

The background is a classical painting depicting a scene with several figures. On the left, a figure in a blue and red robe is seen from the back, looking towards the center. In the center, a nude figure is in a dynamic, possibly dancing or falling pose. On the right, another figure in a red and blue robe is visible, holding a circular object. The background shows a landscape with trees and a distant horizon under a blue sky with clouds.

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Ostraka has been part of Durham University's Classics Society since 2018. In 2023, we moved from an online blog to a peer-reviewed journal. We are now accredited by the British Library and accept submissions about Classics and Ancient History from undergraduates all over the world. Our authors have the chance to explore topics of personal interest outside their degrees, and to have their academic and creative work published.

During the Classical era, *Ostraka* were sherds of fired clay used to vote in political elections at Athens. The politician with the most votes would be banished ("ostracised") from Athens for ten years. While *The Ostraka Journal* does not banish students forever should their work be rejected during a publication cycle, each publication represents a unique undergraduate voice and argument; each one stands out like an individual Athenian politician, bringing to mind the Classical roots of *Ostraka's* name.

At *The Ostraka Journal*, we define the domain of Classics and Ancient History as anything falling between the Chalcolithic (c.2500 BCE) to the Fall of the Roman Empire (476 CE), and within the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Near East. However, this is a flexible guideline, and exceptions to these parameters are considered on a case-by-case basis. We appreciate creativity and variety.

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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It's difficult to not feel nostalgic looking over my time with *Ostraka* while writing this on the train away from university and towards my year of placement. It feels appropriate that my second year at Durham has started and ended with *Ostraka* by my side. Overseeing this year's edition has been an absolute privilege, and I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to coordinate - and more importantly learn a lot from - all the incredible Classics and Ancient History submissions by students from across the UK and Europe this year.

My experience with the Journal over the past academic year has been hectic but incredibly rewarding: coordinating editors, proof-reading submissions and developing a new blog on the website are just a few of the things that kept me busy! I've had the pleasure of building on Ros' beautiful website and leaving my own legacy: creating a new blog for *Ostraka* named '*Bits and Pieces*'. Through this initiative I hope to have created more opportunities for students to write and submit shorter, informal pieces that interest them in the field of Classics and Ancient History. Thank you so much to Yunsu Geng, Kitty Frith and Katie Morrissey for working with me to bring this to life. Another thanks goes to Jack Pemberton, without whose kindness and technical skills the final edition would not have been compiled!

I would like to extend the biggest thank you, however, to last year's Editor-in-Chief: Rosalind Watkin. You've been my *Ostraka* rock throughout the year, and I envy your superhuman organisational abilities. Your beautiful handover document and patience for all my questions have been incredible.

It's been so worthwhile taking on this new form of responsibility outside of my degree, and I'm glad that I've been able to take on a project that is so meaningful. My contribution to *Ostraka* this year has been a testament to my degree in Classical Civilisation, and I'm proud to be one of many people representing Arts and Humanities in Durham. A huge congratulations to all of those who submitted this year, and I hope you enjoy this edition!

Durham
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ACADEMIC PAPERS

THE RITUAL ROLE OF THE ORPHIC LAMELLAE: A CASE STUDY OF PELINNA A AND THURII 1

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The so-called ‘Orphic Leaves’, or lamellae, are a group of small golden leaves inscribed with hexametrical verse found in graves from Italy, Crete, and Thessaly.¹ They are both text and artefact, providing instructions for the dead once they reach the underworld.² Zuntz, in *Persephone*, provided the categorisation of the lamellae into ‘A’ and ‘B’ texts, with the A texts, marked by those from Thurii, focusing on Persephone and the purity of the soul, and the B texts, as exemplified by the Petelia and Hipponium leaves, focusing on geographical landmarks in the Underworld and on guiding the initiate in finding their way.³ The Orphic element of the lamellae is inferred from the emphasis on the salvation of the soul and katabasis, as also attested in other ‘Orphic’ literature such as the *Argonautika* and *Orphic Hymns*.⁴ The Orphic associations within the lamellae, however, are perhaps less potent than that of the Dionysiac; as clearly attested to in the Bacchic symbolism indicated by the ivy and thyrsus shape of the Pelinna and Pherai leaves, respectively; the maenad statuette found outside the sarcophagus at Pelinna; as well as the repeated mention of Bacchus throughout the texts as the saviour of souls.⁵

This study will analyse both the Pelinna A and Thurii 1 texts as a means of positing the potential ritual role of the Orphic leaves. It will begin with an investigation of the context and significance of the Thurii 1 leaf and will then argue that the text would fit suitably within an initiatory ritual involving supplication to the chthonic deities, with particular emphasis on Persephone. It will do this by adopting Jauregui’s⁶ comparison between Odysseus’s supplication to Queen Arete⁷ and the structure of the scene within the Thurii text. After analysing the context and significance of the Pelinna leaf as a bridge between the A and B texts, it will also argue for a ritual role regarding supplication, albeit with a slight modification or shortening. I will then maintain that the poetic structure of both texts, as exemplified by Pelinna, are suited for recitation; with the Pelinna leaf using rhythmic effect and a sense of urgency and relief within a ring composition, to create a dramatic scene that would be particularly suited for oral transmission.⁸ The study will suggest that this oral transmission would likely be part of a funerary ritual, with the aorist ἔθανες indicating the event of dying would have already passed by the time of recitation.⁹

¹ Petrovich 2016, 250

² Jenner 2012, 45

³ Zuntz 1971, 277-383; Petrovich 2016, 251

⁴ Petrovich 2016, 250

⁵ Jenner 2012, 46

⁶ 2013, 34-8

⁷ Od. 7.146-52

⁸ Segal 1990, 413-14

⁹ Segal 1990, 414

The Thurii lamellae are a group of three golden tablets unearthed from the same burial mound in Southern Italy, dated to the mid 4th century BCE.¹⁰ I maintain that the two main ritual roles of the Thurii lamellae are supplication and confirmation of purification or initiation. Jauregui¹¹ provides a compelling comparison between the supplication of Odysseus to Queen Arete¹² and the elements of supplication in the Thurii leaves. He outlines the six elements of parallel structure between the scenes as: invocation, declaration of arrival as suppliant and claiming of one's rights, reference to past hardships, reference to persecution at the hands of another, petition for protection, and the welcome and guarantee of help if the host(ess) chooses to demonstrate generosity. The reference to past hardships and persecution at the hands of others is particularly important within the Thurii 1 text, with the narrator describing their vanquishing by Fate and Lightning- striker's bolt and the suffering incurred in the βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο ('wheel of heavy grief'), which is symbolic of the suffering of life as opposed to the blessings of immortality awaiting the initiate in the Underworld. This reference connects the Thurii 'A' texts with the 'B' texts, where the initiate is described as being 'parched with thirst and dying,'¹³ and being instructed to seek help from the chthonic deities and guardians, reminiscent of the suffering faced by the Thurii narrator and the ritual role of supplication within the lamellae.

Perhaps the most significant point in the Thurii 1 leaf is the double invocation and declaration in line one of ἐρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶν κοθαρά ('pure, I come from the pure'), which is at once an invocation to the 'pure' chthonic deities, a declaration of the initiates' own purity, and a claiming of the initiates' rights as one of the pure or initiated. The narrator of this text and the other Thurii texts speaks in the female gender and the first personal singular, which may indicate they were written for or by female initiate(s), or perhaps that the 'narrator' is actually the soul, which has a feminine gender in the Greek.¹⁴ Furthermore, as argued by Petrovich (2016), the focus on purity in the Thurii tablets suggests that the initiate perhaps underwent expiatory purification in the context of a mystery ritual or by observing particular precepts such as 'vegetarianism, abstinence from eggs and beans, and sexual moderation.'¹⁵ The term κοθαρά is also found within Plato's myth of Er, in the conclusion to the Republic (10.614-10.621), in which the souls of wrongdoers become pure through punishment in the Underworld.¹⁶ In this story, however, the purification happens after death, whereas in the Thurii 1 leaf the initiate is already pure when entering the Underworld. This indicates that the initiate was required to prove the purity they had acquired through previous initiation to the chthonic deities in order to be excepted amongst the ὀλβιον, for which the lamellae provides instruction.

