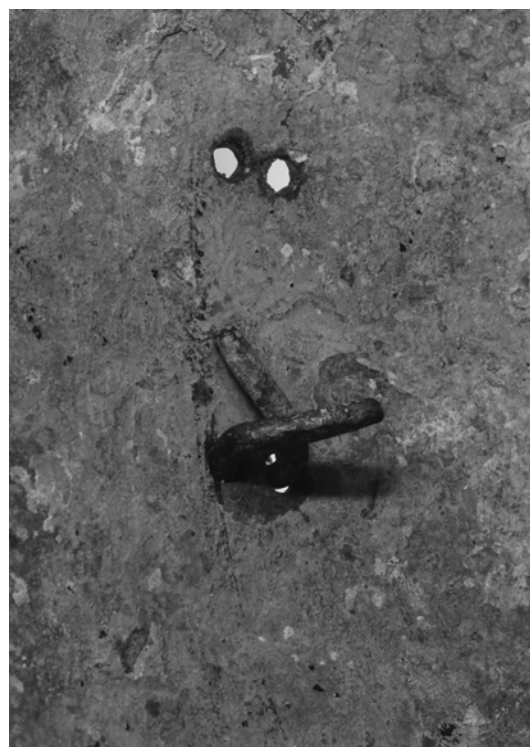


Figure 5a-b. Otago Museum E28.355.  
Bronze Corinthian helmet.  
Crest fittings on the right side (external and internal).

## J. A. BARSBY ESSAY

*The paper judged to be the best student essay in New Zealand submitted to Scholia by 1 September for the preceding year is published annually as the J. A. Barsby Essay. The competition is sponsored by the Australasian Society for Classical Studies. The Essay is in honour of New Zealand classicist J. A. Barsby.*

### ROME'S 'STUDENT WHO SURPASSES THE MASTER' MOTIF

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ἃ συνιδόντες ἐμιμήσαντο ταχέως· ἀγαθοὶ γάρ, εἰ καὶ τινες ἕτεροι,  
μεταλαβεῖν ἔθη καὶ ζηλῶσαι τὸ βέλτιον καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι.

(Polyb. 6.25.11)

The Romans, when they noticed this, soon learned to copy the Greek arms; for this too is one of their virtues, that no people are so ready to adopt new fashions and imitate what they see is better in others.

In the late republic a potent motif became ingrained in Rome's national psyche: the idea that the Romans owed major advances, particularly in the field of military technology, to a succession of 'student surpassing the master' relationships with other nations.<sup>1</sup> This motif would not be so remarkable if it were based in fact, but a critical

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<sup>1</sup> The text of Polybius is that of T. Büttner-Wobst (ed.), *Polybii Historiae* 1-4 (Stuttgart 1962-1967); of Diodorus Siculus is that of F. R. Walton (ed.), *Diodorus of Sicily* 11 (Cambridge, Mass. 1968); of Tyrtaeus is that of M. L. West (ed.), *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* 2 (Oxford 1972); of Horace is that of F. Klingner (ed.), *Q. Horati Flacci Opera* (Leipzig 1959); of Virgil is that of R. A. B. Mynors (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (Oxford 1972); of Plut. *Marc.* is that of K. Ziegler (ed.), *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae*<sup>2</sup> 2.2 (Leipzig 1968); of Livy is that of R. S. Conway and C. F. Walters (edd.), *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita* 1-3 (1919-1955); of Plut. *Cat. Mai.* and *Cam.* is that of K. Ziegler (ed.), *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae*<sup>4</sup> 1.1 (Leipzig 1969); of Homer is that of T. W. Allen (ed.), *Homeri Ilias* 2-3 (Oxford 1931); of Pausanias is that of F. Spiro (ed.), *Pausaniae Graeciae Descriptio* 1-3 (Leipzig 1903-1967); of Cic. *Verr.* is that of W. Peterson (ed.), *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes* 3 (Oxford 1917); of Hellanicus of Lesbos and Damastes of Sigeum is that of F. Jacoby (ed.), *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker [FGH]* 1-3 (Leiden 1923-1958); of Athenaeus is that of G. Kaibel (ed.), *Athenaei Naucratis Deipnosophistarum Libri* 15 1-3 (Stuttgart 1965-1966); of Cic. *Fam.* is that of D. R. Shackleton Bailey (ed.) *Cicero: Epistulae ad Familiares* 1-2 (Cambridge 1977); of Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* is that of K. Jacoby (ed.), *Dionysii Halicarnasei Antiquitatum Romanarum Quae Supersunt* 1-4 (Stuttgart 1967); of Plin. *HN* is that of C. Mayhoff (ed.) *C. Plini Secundi Naturalis Historiae Libri* 37 1-5 (Leipzig 1892-1909); of