The Pelinna leaves are two ivy-shaped gold tablets found in a woman's sarcophagus in Thessaly, dated to around 325-300 BCE.¹⁷ The Dionysiac associations within these lamellae are potent; not only from the ivy shape of the leaves, but also from the maenad statuette found

¹⁰ Jenner 2016, 7

¹¹ Jauregui 2013, 34-8

¹² Od. 7.146-52

¹³ Jenner 2016, 16-31

¹⁴ Petrovich 2016, 253

¹⁵ Petrovich 2016, 254

¹⁶ Torjussen 2008, 76

¹⁷ Segal 1990, 412; Jenner 2016, 35

outside of the sarcophagus,¹⁸ and the mention of ‘Bakkhios’ himself in line two of the texts. The texts are labelled ‘A’ and ‘B’, both being identical except that the B text omits lines 4 and 7 from the A text. The discovery of the Pelinna leaves in 1985 had a major impact on the understanding of the Orphic lamellae, as the texts overrode the boundaries of Zuntz’s categorisation, sharing both the Bacchic associations of the B texts, and the prominence of Persephone for entrance into the Underworld and the ‘milk formula’ of the A texts.¹⁹

The Pelinna A text is particularly significant for positing the potential recitation or memorisation ritual role of the Orphic lamellae. As Segal²⁰ maintains, the rhythmic effect of the verse-beginnings of lines three – six (ταῦρος εἰς... αἶψα εἰς... κριὸς εἰς...οἶνον ἔχεις) would be suited for oral performance. Furthermore, the use of the second personal singular throughout the text, as opposed to the first personal singular in the Thurii leaves, implies that the texts were part of a ritual performance, spoken by somebody who was not the initiate; likely within a mystery cult or funeral setting. A funerary context for this performance can be inferred from both the context of the Orphic leaves being found or being previously taken from burial chambers and mounds and the use of the aorist ἔθανες rather than the future indicative in line one of the Pelinna texts, indicating that the moment of death had already passed by the time of recitation.²¹

As Janko²² argues, the extent of agreement between the Orphic lamellae ‘precludes coincidence’, and in fact suggests that there was an archetypal version of the texts used for ritual recitation; the differences between the texts being simply a result of mis-memorisation and the difficulties of writing on such a small, expensive surface.²³ This can be seen within the Pelinna text, with the rhythmic effect previously mentioned being suited for memorisation and the dramatic expression of νῦν and εἰπεῖν in lines one and two – compared with the calm effect of the last line with the promises of blessings – creating a sense of drama appropriate for oral performance.²⁴ However, the creation of an archetype, as proposed by Janko, although useful for understanding the similarities between texts and bridging gaps already filled by the ‘other texts’ (Pelinna, Pherai 1 and 2 and Amphipolis²⁵), would necessarily obscure the uniqueness of each text and prevent exploration into the special insights that can be gleaned when looking at them individually; such as the differences in effect of the first person singular of the Thurii leaves versus the second person singular of the majority of the other texts.

The Pelinna leaves also fit within the supplication framework provided by Jauregui,²⁶ albeit with a slight shortening compared with the Thurii lamellae. The Pelinna text includes a declaration of arrival, as indicated in line one with νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἅματι τῷδε (‘now you died and now you came into being, thrice blessed, on this very same day’). The claiming of one’s rights within line two is less distinct than the claim of the Thurii 1 narrator to be of the γένος ὀλβιον, however, is more instructive than Thurii, indicating that the

¹⁸ Jenner 2012, 46

¹⁹ Graf 1993, 250

²⁰ Segal 1990, 413

²¹ Segal 1990, 414

²² Janko, 2016, 105

²³ Janko, 2016, 105

²⁴ Segal 1990, 414

²⁵ Jenner 2016, 33-41

²⁶ Jauregui 2013, 34-8

initiate should εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόναι σ' ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε ('say to Persephone that Bakkhios himself released you'). The reference to suffering and persecution at the hands of another is missing entirely from the supplication framework of Pelinna, whereas at Thurii the theological and eschatological narrative of lines three – four provide evidence of persecution and suffering to the initiate caused by Fate (and other immortal gods) and Lightning-Striker's bolt. The ending scenes of both the Thurii and Pelinna lamellae provide a sense of guaranteed help or reward for the initiate gained through the supplication of the initiate in life and in the Underworld to Persephone and the other chthonic deities, with the Thurii 1 leaf focusing on the immortality awaiting the narrator and the Pelinna text promising τιμὴν ... ὑπὸ γῆν.

The indication in the Pelinna text that the initiate had already formed some kind of agreement or bond with Bacchus before reaching the Underworld, and yet some kind of supplication to Persephone is still expected in the line εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόναι σ' ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε is important for understanding the ritual role of the leaves. This indicates that the initiation rituals performed by the initiates of the lamellae during their lives were focused on Bacchus rather than Persephone, and that the role of Persephone within these rituals was perhaps more of a thought for once the initiate had reached the Underworld, hence the requirement of the Orphic lamellae to provide this ritual instruction. This is less apparent in the Thurii leaf, as Persephone and Bacchus (Εὐβουλεύς?), are mentioned together without indication of any previous 'releasing' by Bacchus as at Pelinna.

The Thurii and Pelinna lamellae have a ritual role of providing instruction to the initiate, both through physical instruction ('say to Persephone that Bakkhios himself released you') and by postulating a theo-philosophical narrative that serves as religious and philosophical instruction within the context of the Orphic-Bacchic mystery cult. Within the Thurii lamellae, the word κύκλος in the 5th line points to the notion of rebirth and has been used by scholars to link the lamellae with the Orphic-Pythagorean concept of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul after death, despite the word being found only within the Thurii leaves and ergo not likely playing a major role in the cultic rituals even at Thurii.²⁷ The 'falling into milk' motif in the Pelinna and Thurii leaves, as well as throughout the 'A' texts, is reminiscent of the maenad's suckling of wild animals within the Bacchae,²⁸ and the combination of wine and milk in the context of 'Bakkhios' releasing' has similarities to the wine, milk, and honey shared between the maenads after they loose 'the bonds of their fawnskins' again in the Bacchae.²⁹ This indicates a symbolic Dionysiac association within the Orphic lamellae, which may potentially have been included within the ritual with the offering or ritual drinking of milk and wine.

After considering this varying evidence, it is clear that both the Thurii and Pelinna 'Orphic' lamellae provide evidence for the ritual importance of supplication and oral recitation or memorisation within the context of the mystery cult. The Pelinna text is particularly useful in understanding the rhythmic language of the texts and the dramatic tone effected by the ring-composition present in lines one – seven, and for expressing the possibility of a ritual recitation of the lamellae in a funeral context with the use of the second person throughout and the aorist

²⁷ Torjussen 2008, 75

²⁸ Eur. 599-702

²⁹ Segal 1990, 415

ἔθανες being preferred over the future indicative in line one.³⁰ The Thurii leaf, on the other hand, is significant for its narrative framing comparable to supplication scenes in wider Greek literature, particularly in Odysseus' supplication to Queen Arete in the *Odyssey* Book Seven.³¹

Both lamellae I have examined fit within the context of other Orphic lamellae, with both exhibiting associations with Bacchus, Persephone, and the other chthonic deities, and providing the 'falling into milk' motif prevalent within Zuntz' 'A' texts. Furthermore, both texts also give an insight into the ritual instruction given to initiates, likely as part of a ritual during life that was to be remembered once in the Underworld, such as the Pelinna εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε ('say to Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you'), and the less instructive and more metaphorical Thurii 1 statement that the narrator ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι, δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας ('raced to win the crown I so desired, I sank beneath the breast of our mistress Queen of the Dead').

Overall, these texts are invaluable for providing a connection between Orphic literature and ritual. They have the potential to bridge the research gap between the Greek cults that have little to no archaeological evidence and the major cultic festivals such as the Eleusinian Mysteries through a conceptualisation of the possible ritual function of the lamellae. Further comparison between the ritual function of the lamellae and other cultic rituals across the Greek world would allow for Orphic concepts to be tied in with the wider Greek consciousness and archaeological landscape.