examination of the relevant evidence reveals that it was not. How then, did the Romans come to hold this false and somewhat self-deprecatory belief? Some have suggested that the Romans possessed a sense of ‘cultural cringe’ towards the Greeks and Etruscans from the outset. Close analysis of relevant literary sources, however, suggests a more plausible alternative. In two sources, Diodorus and Athenaeus, discussion of the ‘student surpassing the master’ motif is situated on the eve of the Punic Wars, and a third, *Ineditum Vaticanum*,<sup>2</sup> picks up on the Carthaginian theme. The facts that these sources are written in Greek, present reasons for Rome’s military success, and are set against the historical context of the Samnite Wars, Rome’s conquest of Magna Graecia and particularly Pyrrhus’ defeat at Beneventum, are all highly suggestive. This essay will argue that the ‘student to master’ motif was promulgated by one or more mid-third century BC Greek historians, probably including Timaeus of Tauromenium, in an attempt to rationalize these Greek losses to a Greek audience. This motif was then picked up by Greek writers such as Diodorus Siculus and Polybius and, with increasing Hellenistic influence in the late-third to first centuries BC, by the Romans themselves. On the eve of the Punic Wars this motif was not part of the Roman national psyche, but by the Imperial period it was, anachronistically distorting the Romans’ perception of their own history.

To begin, a few points must be made in order to establish that the motif was not just an accurate reflection of historical fact. Sources such as Diodorus Siculus (23.2) and the *Ineditum Vaticanum* assert that Rome adopted important military institutions, particularly the hoplite phalanx, from the Greeks and Etruscans. This assertion is almost certainly untrue, but due to anti-Roman, pro-Greek/Etruscan biases it has been largely unchallenged in modern scholarship. Both hoplite equipment and pictorial representations are found in Etruscan and Roman graves from around 650 BC, but not in abundance, and often in conjunction with native weaponry.<sup>3</sup> The stele of Aule Feluske from Vetulonia, for example, depicts a hoplite shield and helmet with an

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Martial is that of W. Heraeus and J. Borovskij (edd.), *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Libri* (Leipzig 1925); of Plin. *Ep.* is that of R. A. B. Mynors (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum Libri Decem* (Oxford 1966); of Sallust is that of A. Kurfess (ed.), *C. Sallusti Crispi Catilina, Iugurtha, Fragmenta Ampliora* (Leipzig 1957). The translation of Polybius is that of W. R. Paton (ed. and tr.), *Polybius: The Histories 1-6* (Cambridge, Mass. 1922-1927); of Plut. *Marc.* is that of B. Perrin (ed. and tr.), *Plutarch’s Lives 5* (London 1917); of Livy is that of A. de Sélincourt and B. Radice (edd. and trr.), *The War with Hannibal : Books 21-30 of the History of Rome from its Foundation, by Livy* (Harmondsworth 1972); of Pausanias is that of W. H. S. Jones (tr.) *Pausanias: Description of Greece 1* (1918); of Plin. *Ep.* is that of W. Melmoth (ed. and tr.), *Pliny the Younger: Letters* (London 1951). I hereby acknowledge the assistance and inspiration of Dr Jeremy Armstrong of the Department of Classical Studies and Ancient History at the University of Auckland in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> H. Von Arnim, ‘Ineditum Vaticanum’, *Hermes* 27 (1892) 118-30.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Rich, ‘Warfare and the Army in Early Rome’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (Oxford 2007) 17.

Etruscan double-axe.<sup>4</sup> Axe-fighting did not occur in traditional hoplite warfare, which underlines the point that just because the Romans and Etruscans utilized hoplite equipment it does not mean that they did so in the Greek fashion. As Cornell writes, this issue has been clouded by modern biases, especially pro-Etruscan.<sup>5</sup> The belief in the Etruscan cultural, political and military dominance of Rome only became an accepted scholarly view in the post-Second World War, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, and decidedly anti-Roman intellectual context.<sup>6</sup> A prime example is Ogilvie, who states that the Etruscans ‘deeply penetrated Roman society at every level’, citing, for example, the number of drainage tunnels in Etruria as proof that the Cloaca Maxima was engineered by Etruscans.<sup>7</sup> Extensive drainage tunnels are also found in the vicinity of Rome and there is no valid reason to assume that the Romans were not expert drain layers themselves.<sup>8</sup> Cornell himself is perhaps guilty of buying into an even deeper-set pro-Greek bias when he concludes that both the Etruscans and Romans learned hoplite warfare directly from the Greeks.<sup>9</sup> The archaeological evidence for Roman use of traditional hoplite warfare is slight, even more so than with the Etruscans, and Cornell may have done better to limit himself to his own recognition that valid evidence for the ‘Roman hoplite’ is both slim and open to manipulation.<sup>10</sup>

Possibly the most convincing refutation of the idea that Rome utilized Greek-style hoplite warfare comes from a logical evaluation of early Roman society. There was undoubtedly significant Greek influence on early Rome, especially via trade, but it is difficult to say to what extent these influences altered Roman institutions.<sup>11</sup> Rome

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<sup>4</sup> Museo Archeologico di Firenze n. 363F. Other examples include the bronze figurines wearing Greek helmets from Northern Etruria ca. 600 BC: see W. Lamb, *Greek and Roman Bronzes* (London 1929) 80 pl. 24a. For a comprehensive record of hoplite-style weaponry finds in ancient Etruria and Rome, see P. F. Stary, *Zur Eisenzeitlichen Bewaffnung und Kampfweise auf der Iberischen Halbinsel* 1-2 (Mainz 1981).

<sup>5</sup> T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-246 BC)* (London 1995) 151-72.

<sup>6</sup> For discussion, see M. I. Finley, *Aspects of Antiquity: Discoveries and Controversies* (London 1968) 101-06.

<sup>7</sup> R. M. Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans* (Glasgow 1976) 31.

<sup>8</sup> For discussion, see Cornell [5] 164f.

<sup>9</sup> Cornell [5] 171.

<sup>10</sup> Cornell [5] 17; Rich [3] 17. L. Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (London 1984) 17 exemplifies this pro-Greek bias; he asserts that Rome obtained the hoplite phalanx from Greece, whilst providing no evidence to back up his claim. For an example of post-Second World War, pro-Etruscan scholarship, see A. C. Vaughan, *Those Mysterious Etruscans* (New York 1964).

<sup>11</sup> K. A. Raaflaub, ‘The Conflict of the Orders in Archaic Rome: A Comprehensive and Comparative Approach’, in K. A. Raaflaub (ed.), *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome: New Perspectives on the Conflict of the Orders* (Malden 2005) 18.



certainly did utilize hoplite weaponry, but there is a significant difference between adopting elements of an institution and adopting the institution itself.<sup>12</sup> As modern scholars and the Greeks themselves point out (Tyrt. *Eleg.* 12.10f.), hoplite warfare is related to a certain kind of egalitarian social structure, one that cannot be plausibly transposed onto early Rome.<sup>13</sup> It is not that Rome was physically unable to raise a hoplite phalanx; it is rather that hoplite warfare would have been unsuited to a society whose war-mindset essentially consisted of raiding and plundering in small gentilicial groups with client-based support.<sup>14</sup> Admittedly, this type of small-scale raider-warfare largely ended after the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BC, when the dominance of the consular tribunate indicates a shift towards larger-scale conflict.<sup>15</sup> Continuity in war-mentality, however, can be extrapolated from the example of the Macedonian Wars, where the flexibility of the Roman legions was a decisive factor in the defeat of Perseus.<sup>16</sup> A flexible style of fighting stems more logically from a raider-style military tradition than from one of strictly regimented phalanx formations.