³⁰ Segal 1990, 415

³¹ Jauregui 2013, 34-8

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THE USE OF *EMPSYCHOS* IN ‘PSYCHOLOGICAL’ RESPONSES TO POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN STOIC AND PSEUDO-PYTHAGOREAN WRITINGS

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Two methodological difficulties must be addressed prior to the present discussion. First, ‘political authority’ has seen wholesale reconceptualization in post-Aristotelian, especially Hellenistic writings. Although the texts discussed in this paper come from various backgrounds and dates, it is necessary to establish first a common ground upon which we understand the generalities of ‘political authority’ applied. As Stoic influence peaked in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, the cosmic perspective of authority in the form of idealised kingship was more universally found. My focus will be on a set of less chronologically-bound Stoic doctrines, and the Pseudo-Pythagorean kingship treatises (*Περὶ Βασιλείας*), the dating of which I follow falls in the early imperial period when concepts of cosmopolitanism became most popular.¹ Second, the term ‘psychological’ demands clarification, as political thought in antiquity did not involve reflections of mental and behavioural aspects *stricto sensu*. I define ‘psychological’ therefore as ‘relating to the human soul’, retaining etymological faithfulness to the Greek *psychē*.² With such limitations in mind, I propose a theoretical unity centred around the notion of *empsychos*, as an apparatus for conceptualising the various responses of the soul to a cosmic-political authority.³ Section 2 establishes the metaphysical groundings supplied by what I call the ‘*cosmos empsychos*’, before considering the political implications of *empsychos* as extended in Stoic *oikeiōsis*; Section 3 moves to the discussion of the Archytan *nomos empsychos* and its effect on both ruler and ruled.

1. ‘*COSMOS EMPSYCHOS*’

I begin with ‘cosmopolitanism’, a defining feature of Hellenistic political thought. This view embraces the death of the polis which the early empire has brought upon its citizens. For them, the ultimate political authority is the world (*cosmos*).⁴ It is to this cosmic polis that a

¹ The dating of the *On Kingship* (*Περὶ Βασιλείας*) texts has been notoriously difficult; proposals range from 3rd BCE to 3rd CE; Calabi 2008, 185-88 summarises various views on dates of production; This uncertainty, however, allows a focus on theoretical unity of elements from different texts of the proposed period.

² Post-classical works of political philosophy after Plato should still consider the centrality of the soul.

³ Literally, ‘ensouled’, often ‘animate’; the *locus classicus* is most likely Plato’s *Phaedrus*, 245e: *πάν γὰρ σῶμα, ὃ μὲν ἐξῶθεν τὸ κινεῖσθαι, ἄψυχον, ὃ δὲ ἐνδοθεν αὐτῷ ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἔμψυχον, ὡς ταύτης οὐσης φύσεως ψυχῆς*.

⁴ I will use world and cosmos interchangeably in the Stoic context, which tend to equate God, Nature and the world-soul collectively as the highest authority; they apply to the same thing but should not be understood as a statement of identity, see Long 1986, 148.

Stoic citizen will first be associated. Seneca's passage here presents an orthodox view of what it means to be a citizen of the world:

duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et vere publicam qua di atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum sed terminos civitatis nostrae cum sole metimur, alteram cui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi. (Seneca *De otio* 4.1 = LS 67K)

'Let us take hold of the fact that there are two communities (*duas res publicas*) - the one, which is great and truly common (*magnam et vere publicam*), embracing gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our citizenship by the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by the accident of our birth'.⁵

The dual citizenship advocated by the Stoics is all-encompassing, even the king is subject to it. Marcus Aurelius recognises that: 'As Antoninus, my city and native land is Rome, as a human being it is the universe (*cosmos*). The only thing that is good for me is what benefits both these cities'.⁶ Yet the language of both examples seem to suggest that citizenship on earth is secondary and accidental whereas citizenship of the cosmos is prior and innate. This is evident from Seneca's 'by the accident of our birth', and Marcus' contrast of his official name inherited and his own essence as a human being. Marcus does not spell out what this essence is, but this is a given: for the soul in antiquity is thought to be the essence of man (Arist. *De Anima* 412b10). Since cosmic citizenship forms the basis of his essence, we must look to the soul to make sense of this new political relation. Diogenes Laertius records the Stoic argument for this:

ἔμψυχον [sc. τὸν κόσμον] δέ ὡς δῆλον ἐκ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ἐκεῖθεν οὐσης ἀποσπάματος. (Diogenes Laertius 7.143 = LS 53X)

'That the world is ensouled is evident, they [the Stoics] say, from our own soul's being an offshoot of it'.

Since Stoicism has kept the Platonic precedence of world-soul (*Ti* 34 ff), coextensive with the world-body, of which we are a part, the individual soul and the world-soul, as the argument put forth by Diogenes, function as parts and whole. Although the argument itself is a rather simplistic mereological one, such macrocosm-microcosm inference has been taken as an essential method in Stoic physics. What is significant here is the use of *empsychos* (*ἔμψυχον*), which helps us understand the nature of the world being the ultimate political authority. Since our soul contains rationality and thus the capacity to deliberate and practice politics, given that the individual soul is now part of the world-soul, the political response of the Stoic soul is a natural and metaphysical one, not a mere concern of conventions and moral duty.⁷ Political

⁵ LS = Long & Sedley 1987, translations follow LS.

⁶ VI. 44, tr. Hard 2011.

⁷ By 'natural' I follow the Stoic notion of 'living in accordance with Nature'; not the sense of Aristotelian naturalism.

obligation becomes a form of metaphysical participation; and there need be no talk of 'response' in this sense, for how can a part (the individual soul) cease to be part of a whole (the world-soul)?⁸

The metaphysical implications of *empsychos* could subsequently be applied to particular socio-political discussions. For the affinity between soul and world creates for the individual the awareness that: 1) he himself is *empsychos* for the soul is most essential to him, by this he perceives himself; 2) he is *empsychos* insofar as the world is *empsychos*, by this he perceives the externals, i.e. himself in relation to something else. This points to the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis* ('appropriation').

Two accounts of *oikeiōsis* are given: personal *oikeiōsis* (self-appropriation) and social *oikeiōsis* (directed towards others). Jacob Klein proposes a unifying view of the two, suggesting that the socio-political concern is naturally a cognitive extension of the personal.⁹ Klein's view seems to find support in Hierocles' *Foundations of Ethics*, where the author argues that *oikeiōsis* is, fundamentally, self-awareness, but at the same time, to be aware of oneself is to picture oneself in relation to others. This abstract psychological concept can be applied to the more immediate political context, as Marcus Aurelius reflects his relationship with his fellow citizens: '[...] I cannot be angry with my brother or hate him. We were born to work together, like a pair of hands, feet, or eyelids, like the rows of upper and lower teeth'.¹⁰ Marcus' point is one that could be better expressed through *oikeiōsis*. As Christopher Gill suggests that 'the key feature of social *oikeiōsis* is recognizing the fundamentally associative character of human nature and wanting to benefit others as well as ourselves'.¹¹ In Marcus' passage the language of parts and whole is at work to highlight the very purpose of Stoic *oikeiōsis*: for just as the bodily parts function for the good of the whole, so fellow citizens of the cosmopolis, in virtue of being equally *empsychos*, work together for the common good.

To further conceptualize how such a psychological development as *oikeiōsis* is implemented fruitfully to the political realm, let us return to Hierocles, who envisions the process in the form of many circles, beginning with the innermost circle which is our very self, our soul, expanding to circles of family, community of fellow citizens, mankind as a whole, and eventually the cosmic political authority (Stobaeus 4.671, 7-673, 11 = LS 57G).¹²

From a synoptic reading of these Stoic passages, we may understand *oikeiōsis* as intended to perfect the relations of the individual to every aspect of his externals. As a result of that the political community is in the right harmonious state to pursue the common good. And in line with what I have proposed, it is *empsychos* that enjoins these circles (*Fig. 1*). For thus the soul, in virtue of the cosmos being *empsychos*, becomes associated with everything outside itself in the cosmopolis, and responds by attuning its private striving for virtue and desire for the good with the cosmic perspective of the common good.

⁸ cf. Cicero *De re publica*, 3.33 = LS 67S.

⁹ Klein 2016, *passim*; 178.

¹⁰ II.1, tr. Hard 2011.

¹¹ Gill 2000 in Rowe & Schofield eds., 608.

¹² Hierocles' outermost circle is 'the whole human race', I added the ultimate authority (as mentioned, God/Nature/World-soul) as is appropriate for Stoic doctrine; image mine.

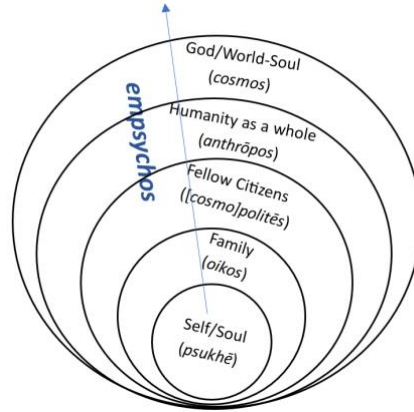


Figure 1

2. NOMOS EMPSYCHOS

In many respects, the Pseudo-Pythagorean political writings are similar to what is discussed in Section 2. Like the Stoic doctrines of divine/natural authority, the systematic theory advocated by Pseudo-Pythagorean writers see God as the supreme governing principle. Likewise the cosmos is divided into sub-systems: world, city, family, individual and individual soul. Whereas Stoic harmonization is attained through *oikeiōsis*, the Pseudo-Pythagorean literature posits that, ‘the polis, resulting from the combination of many different elements of the cosmos, imitates its rule and harmony’ (Diotog. Fr.1, 72.21-2 Thesleff).¹³ But what exactly constitutes this ‘imitation’? For the discussion hitherto has been more metaphysical than political, the latter part of this paper looks for a complementary view of Section 2. I shall apply the *empsychos* apparatus to more formal discourses on the ‘political’, specifically, on kingship and law, or, in this case, kingship as law. For the Pseudo-Pythagorean literature this takes the form of *nomos empsychos*. Whereas the Stoic perspective treats the response of the individual soul to the world-soul, the Pseudo-Pythagoreans turn to the ‘psychological’ response of the ruler, who holds supreme authority on earth, to God, who is the ultimate political authority. Consider the following fragments from the kingship treatises:

- (1) *Χρή τὸν βασιλέα σοφὸν ἤμεν· οὕτω γὰρ ἐσσεῖται ἀντίμιμος καὶ ζηλωτὰς τῷ πρώτῳ θεῷ* (Ps-Sthenidas, Fr.1, 187.10 Thesleff)

‘A king ought to be wise, for thus he will be closely imitating and emulating the primary God’

- (2) *ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀρχὰν ἔχων ἀνυπεύθυνον, καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν νόμος ἔμψυχος, θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις παρεσχαμάτισται* (Diotog. Fr.1, Fr.1, 72.23 Thesleff).

¹³ The text of the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha follows the edition by Thesleff 1965 (with corresponding page no. provided), all translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

‘[...] the king, who rules beyond human control and himself animate/ensouled law, has been transformed into a god among mankind.’¹⁴

The idea of *nomos empsychos* traditionally construed constitutes the idea that the king is the embodiment of perfect law, justice and virtue, for he is the imitator of God. From the wider Hellenistic context, however, this attribution of *empychos* to the king suggests the perfect law of the cosmos being hypostasized into the soul of the king. Consequently, the ‘psychological response’ explained by a vague ‘imitation’ excludes the ruled, since they, unlike the ruler, cannot participate in the correspondence with the world-soul. A tracing back of the genealogy of *nomos empsychos* to a fragment attributed to Archytas of Tarentum provides further clarification and a potential solution:¹⁵

νόμων δὲ ὁ μὲν ἔμψυχος βασιλεύς, ὁ δὲ ἄψυχος γράμμα. πρῶτος ὧν ὁ νόμος · τούτῳ γὰρ ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς νόμιμος, ὁ δ’ ἄρχων ἀκόλουθος, ὁ δ’ ἀρχόμενος ἐλεύθερος, ἅ δ’ ὅλα κοινωνία εὐδαίμων· (fr.1, Horky and Johnson 33.8-10)¹⁶

‘Of laws, one, the animate, is a king, but the other, the inanimate, is written. Thus, law is primary; for by means of it, the king is lawful, the ruler is compliant, the man who is ruled is free, and the whole community is happy’.

The author seems to have no concern for the response of the ruled, for so long as the king performs the function of ‘ensouled’ law (*nomos empsychos*), the good of the whole is achieved. This could potentially be a problematic view. As Bruno Centrone’s overview of the Pseudo-Pythagorean writings, to which this fragment belongs, points out that ‘the predilection for monarchy in the Pseudo-Pythagorean literature seems to derive from abstract theoretical reflection’, which concludes bluntly that the perfect imitator of God’s rule ‘cannot be but monarchy’.¹⁷ Indeed most of their political content upholds *monarkhia* as the ideal *tout court*. The Archytaen view, however, gives us an alternative. Horky and Johnson have commented on the contrast between the Archytaen view and the strict monarchic view of the kingship texts. They point to fragment 3 as evidence (*Ἐν ταύτῳ. Συμφέρων δὲ τῇ πολιτικῇ κοινωνία, αἶκα μὴ μόναρχος ἢ καὶ ἰδίωφελῆς ὁ νόμος, κοινωνοφελῆς δὲ καὶ διὰ πάντων διατείνων...*), which could be seen as clarifying fr.1, that the law is only beneficial for the whole if it is ‘extended to all/everyone (*διὰ πάντων διατείνων*)’. This, they argue, reflects the radical aspect and democratic undertones of the Archytaen view.¹⁸ The surprising addition of this democratic element seems to infer a distributive ‘psychological’ model - the law, not the king, becomes the

¹⁴ See n.13.

¹⁵ These belong to a work entitled *On Law and Justice* attributed to Archytas of Tarentum (c. 435/10-360/50 BCE, see Huffman 2005, 5-6); Scholars mostly agree that the extant fragments were probably composed by Pseudo-Pythagorean writers in the Hellenistic period, but the ideas are very much of the Archytaen tradition; see Horky & Johnson 2020, 455-60.

¹⁶ tr. Horky & Johnson 2020.

¹⁷ Centrone 2000 in Rowe & Schofield eds., 575.

¹⁸ 33.30-1, tr. Horky and Johnson 2000; *ibid*, 467, esp. n.57-60; despite this, Archytas advocates for a mixed constitution.

highest authority, and everyone, ruler and ruled, insofar as he possesses a soul and is capable of reason, abides in it.

However, this particular claim of *διὰ πάντων διατείνων* is vague. Archytas does not specify how such an extension could be achieved in the *politeia*. More problematic is that the claim seems incompatible with the overall notion of *nomos empsychos* and Pseudo-Pythagorean political thought. If we return to the concept of imitation, *nomos empsychos* is established only upon the prior assumption that the imitation of God by the ideal king is already perfect. Without perfect imitation, how can kingship truly be identified as *nomos empsychos*? For if his own soul is defective, the law will be likewise.

As such, this model ultimately ignores the psychological response of the ruled. Despite the presence of democratic elements, *nomos empsychos in situ* of the Pseudo-Pythagorean writings is inherently monarchic and overtly idealistic.

As the discourse moves from the more idealistic ‘*cosmos empsychos*’ to the more pragmatic *nomos empsychos*, the *empsychos* apparatus appears unsatisfactory, since not all responses from different souls, i.e. ruler and ruled, are valued with the same consideration. My purpose, therefore, is not to make *empsychos* an apparatus to be applied to an all-encompassing sphere of political interests and psychological concerns - the Hellenistic and early imperial political milieu allows no such a thing - but I would simply point out that the theoretical device of *empsychos* can more effectively be used to understand the soul in response and dialogue with a political authority that is not just constitutional, but animate and itself ensouled. This, I believe, is what stays true to the *locus classicus* of ancient political thought as a whole. For just as the *Republic*’s soul opens up debates of *politeia* and justice, so the Hellenistic *empsychos* informs the structure of a new kind of political order.

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TIBERIUS: AUGUSTUS' "LAST RESORT"?

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Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus was the first hereditary ruler of the Roman Empire, but this was not always guaranteed. His adoptive father Augustus, although placing a variety of military and political responsibilities on Tiberius throughout his life, frequently favoured other members of the imperial family as his successor. The majority of the ancient accounts of this period portray Tiberius as Augustus' "last resort", someone who would never have been picked unless Augustus had been forced into it. However, personal bias as well as knowledge of the failings of Tiberius' reign tend to impact the depiction and understanding of his rise to power. Through a close examination of the ancient literary sources, including their personal agendas and narrative aims, this essay will determine whether it is fair to refer to Tiberius as Augustus' "last resort".