To understand the ‘student to master’ motif, one must also reject the notion that it formed part of the Roman consciousness from the outset. The main issue at stake here is that many sources from the late Roman republic and early Roman empire exhibit what almost amounts to a sense of shame over how culturally backward early Rome was, giving credence to the idea that Rome only progressed by adopting from ‘superior’ nations, such as Greece. This is the impression given by Horace who claims that, before the introduction of Greek culture, Rome was *ferus* (‘savage’, ‘uncivilized’, *Epist.* 2.1.156-67; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 6.847-53). The same theme is repeated by Plutarch, who recalls the Rome that existed before 211BC:

οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶχεν οὐδ’ ἐγίνωσκε πρότερον τῶν κομψῶν καὶ περιττῶν, οὐδ’ ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ χάριεν τοῦτο καὶ γλαφυρὸν ἀγαπώμενον, ὅπλων δὲ βαρβαρικῶν καὶ λαφύρων ἐναίμων ἀνάπλεως οὔσα, καὶ περιεστεφανωμένη θριάμβων ὑπομνήμασι καὶ τροπαίοις, οὐχ ἰλαρὸν οὐδ’ ἄφοβον οὐδὲ δειλῶν ἦν θέαμα καὶ τρυφόντων θεατῶν.  
(Plut. *Marc.* 21.2)

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<sup>12</sup> See Cornell [5] 166.

<sup>13</sup> Rich [3] 17; J.-C. Richard, ‘Patricians and Plebeians: The Origin of a Social Dichotomy’, in Raaflaub (ed.) [11] 113.

<sup>14</sup> C. J. Smith, *The Roman Clan: The Gens from Ancient Ideology to Modern Anthropology* (Cambridge 2006) 296. For the ‘raider’ element of early Roman warfare, see the depiction of Sextus with the Gabii (Liv. 1.53.4-54.10). For the importance of the *gentes* (‘clans’) and *clientes* (‘clients’) as the driving force behind early Roman warfare, consider the actions of the Fabii at Cremera (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 9.15).

<sup>15</sup> G. Forsythe, *A Critical History of Early Rome: From Prehistory to the First Punic War* (Berkeley 2005) 234-39.

<sup>16</sup> T. Everson, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: Arms and Armour from the Heroes of Homer to Alexander the Great* (Stroud 2004) 176.

Before this time Rome neither had nor knew about such elegant and exquisite productions, nor was there any love there for such graceful and subtle art; but filled full with barbaric arms and bloody spoils, and crowned round about with memorials and trophies of triumphs, she was not a gladdening or a reassuring sight, nor one for unwarlike and luxurious spectators.

The physical evidence, however, weighs decidedly against the notion that Rome possessed a corporate sense of cultural inferiority on the eve of the Punic War, when (as will be argued) the 'student to master' motif developed. Rome in the middle republic was not a culturally or fiscally poor community, producing in 396-272 BC seventeen public temples, an aqueduct, a road from Tiber to Capua, and a wide variety of high-quality pottery, terracotta sculpture, cups and miniature altars.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, McDonnell describes fourth and early-third century BC Rome as 'a place of considerable cultural and artistic sophistication'.<sup>18</sup> Arguably, the liminal moment for the development of a Roman 'cultural cringe' was the sack of Syracuse in 212 BC and the subsequent display of Greek culture at Rome which, McDonnell suggests, 'changed Rome's aesthetic sensibilities'.<sup>19</sup> Livy supports this idea and writes of the Syracusan spoils:

ceterum inde primum initium mirandi Graecarum artium opera licentiaeque hinc sacra profanaque omnia uolgo spoliandi factum est, quae postremo in Romanos deos, templum id ipsum primum quod a Marcello eximie ornatum est, uertit.

(Livy 25.40.2.2-5)

Their removal to Rome was the origin of our admiration of Greek art and started the universal and reckless spoliation of all buildings sacred and profane which prevails today, and which ultimately turned us against our own Roman gods, beginning with the very temple which Marcellus so splendidly adorned.

The massive influx of Greek luxury items to Rome in the second and first centuries BC caused a backlash from prominent individuals, including Cato the Elder, against the new decadence (perceived or otherwise). The force of this backlash was a romanticized ideal of simple, pre-Greek, traditional Roman virtue, and it seems that this resulted in an anachronistic downplay of native Roman cultural ability (e.g., Livy 25.40; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 23.1-4).