Although they are incredibly valuable sources for the ancient world, contemporary Roman literature must be handled carefully as they were, as with all writing, subject to personal agenda and societal influence. Additionally, ancient histories were literary works as well as informational, and authors were expected to use creative licence.¹ The following authors all provide differing perspectives on Tiberius' journey towards succession and include much of their own opinions, explicitly or otherwise. Tacitus, the most constantly lauded ancient Roman historian, was famously critical of Tiberius in his *Annales*, calling the latter part of his reign "an orgy of crime and ignominy alike" (6.51).² Claiming to be writing with impartiality, he in fact presents quite a negative view of the principate as a whole, likely due to his dislike of autocracy as a senator as well as his experience under the reign of Domitian (*Ann.* 1.1, *Hist.* 1.1.3).³ Suetonius, who was writing at a similar time to Tacitus, is not as critical of the principate as a system and instead focuses his efforts on relaying sensationalised anecdotes, which sometimes makes it difficult to discern continuous narratives. The work of Cassius Dio was composed during the Severan period, an era of considerable cultural and artistic development as well as civil unrest. Like Tacitus, Dio was a senator, but his temporal distance from the Republic means he presents the imperial system as something that should be examined closely, but is beneficial overall.⁴ He closely critiques emperors that, in his view, failed to efficiently govern Rome. Velleius Paterculus is overwhelmingly complimentary towards Tiberius as he served as a soldier and a senator under him (2.104, 2.111, 2.114, 2.124). Subsequently, he has incredible value as a contemporary source for Tiberius' reign. Possibly only composed in a few months, the work claims to be a brief history, but Velleius sometimes

¹ S. J. V. Malloch, "The End of the Rhine Mutiny in Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio," *Classical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2004): 198, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/54.1.198>.

² J. C. Yardley, *Tacitus: Annals, Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2008), ix.

³ Yardley *Tacitus: Annals, Introduction*, xvi, xviii.

⁴ Caillan Davenport and Christopher Mallan, "Cassius Dio: The Senator and His Caesars," in *Emperors and Political Culture in Cassius Dio's Roman History*, edited by Caillan Davenport and Christopher Mallan (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 1.

takes the time to elaborate on certain events if they reveal some positive quality in Tiberius (e.g. 2.114, 2.107).⁵ The obvious pro-Tiberian bias in Velleius' work does not take away from the fact that he is reflecting much of the political culture of his time, when the principate was in its infancy and had only recently become institutionalised. Sources that can be considered 'overly critical' are perhaps more inclined to emphasise negatives and gloss over positives, presenting Tiberius as an interloper and someone undeserving of the principate. However, those writing under an emperor may feel unable to speak their mind freely and relay facts accurately. Regardless, these works can all be examined and compared closely in order to reveal some truth about Tiberius' accession.

To determine whether Tiberius was truly Augustus' "last resort", all other contenders for the succession must be examined. The first to be considered an obvious successor by both ancient and modern historians is Claudius Marcellus, son of Augustus' sister Octavia, especially due to his rapid political career making him consul ten years before legal age (Tac. *Ann.* 1.3; Vell. Pat. 2.93).⁶ Unfortunately, his early death meant that he was not a strong contender for long. Marcus Agrippa was given equal (or very similar) powers to Augustus - even receiving Augustus' signet ring in 23 BC during a health scare - but he was not a biological member of Augustus' family and was likely only really intended to be a sort of 'regent' to his sons, Augustus' grandsons, Gaius and Lucius.⁷ Tiberius' younger brother, Drusus, seemed to have been increasing in renown up until his death. He was given a lot of military responsibility (Cass. Dio 54.22.3, 54.32.1-33.5), and was incredibly popular amongst the people (Cass. Dio 55.27.4). Valerius Maximus went so far as to call Drusus "the particular glory of the Claudian family" (4.3.3), and Augustus delivered a heartfelt eulogy at his funeral (Cass. Dio 55.5.2). However, much of Drusus' acclaim and political power went hand in hand with that of his brother. Velleius Paterculus highlights the incredible achievements and popularity of Drusus, but he does so in a way that honours Tiberius by association (2.97). Tacitus presents the two brothers as being equally honoured by Augustus, even above Gaius and Lucius, which suggests that together, Tiberius and Drusus were intended to follow in Augustus' footsteps (*Ann.* 1.3).⁸ Drusus was certainly a popular contender for the succession, but he did not live long enough to be strongly considered over his brother, whom he shared much of his career with. Agrippa Postumus was adopted by Augustus as Tiberius' brother in AD 4, which does suggest that he was considered something of a successor for at least a short time (Vell. Pat. 2.104). However, he was not a significant player, as he received none of the privileges that Gaius and Lucius received at a similar age and was rapidly exiled due to his poor conduct (Cass. Dio 55.22.4; Vell. Pat. 2.112; Suet. *Aug.* 65). These four men all, however briefly, may have had a chance of succeeding Augustus, but due to a range of circumstances (including untimely death) they did not present a long-term alternative to Tiberius.

Gaius and Lucius Caesar were the biggest threat to Tiberius' place as *princeps*, therefore they must be examined in greater detail. As Augustus' biological grandsons, they took precedence over any other possible successors, and their hasty adoption in 17 BC displayed

⁵ John Rich, "Velleius' History: Genre and Purpose," In *Velleius Paterculus: Making History*, edited by Eleanor Cowan, 85-6 (Classical Press of Wales, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvvnbjc.8>.

⁶ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (Routledge, 1999), 9, 24.

⁷ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 16-7; Robin Seager, *Tiberius* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 16, 18.

⁸ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 19.

Augustus' desire for them to succeed him (54.18.1). They were given significant public attention and honorary titles such as '*princeps iuventutis*' from a young age, and Augustus was directly involved in ensuring they had a good education (Tac. *Ann.* 1.3; Suet. *Aug.* 64; *Res Gestae* 3.14). However, they were both very young and it appears that Augustus did not have much confidence in both of them for a long time (Cass. Dio 55.9.1-3). The military training they received allowed them to learn to rule "in quiet and safety", and when Gaius was finally given a proper command, it was only "under the stress of necessity" (Cass. Dio 55.10.17-18). Augustus apparently expressed his own reservations in a letter to Gaius, where he prays that the two brothers will be ready to become men and succeed him (Gell. *NA* 15.7.3).⁹ Dio places a lot of emphasis on the development of their careers, and when the brothers are killed, it is somewhat tragic as we are left to wonder what they could have grown to be (Cass. Dio 55.10a.7). Velleius Paterculus takes a different route, spending very little time on the lives of Gaius and Lucius and announces their deaths with a reassurance that Tiberius is still around to protect Rome, indicating that in his mind, Gaius and Lucius were secondary to Tiberius anyway (2.102-3). In summary, there were multiple different options that Augustus could have considered for his successor, but many of these were fleeting or too unaccomplished. Gaius and Lucius would have been the biggest concern for Tiberius, but due to their age Augustus was reluctant to give them any real power for a long time.

Thanks to Augustus, Tiberius received a significant amount of power well before he was named as the successor. The marriage between Tiberius' mother Livia and Augustus in 38 BC meant that Tiberius was the stepson of one of the most important men in Rome. Tiberius was in the public eye from the age of nine when he delivered his father's eulogy, and he rode next to his step-father's chariot in the Actium triumph before even taking up the *toga virilis* (Suet. *Tib.* 6).¹⁰ Although his political career followed a standard process towards the consulship, it was significantly accelerated, which would come to be characteristic of the careers of the imperial family (Suet. *Tib.* 9).¹¹ Later in Tiberius' career, Augustus granted him joint authority over the provinces, making them equals (Suet. *Tib.* 21; Vell. Pat. 2.212). Tiberius was also given a lot of military commands, which indicates that Augustus saw him as a highly competent leader (Cass. Dio 55.2.4, 55.6.1-7, 55.28.5-29.1, 56.12.1; Suet. *Tib.* 16; Vell. Pat. 2.94, 2.95, 2.111). After Agrippa died, Tiberius was made to marry Julia the Elder, an early sign of Augustus' desire to bring Tiberius closer into the imperial family.¹² Augustus even gave Tiberius tribunician power on multiple occasions, including while Gaius and Lucius were still alive, which aligned Tiberius very closely with Augustus himself (Cass. Dio 55.9.4-5).¹³ Most importantly, Augustus adopted Tiberius in AD 4, indicating that Tiberius will succeed him by claiming that he is doing it "for reasons of the state" (Vell. Pat. 2.104). Some of the less complimentary sources suggest that Augustus only chose Tiberius because he would make Augustus look better by comparison (Tac. *Ann.* 1.10; Cass. Dio 56.45.1-3). This is highly

⁹ Alison E. Cooley, "From the Augustan Principate to the Invention of the Age of Augustus," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 109 (2019): 76, <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1017/S0075435819000674>.

¹⁰ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 8.

¹¹ Seager, *Tiberius*, 13.

¹² Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 18.

¹³ Harriet Flower, "Augustus, Tiberius, and the End of the Roman Triumph," *Classical Antiquity* 39, no. 1 (2020): 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27220551>.

uncharitable, especially as Augustus placed so much responsibility on Tiberius throughout his own reign. Additionally, Suetonius refutes this rumour with quotations from, he claims, personal letters between Tiberius and Augustus, where Augustus expresses his love and support for his adopted son (*Tib.* 21). By placing so much responsibility on Tiberius from the beginning, and continuously honouring him in various ways, Augustus seems to have considered Tiberius a strong contender for the succession.

The personal relationship between Augustus and Tiberius is also important to examine when considering if Augustus would have wanted Tiberius to succeed him. This is presented very differently in the sources. Velleius emphasises that the two were very close, with Augustus sharing a tender moment with Tiberius on his deathbed (2.123). Suetonius further attests that Augustus recalled Tiberius in his last moments, so there was at least some affection between them at this stage (*Aug.* 98, *Tib.* 21). Suetonius also quotes some letters from Augustus to Tiberius that discuss casual topics like gambling, indicating that they had a friendly relationship (*Aug.* 71). Dio takes a more measured approach by stating that Augustus would bring Tiberius along on various diplomatic missions, but also suggests that there is growing suspicion from Augustus as Tiberius appears to be delaying the war in Dalmatia in order to retain command (54.19.6, 54.36.3-4, 55.31.1). Tacitus creates no impression of a close relationship, claiming that the only reason Tiberius went to Augustus' deathbed was because Livia summoned him (*Ann.* 1.5). Tension was created when Tiberius insisted on having a triumph in 7 BC, which can be interpreted as Tiberius defying Augustus' apparent desire to get rid of triumphs all together.¹⁴ This growing tension could explain Tiberius' 'retirement' to Rhodes the following year. This retirement was quite surprising; Tiberius, in the prime of his political career, having been granted his second consulship, a triumph, and the tribunician power, chose to leave Rome (Vell. Pat. 2.99). He was arguably the most attractive contender for the next *princeps*.¹⁵ Both modern and ancient sources point to a range of different explanations, but there is an understanding that Tiberius left because of the growing power of and support for Gaius and Lucius, which he may have seen as something that sidelined him (Cass. Dio. 55.9.4; Suet. *Tib.* 10; Vell. Pat. 2.99).¹⁶ Tiberius also may have simply decided he had no desire to be Augustus' successor. This was a devastating political blow to both Tiberius and Augustus, the former having completely eradicated his own political position, and the latter now being forced to bring forward two inexperienced young men as his successors (Cass. Dio 55.9.9). Dio describes Tiberius grovelling at Gaius' feet when he sees him during the Rhodes period, which points towards the uncertainty of Tiberius' position and the newfound supremacy of Gaius (55.10.19). However, the chaos of this period does point towards Tiberius being a key part of Augustus' succession plan. When Augustus reluctantly brought Tiberius back in AD 2, it was with the guarantee that Tiberius would no longer participate in public life.¹⁷ It seems clear that following Tiberius' time

¹⁴ Flower, "Augustus, Tiberius, and the End of the Roman Triumph," 13-22; even Augustus, after taking on that title, never celebrated a triumph, and did not permit Tiberius to have one after subduing the Pannonians (Cass. Dio. 54.31.4).

¹⁵ John H. Corbett, "The Succession Policy of Augustus," *Latomus* 33, no. 1 (1974): 91, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41528932>.

¹⁶ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 24-5; Seager, *Tiberius*, 23-5.

¹⁷ Seager, *Tiberius*, 29.

in Rhodes, the relationship between the two was shattered, and it was only with the death of Augustus' two grandsons that this relationship would be repaired.

Throughout Tiberius' life, it seems like he was always a strong contender, but also regularly the second choice. In the wake of Marcellus' death, Tiberius (along with Agrippa) was expected to step up and take more of an active political role, which does show that Tiberius was one of Augustus' options from very early on.¹⁸ Similarly, following Agrippa's death, Tiberius is handed both his military responsibilities and his familial ones, taking charge of Agrippa's legions and marrying his widow, Julia (54.31.1-3). Dio does present the decision to raise up Tiberius at this time as one only taken because Gaius and Lucius were too young, but this does not take away from the fact that Tiberius was seen as the right-hand-man to Augustus as early as 12 BC. It is possible that Augustus was intended to be a sort of regent for Gaius and Lucius at this stage, which would have been Agrippa's role originally, but it is not really fair to consider the young boys real competitors with Tiberius at this stage.¹⁹ Going to Rhodes forced Augustus to focus all his energy on Gaius and Lucius, but their untimely deaths ruined his plans. As a result, Augustus was forced to promote Tiberius as his successor (Suet. *Aug.* 65, *Tib.* 15, 23; Cass. Dio 55.13.1a; Tac. *Ann.* 1.3). Velleius, forever the optimist, insists that Augustus had in fact been planning to adopt Tiberius for a long time, but Tiberius in his famous *moderatio* had refused up until Gaius died (2.103). However, even within Velleius' narrative, he somewhat hints at Augustus being forced to pick Tiberius. Velleius claims that Augustus "had no need to search for one to choose as his successor but merely to choose the one who towered above the others" (2.103). Although this primarily demonstrates Velleius' own appreciation of Tiberius, suggesting that Tiberius' virtues were so excellent that he was the obvious choice for successor, it is said right after the death of Gaius, so perhaps implies that Tiberius was now the only choice, for better or for worse. Considering the breakdown of Tiberius and Augustus' personal relationship, and the fact that Augustus only did adopt Tiberius after Lucius died, it does appear that by this time, Augustus was somewhat reluctant to put forward Tiberius as his successor. Despite this, Augustus spent many years following the adoption advancing Tiberius' reputation and demonstrating that he would make an excellent heir to Augustus' power (Suet. *Aug.* 97, 101, *Tib.* 15, 17; Cass. Dio 55.25.2). In the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Tiberius' connection to Augustus is highlighted as well as his military prowess (2.8, 5.25-33). Coinage and monuments like the Arch of Ticinum presented the two as a united front with strong kinship ties.²⁰ By including Tiberius in such public displays, Augustus was continuously reaffirming his choice of successor.

Overall, the evidence presents quite a complex view of Augustus' intentions regarding Tiberius. Suetonius reports that, despite the assertions of a close relationship between the pair, Augustus on his deathbed mourned that Rome was "doomed to be masticated by [Tiberius'] slow-moving jaws" (*Tib.* 21), which does not show confidence in Tiberius' rule. Tacitus and Dio, ever critical of misuses of power, make the death of Augustus and Tiberius' accession feel suspicious and uncertain, and even suggest that Livia may have orchestrated it (Tac. *Ann.* 1.5;

¹⁸ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 12.

¹⁹ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 18; Seager, *Tiberius*, 18; Flower, "Augustus, Tiberius, and the End of the Roman Triumph," 18.

²⁰ Seager, *Tiberius*, 38-9.