The history of Rome's foundation myth of Aeneas also testifies that on the eve of the Punic Wars, Romans did not essentially define themselves in relation to Greece. The Aeneas myth is first recorded in Homer, *Iliad* 20 and, in light of the classical pedigree that it offered, it was a myth that Rome unsurprisingly adopted. During the

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<sup>17</sup> M. McDonnell, 'Roman Aesthetics and the Spoils of Syracuse', in S. Dillon and K. E. Welch (edd.), *Representations of War in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 2006) 68.

<sup>18</sup> McDonnell [17] 69-72.

<sup>19</sup> McDonnell [17] 74-84.

early to mid-republican period, however, the Roman reception of the myth was quite different to that of the Greek-compatibility version presented in Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>20</sup> Pausanias records that during the Pyrrhic Wars:

ταῦτα λεγόντων τῶν πρέσβων μνήμη τὸν Πύρρον τῆς ἀλώσεως ἐσῆλθε  
τῆς Ἰλίου, καὶ οἱ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἤλπιζε χωρήσειν πολεμοῦντι· στρατεύειν  
γὰρ ἐπὶ Τρώων ἀποίκους Ἀχιλλέως ὦν ἀπόγονος.

(Paus. 1.12.1.12-15)

When the envoys urged these considerations, Pyrrhus remembered the capture of Troy, which he took to be an omen of his success in the war, as he was a descendant of Achilles making war upon a colony of Trojans.

In the mid-third century BC, Pyrrhus saw Rome as Greece's traditional enemy, a sentiment that Rome also capitalized on immediately following Pyrrhus' defeat in 263 BC, when it sought the aid of Segesta on the basis of shared Trojan lineage (Cic. *Verr.* 4.72). It appears that, at this time, Rome was defining itself in opposition to Greece, rather than in relation to it.<sup>21</sup>

Having argued that, on the eve of the First Punic War, the 'student to master' motif was neither true nor believed by the Romans, this section will examine the history of Greek literary interest in Rome, and will argue that this motif was created by Greek historians in the wake of Rome's conquest of Magna Graecia and Pyrrhus' Roman defeat. The first recorded mention of Rome in Greek literature is from the end of the fifth century BC by Hellanicus of Lesbos and Damastes of Sigeum; but to these writers at this early stage, Rome would have meant little more than a name (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.72.1f. [= Hellan. *FGrH* 4 F 84; Damast. *FGrH* 5 F 3]).<sup>22</sup> The Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BC is mentioned by several Greek authors including Heraclides Ponticus, although Greek knowledge of Rome must still have been limited as Heraclides calls Rome a Greek city (Plut. *Cam.* 22.2f.). During the late-fourth century BC, however, Greek interest in Rome seems to have increased dramatically, which is not surprising when one considers that over the course of the three Samnite Wars (343-290 BC) Rome had pressed hard up against the southern Italian cities of Magna Graecia. When Rome invaded Tarentum in 281 BC, the Tarentines called on Pyrrhus of Epirus for aid, precipitating a war that led directly to the Roman conquest of Pyrrhus' Greek-Italian allies. In the wars against the Samnites and the Lucanians, Rome engulfed about 150 formerly independent south Italian communities, plunging

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<sup>20</sup> Cornell [5] 65.

<sup>21</sup> For comprehensive analysis of the Roman reception of the Aeneas myth, see J. N. Bremmer and N. M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London 1987); G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton 1969); E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca 1992) 6-51; N. M. Horsfall, 'The Aeneas-Legend and the *Aeneid*', *Vergilius* 32 (1986) 8-17; R. F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Cornell [5] 64.

itself deep into the Hellenistic world.<sup>23</sup> It is hard to overemphasize how dramatic the Roman defeat of Pyrrhus would have been to a mid-third century BC Greek mind, especially without the hindsight of Rome's future conquests; and it is no surprise that around this time one sees what Cornell calls a 'flurry of historical research into Rome and the Romans' by Greek writers.<sup>24</sup> It is against this context that the development of the 'student to master' motif should be read.