Cass. Dio 56.30.1-2).²¹ Dio also fails to mention certain positions and honours that we know were held by Tiberius, which could mean that he was intending to paint Tiberius as less favoured, or could just mean that his sources were limited.²² Velleius Paterculus maintains throughout his work that Tiberius was destined from the start to be *princeps* because of his immense virtue, and Augustus could not have considered anyone else (2.94, 2.114). Even his structure suggests this destiny, as he essentially makes the entirety of Roman history culminate with Tiberius' reign.²³ Suetonius also claims that Tiberius was destined for greatness since birth, as he was always the subject of favourable omens (*Tib.* 14). Modern scholars seem to overwhelmingly agree that Tiberius was a "last resort" for Augustus, and was by no means a first choice.²⁴ However, this is a very unfair assessment. These same ancient sources outline a considerable history of military achievement and political acumen, as well as a large number of honours granted to Tiberius by Augustus.²⁵ Corbett agrees that Tiberius had been a primary contender from the death of Agrippa.²⁶ Throughout his life, Tiberius proved himself to be someone who would be a competent ruler, and this is reflected by his position just before his retirement as the second most important man in Rome. The personal relationship between Augustus and Tiberius may have soured by the time of the adoption, but this does not discount the years of experience Tiberius had as one of the crucial players in the principate.

In conclusion, calling Tiberius Augustus' "last resort" is an inaccurate reading of the sources. Tiberius was, until his retirement, an incredibly strong contender for the succession due to his wealth of experience in both military and political matters. Close analysis of the ancient material, particularly the authors' motivations and personal biases, has revealed a far more nuanced portrait than is widely believed. He was not Augustus' first choice by any means, but to call him the "last resort" ignores the high position Tiberius occupied for much of his life. It is perhaps fairer to refer to him as the "second choice", a constant option, but overlooked in favour of Augustus' biological relatives.

²¹ Ellen O'Gorman, "On Not Writing about Augustus: Tacitus' 'Annals' Book I," *Materiali e Discussioni per l'analisi Dei Testi Classici* 35 (1995): 103, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40236068>.

²² Christopher Mallan, "'... But He Possessed a Most Singular Nature': Cassius Dio on Tiberius," in *Emperors and Political Culture in Cassius Dio's Roman History*, edited by Caillan Davenport and Christopher Mallan (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 137-8.

²³ Rich, *Velleius' History: Genre and Purpose*, 87.

²⁴ Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 32-3; Seager, *Tiberius*, 30-1; Flower, "Augustus, Tiberius, and the End of the Roman Triumph," 22.

²⁵ T. Hillard, "Velleius 2.124.2 and the Reluctant Princeps: the Evolution of Roman Perceptions of Leadership," in *Velleius Paterculus: Making History*, edited by Eleanor Cowan (Classical Press of Wales, 2011), 235.

²⁶ Corbett, "The Succession Policy of Augustus," 96.

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CHARACTERISING XENOPHON'S PANTHEA

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INTRODUCTION

The novella of Panthea, the fairest woman of Asia, spans from book five to seven of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, his lengthiest and most enigmatic work. It describes selective episodes from the life of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire. Within the *Cyropaedia*'s discourse, topics such as leadership, military tactics, toil and ethics are discussed using the life of Cyrus as an example of virtue.¹ Combining various genres - biography, historiography, treatise and encomium - Panthea's novelistic love story additionally has led scholars to regard the *Cyropaedia* as a predecessor of the ancient novel.²

Panthea's story begins in the fifth book after the Persian victory over Assyria, when the Hyrcanians, former Assyrian allies, join Cyrus and reveal important military routes. At the same time Median soldiers return with Assyrian spoils of war and award Panthea to Cyrus. Although handed over to Cyrus, his childhood friend Araspas immediately falls in love with her. But Panthea stays true to her husband Abradatas, king of Susa, and tells on Araspas, who is granted mercy and then sent to Libya.³ Since Panthea does not know about Cyrus' plan not to marry her, she offers to turn her husband into a loyal companion, thinking Araspas has backed off. They reunite shortly after and Abradatas hence grows into a trusted ally.⁴ Xenophon tragically describes Panthea's farewell before the battle against the Egyptians, her mourning her fallen husband and taking her life right beside him.⁵

While the story about the glorious woman, a loving and loyal wife as well as a powerful associate is always looked upon in its unity, Panthea's first appearance remains undiscussed. For the beginning of a storyline that becomes increasingly prominent, the omission of her name and passivity seem unusual. This article argues, using a text-based analysis of Xen. Kyr. 5.1.4-7.3, that Panthea's initial passive characterisation and grieving appearance are purposefully used as a rhetorical strategy by Xenophon within the narrative to introduce Araspas and to highlight his future importance. For better readability of the paper, the original Greek passage, edited by Marchant in 1910, is included in the appendix.

FINDING PANTHEA

The description of Panthea's first appearance starts in 5.1.4 with Araspas asking whether Cyrus had already seen her. Emphasising his ignorance, he uses the oath $\mu\alpha\delta\acute{\iota}$ and the elliptical $\omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\gamma\omega\gamma\epsilon$.⁶ Araspas then proceeds to talk about having selected her himself and launches into

¹ Tamiolaki, 2017, 174-175.

² Tamiolaki, 2017, 180-181.

³ Mueller-Goldingen, 1995, 204-205.

⁴ Mueller-Goldingen, 1995, 206.

⁵ Mueller-Goldingen, 1995, 207-210.

⁶ Lidell/Scott, s.v. " $\epsilon\gamma\omega\gamma\epsilon$ ".

the story of how he and a group of delegated men encountered her for the first time. From that point onward he assumes the role of the homodiegetic narrator, speaking in third person singular. Emphasising once again a particle construction, καὶ δῆτα, opens the narrative at 5.1.4.6 and is to be interpreted as a colloquial phrase, commonly found in Xenophon's dialogues.⁷ The particle additionally introduces a lengthy passage uninterrupted by other speakers and proleptically stresses the amazement at Panthea's refusal to set herself apart from her slaves.⁸ The woman's tent is then introduced as the narrative's location, yet no further description is provided.

The causal particle γὰρ at 5.1.4.8 serves to introduce the reasoning for not recognizing Panthea instead of investigating causes of her unusual behaviour.⁹ The syllepsis at 5.1.4.8-9 states that she was sitting on the ground, surrounded by her female slaves and aims to showcase the grief evoked by captivity and separation from her husband Abradatas.¹⁰ Moreover the simple, unroyal attire which does not differ from that of her maids is mentioned as a further reason for not noticing her immediately. This reveals and highlights a grief-motive, since she evidently lacks the strength to dress herself properly.¹¹ τοῖνον introduces this remark incidentally and additionally stresses the colloquial tone of the embedded narrative.¹²

Upon closer observation of all the women present, one figure ultimately emerges as the socially superior δέσποινα.¹³ The alliteration and polyptoton πάνυ καὶ πασῶν at 5.1.4.11 highlight that moment, despite their differing syntactic relations. Panthea's first appearance is furthermore presented by a concessive participle construction, introduced by the conjunction καίπερ, within a k-alliteration - καίπερ καθημένη κεκαλυμμένη.¹⁴ The two perfect participles underscore in a resultative sense the woman's state of sitting and having veiled her head, whereas the present participle ὁρῶσα refers to the ongoing action of most importance, namely her looking down at the ground.

In 5.1.5 the delegated men conduct a test by which Panthea is to be distinguished from the maidservants. When the command to stand up is given, not only the veiled woman, but all the slaves surrounding her rise alongside her to conceal Panthea's identity. A striking shift of subject – from third person singular, which describes Panthea's behaviour, to third person plural, describing the servants operating actively, puts the empress in a subdominant position and clearly underline her passivity.

Furthermore, the description of the attendants through the substantivised prepositional phrase αἱ ἄμφ' αὐτήν functions as a *variatio* in relation to the terms θεράπαινη and δούλη¹⁵ mentioned earlier. In this scene, the dative αὐτῇ additionally stresses the protagonist's passiveness and participation in an action primarily conducted by others. Additionally, the grammatical subordination expresses the fact that Panthea has not yet clearly set herself apart

⁷ Denniston, s.v. "δῆτα".

⁸ Owen, 1852, 413.

⁹ Denniston, s.v. "γὰρ".

¹⁰ Owen, 1852, 413.

¹¹ Owen, 1852, 413.

¹² Denniston, s.v. "τοῖνον".