Similarities in the three key literary examples of the Roman 'student to master' motif—Diodorus Siculus (23.2), the *Ineditum Vaticanum*,<sup>25</sup> and Athenaeus (6.106.4-24)—suggest that each drew on a common and prior source, possibly that of Timaeus of Tauromenium.<sup>26</sup> This is a difficult assertion to prove, as little of Timaeus' work remains extant, but what is known from various accounts and fragments marks him out as the most likely and logical candidate. Timaeus was born in the Sicilian town of Tauromenium ca. 350 BC, was exiled to Athens ca. 315 BC, and possibly returned to Sicily ca. 265 BC, and died in 260 BC.<sup>27</sup> According to Polybius, Timaeus wrote a history of Rome whose narrative carried down at least to Rome's crossing into Sicily in 264 BC (Polyb. 1.5.1 [= Timae. *FGrH* 566 T 6a]; 12.4.1-8). Timaeus was perhaps the most important and influential historian between Ephorus and Polybius and, by the time of Polybius, he had firmly established the history of the Greek West.<sup>28</sup> It is perhaps a measure of his influence that Polybius marks him out for such

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<sup>23</sup> M. T. Boatwright, D. J. Gargola and R. J. A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (New York 2004) 90-94.

<sup>24</sup> Cornell [5] 8. See also K. S. Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton 1990) 119.

<sup>25</sup> Von Arnim [2].

<sup>26</sup> Cornell [5] 170 n. 72. Both Diodorus and Athenaeus have reputations as ciphers, and are known to have drawn heavily on Timaeus as a source; see P. Bonnechere, *F. Jacoby: Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker: Indexes of Ancient Authors 3: Alphabetical List of Fragmentary Historians with Alphabetical List of Source-Authors for Each* (Leiden 1999) 410-15; J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford 1981) 21; T. J. Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London 1997) 106; W. M. Edwards, R. Browning and N. G. Wilson, 'Athenaeus (1)', in S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (edd.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>3</sup> (Oxford 1996) 202. The *Ineditum Vaticanum* is a more problematic source as its authorship, date and origins are unknown. Some have suggested that Fabius Pictor may have composed it, although this now seems unlikely: see T. R. S. Broughton and M. L. Patterson, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* 1 (New York 1951) 203; cf. E. Badian, 'Kaeso and the Carthaginian', *CR* 14.2 (1964) 139f. Nevertheless, the fact that the work was written in Greek around the period of the Punic Wars suggests that it may have been one of the other early Roman historians writing in Greek and who, due to Timaeus' eminence in Western historiography at this time, would no doubt have used him as a source: see M. Grant, *Greek and Roman Historians: Information and Misinformation* (London 1995) 112-14.

<sup>27</sup> K. Meister, 'Timaeus (2)', *OCD*<sup>3</sup> [26] 1526f.

<sup>28</sup> L. Pearson, *The Greek Historians of the West: Timaeus and His Predecessors* (Atlanta 1987) 1.

harsh and clearly personal criticism in book 12 of his history, which indicates that Polybius viewed Timaeus as a serious rival (Polyb. 12.3.2).<sup>29</sup> In the mould of Xenophon to Thucydides, Polybius picks up his narrative where Timaeus left off, providing a sort of underhand acknowledgement of Timaeus' importance; Polybius makes no attempt to supplant his predecessor.<sup>30</sup> Very little is known about the purpose of Timaeus' work, but it seems reasonable to assume, given the historical context and the nature of Polybius' work written soon afterwards, that Timaeus sought to rationalize Rome's rise to power for the benefit of his Greek audience. It can also be assumed that Timaeus had a personal interest in this topic, for it is recorded that his home town sided with Pyrrhus against Rome and that Timaeus wrote a separate monograph on the Greek king (Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.2; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.6.1). These facts render Timaeus as the prime candidate for the creator of the 'student to master' motif.

The other possible contender for this position is Hieronymus of Cardia who wrote a history stretching from Alexander's death in 323 BC to at least the death of Pyrrhus in 272 BC.<sup>31</sup> Dionysius states that Hieronymus was the first Greek historian to write an account of Rome's earliest history, and that Hieronymus included a description of Rome's war with Pyrrhus (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.6.1). As Hornblower writes, this indicates that Hieronymus, like Timaeus, also sought to rationalize Pyrrhus' inability to secure victory against Rome.<sup>32</sup> Hieronymus had a strong influence on later writers including Athenaeus, Dionysius, Lucian and Plutarch, and it is highly possible that he either created or helped to propagate the 'student to master' motif.<sup>33</sup>

The preceding section of this essay established the historical context around the time of the Punic Wars and suggested that, combined with the evidence concerning Timaeus and Hieronymus, it is both probable and logical that this was when Rome's 'student to master' motif developed. Another historical context must now be established, that of the late-third to first centuries BC, in order to understand how Rome came to accept this motif into its national psyche. Rome's first major intrusion into the Greek world occurred in 229 BC when Rome crossed into Illyria to fight piracy, cultivating the friendship of various Greek states; Polybius emphasizes this event as key in the growth of Rome's power (2.2.1f.). In 219 BC Rome fought again in Illyria against Demetrius of Pharos, and through subsequent wars against Philip V (215-205 BC and 201-196 BC), the Aetolians and Antiochus III (192-189 BC), and Perseus of Macedonia (171-168 BC); and then finally, with the defeat of the Achaean League and the sack of Corinth (150-146 BC), Rome gained control of the entire

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<sup>29</sup> Grant [26] 63.

<sup>30</sup> S. Usher, *The Historians of Greece and Rome* (London 1969) 104.

<sup>31</sup> A. B. Bosworth, 'Hieronymus (1)', *OCD*<sup>3</sup> [26] 706.

<sup>32</sup> Hornblower [26] 248.

<sup>33</sup> Bonnechere [26] 303; Bosworth [31] 706.

Greek East.<sup>34</sup> During this period, Rome was dramatically affected by Hellenistic cultural influences. Greeks poured into Rome as hostages, tutors, doctors and philosophers, and there was a massive influx of Greek luxury items into Rome, especially following the plunder of cities such as Syracuse and Corinth.<sup>35</sup> As has been stated, this influx brought about a change in Rome's aesthetic tastes; for example, it is during the account of Fulvius Nobilior's sack of Ambracia in 188 BC that one sees the first indication of Romans considering their traditional terracotta statues to be old-fashioned (Plin. *HN* 35.66). With the war against Mithridates in 88 BC and the civil wars of Caesar-Pompey and Octavian-Antony, Greece again became a major Roman battleground, with many Greek goods being commandeered by Roman forces.<sup>36</sup> It is against this context of both a massive influx and a growing acceptance of Hellenistic culture at Rome that the 'student to master' motif seems to have taken hold.

This onset of Greek culture at Rome dramatically impacted upon Latin literature which developed essentially in relation to its Greek counterpart, and which is where the 'student to master' motif became firmly established. Indeed, Alcock summarizes this period as one of 'reverse cultural imperialism', the sentiment captured so vividly in Horace's famous line *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio* ('captive Greece seized her wild conqueror and carried the arts into rustic Latium', *Epist.* 2.1.156f.).<sup>37</sup> Rome's first poet, Livius Andronicus (ca. 284-204 BC), was a Greek from Tarentum and translated Homer's *Odyssey* into Latin. Ennius (239-169 BC) wrote the first Latin epic, the *Annals*, covering Roman history from the sack of Troy, self-consciously modelling his work on the Homeric examples. The earliest Roman historians wrote in Greek, and Roman comedians, such as Terence, drew on Greek exemplars.<sup>38</sup> In this context, Romans began to make a 'positive virtue' of the notion that they owed institutions and customs to other peoples, with the idea that they had conquered their cultural superiors even becoming a source of pride.<sup>39</sup> It is important not to extend this idea too far and to artificially impose this paradigm onto every Roman text from the late Roman republic onwards; indeed there are clear examples of Romans being highly critical of Greek practices,

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<sup>34</sup> Boatwright *et al.* [23] 130-34.

<sup>35</sup> F. W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*<sup>2</sup> (London 1992) 228-51.

<sup>36</sup> S. E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge 1993) 13. Servius Sulpicius Rufus' letter to Cicero, written in 45 BC, vividly depicts several recently sacked Greek towns (Cic. *Fam.* 4.5.4).

<sup>37</sup> Alcock [36] 2.

<sup>38</sup> C. R. Beye, *Ancient Epic Poetry: Homer, Apollonius, Virgil. With a Chapter on the Gilgamesh Poems* (Wauconda 2006) 224; N. Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks* (Athens 1974) 141-62; Walbank [35] 247f.

<sup>39</sup> Cornell [5] 170. It is in this light that one can understand the eagerness of Caesar, for example, to laud Rome's practice of adopting institutions from other nations (Sall. *Cat.* 51.37-42).

such as Martial on the subject of Greek unmanliness (*Epig.* 2.86).<sup>40</sup> Pliny's letter to Maximus, governor of Achaia, however, preserves a sentiment that may perhaps be taken as a valid indication of the general Roman attitude to Greece by the imperial period:

Cogita te missum in prouinciam Achaïam, illam ueram et meram Graeciam, in qua primum humanitas litterae, etiam fruges inuentae esse creduntur . . . Sit apud te honor antiquitati, sit ingentibus factis, sit fabulis quoque. Nihil ex cuiusquam dignitate, nihil ex libertate, nihil etiam ex iactatione decerpseris. Habe ante oculos hanc esse terram, quae nobis miserit iura, quae leges non uictis sed petentibus dederit . . .

(Plin. *Ep.* 8.24.2.1-4.3)

Consider that you are to be sent to the province of Achaia, that real, genuine Greece where politeness, learning and even agriculture are supposed to have first arisen . . . Cherish sentiments of respect for their antiquity, their colossal achievements, and even for their legends. Let no man's dignity, liberty, or vanity, suffer the least diminution at your hands. Remember it was from this land we derived our legal code, that she gave us laws not by right of conquest, but as a favor.

This essay has approached the issue of Rome's 'student to master' motif in four stages. First, it was argued that the motif is both archaeologically and logically an inaccurate model for Roman development up to the Punic Wars, particularly in the field of military technology. Secondly, it was argued that, due to a total lack of evidence, the motif cannot be attributed to some deep-set 'cultural cringe' in Rome's national psyche. Thirdly, it was proposed that, due to a combination of literary evidence and reason, the motif most likely originated with one or both of the Greek historians Timaeus and Hieronymus, in the wake of Pyrrhus' defeat and Rome's conquest of Magna Graecia, and in order to rationalize Roman military successes to a Greek audience. Finally, it was suggested that the reason Rome had accepted the motif by the early imperial period was due to the massive influx of Greek culture into Rome from the late-third century BC, which changed Roman aesthetic tastes and resulted in the development of a sense of cultural inferiority. It was in this environment that the motif seems to have been picked up by the Romans, developed into a virtue, and applied anachronistically to their history.

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<sup>40</sup> For other examples and a discussion of Roman criticism of the Greeks, see Petrochilos [38] 35-54; A. Wardman, *Rome's Debt to Greece* (London 1976) xiv.

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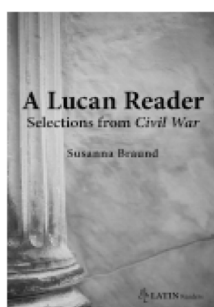
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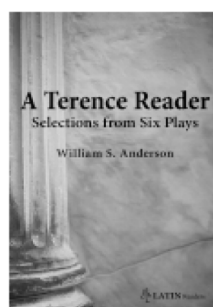


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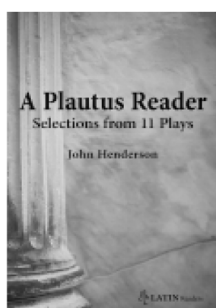
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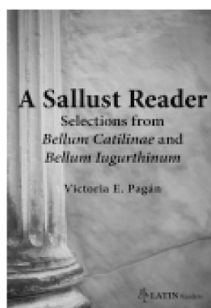
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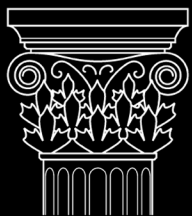
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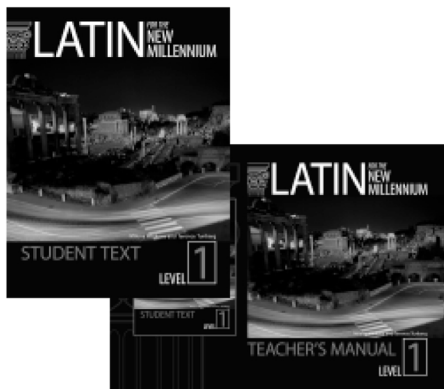


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