¹³ "Empress"

¹⁴ "Despite sitting veiled"

¹⁵ Both terms stand for "female slave"

from the group yet, although the reader knows about her identity because of Araspas' retrospective narration aiming to describe the empress.¹⁶

The mentioned use of the sociative dative emphasises the protagonist's incapability of acting, due to deprivation of self-expression through clothing and her voice through staying silent and turns her into an object of display.

Despite the attempted concealment, Panthea once again stands out on account of certain characteristics Xenophon presents nominally and successively as a climax at 5.1.5.15-16. The adverb *πρῶτον* initially draws attention to the most immediately striking characteristic *μέγεθος*, her tall stature. Owen notes that among "barbarous nations" this was regarded as the most important feature of female beauty.¹⁷ The subsequent *ἔπειτα* intensifies the climactic structure of Panthea's feature, followed by *ἀρετή* and *εὐσχημοσύνη*. The subdivision of the climax suggest that some time has already passed and that the men discover the last two traits upon further investigation. Following Owen's proposal of translating *ἀρετή* as "external excellence" and *εὐσχημοσύνη* as "elegance of figure"¹⁸, those characteristics become apparent after observing the women for a while, whereas physical size immediately stands out.

Glancing at the *apparatus criticus*, the difficulty of translating and classifying these qualities proves difficult. While most manuscripts transmit the variant reading *τῇ ἀρετῇ* in line 15, also printed in Marchant's text, manuscript D instead offers *τῇ ῥώμῃ*. The term *ἀρετή* is ambiguous, which in its original sense might be translated as "goodness" or "moral virtue", but also "good nature".¹⁹ In contrast, *ῥώμη* primarily emphasises physical attributes, such as strength, but might as well be read as "bodily" or "military force".²⁰ Although the noun *ῥώμη* refers to corporal power, it nevertheless carries a consistent negative undertone. Thus, the juxtaposition of the readings shows that *ἀρετή*, regardless of its precise translation, integrates more coherently alongside *μέγεθος* and *εὐσχημοσύνη*. Based on this climactic structure, Panthea is reduced solely to external attributes. Antithetically, a subsequent concessive clause again alludes to her mourning appearance, additionally highlighting her extraordinary beauty and uncovering her strong facade. Therefore, Panthea is reduced to a silent object of description.

Finally, at 5.1.5.17-18, she bursts out into tears. Once more the passive description using the sociative dative *αὐτῇ* instead of Panthea as the sentence's primary subject stands out. Instead, her tears become the subject of the action. Thereby the disempowerment of the former empress is expressed subtly. In addition, this is emphasised due to the reduction to external characteristics. The shedding of tears is displayed tragically as parallel antithesis, with clothing and feet serving as *pars pro toto*, aiming to describe her body as a whole. Overall, Xenophon depicts Panthea in this section as passive and reduce her to a visually constructed object acting in silence.

¹⁶ Owen, 1852, 413.

¹⁷ Owen, 1852, 413.

¹⁸ Owen, 1852, 413.

¹⁹ *Lidell/Scott*, s.v. "ἀρετή".

²⁰ *Lidell/Scott*, s.v. "ῥώμη".

SPEECH OF A DELEGATE

After the initial encounter and identification of Panthea, one of the men informs her about Cyrus, her future husband and continues the construction of Panthea through the men's eyes. A temporal ὥς-clause²¹ introduces this new aspect at 5.1.6.19-20. The unknown speaker within the embedded narrative, described as γεραίτατος²², directly addresses her. He begins the monologue with θάρρει, ᾧ γύναι.²³ By addressing Panthea as γυνή instead of the more suitable δέσποινα,²⁴ her disempowerment is once again emphasised. The term γυνή refers to a woman in a broad sense without taking social status or marital position into account. Solely the addition of a further noun or adjective would specify a female's role as empress, wife, or maid and in Panthea's case stresses her disempowerment.²⁵

Furthermore, the anonymous speaker notes that the delegation knows about her husband who he calls handsome, κάγαθός, and virtuous, καλός.²⁶ Hence a parallel to Cyrus, who is also characterized by both attributes, can be drawn. Furthermore, the particle γάρ in the same sentence introduces a justification, while μέν at the same time establishes a proleptic connection with the following clause.²⁷ Therefore, the importance of Abradatas, who is not mentioned by name, is underlined and clearly alludes to his future role as Cyrus' ally.

At 5.1.6.20 μέντοι²⁸ confirmatively adds that the newly selected husband would easily surpass Abradatas. A parenthetical remark presented by εἴθι, addresses Panthea once more directly, without giving her any space to answer and forcing her to remain silent. Parallel to the content of 5.1.6.19, Cyrus' physical beauty is depicted by εἶδος²⁹ meaning "appearance", while his moral excellence is conveyed by γνώμη³⁰, "intelligence". Moreover, a third accusative, δύναμιν,³¹ is added to the statement, creating a climactic progression that highlights an additional quality that is neither seen in the description of Abradatas nor Panthea, namely Cyrus' capacity for power and reign. The climactic enumeration clearly alludes to 5.1.6.15-16 and Panthea's description and present Cyrus as superior.

Cyrus is likewise first characterised by an external feature, but subsequently by character traits. Panthea on the other hand is presented by an analeptic disparagement: she is introduced as less intelligent – at least at first glance -, by not mentioning any character traits and reducing her solely to physical beauty, which again emphasises her passivity. At 5.1.6.24 it becomes evident that Panthea's description voices the envoys' subjective opinion, using the personal pronoun and the enclitic particle γε. The consequences of her husband's

²¹ Holden, 1887, 129.

²² Owen, 1852, 414 γεραίτατος (the oldest among the men) is to be read as trait to distinguish the speaker from the others and does not particularly hint at a potential old age.

²³ "Woman, do not fear!"

²⁴ "Empress"

²⁵ Lidell/Scott, s.v. "γυνή".

²⁶ Owen, 1852, 414.

Meier, 2006, s.v. "Kalokagathia". This concept describes, in Xenophon's times, the social and moral status of nobility, that thought of itself as virtuous and in good physical condition, and thus beautiful in every way and suitable for Cyrus and Abradatas.

²⁷ Owen, 1852, 414.

²⁸ Denniston, s.v. "μέντοι".

²⁹ Lidell/Scott, s.v. "εἶδος".

³⁰ Lidell/Scott, s.v. "γνώμη".

³¹ "Strength"

defeat and absence appear almost incidental due to displacement to the end of the speech, despite determining the woman's fate and constituting the climax of the embedded narrative. The delayed mention may be perceived as an act of compassion towards Panthea, who is visibly depressed upon the men's arrival or – more plausibly – as an intensification of the speech as it comes to an end. The fact that Panthea is anonymously referred to as γυνή in the entire narrative argues against genuine compassion. Despite the lively depiction, the woman remains unknown to a first-time reader. Tatum argues that Xenophon even names her husband Abradatas at 5.1.3.17, although he plays no role in Panthea's initial introduction and his identification is not necessary for coherence or the subsequent dialogue concerning *eros*.³²

Moreover, he assumes a Greek tradition that largely prohibited the mention of women by name, which aims to explain the reference to Abradatas.³³ Research furthermore refers to Schaps³⁴, who examines the role and naming of women in speeches. He identifies three categories of mentioned females: deceased, women of ill repute and wives of enemies.³⁵ Based on his model, Panthea, as the wife of an enemy who dies at the end of the novella, represents a powerful instrument in winning that adversary as an ally, solely by mentioning her and telling her story as an introduction for Araspas. Therefore, her delayed yet eventual naming can be explained as a powerful, hidden rhetorical strategy that slowly introduces him and arouses the reader's curiosity about his later appearance.

After the delegate finishes his speech, a ὥς-temporal clause commences in line 24 and conveys Panthea's reaction. περικαταρρήγνυμι, a verb found in two occurrences, thus highlighting Panthea's distinguished status, denotes the removal and tearing of clothing. There have been several interpretations proposed for τὸν ἄνωθεν πέπλον, such as "outer garment" or "upper part of garment". Owen argues that due to later depicting the exposure of face, neck and hands, the garment's upper part was torn.³⁶ This interpretation can be supported on semantic grounds, translating ἄνωθεν locally as "from the top downward". The just as rare term ἀναδύρομαι demonstrates how Panthea breaks down and starts crying even heavier and demonstrates her elevated position. Additionally, the grief-motive first found in 5.1.4.8-9 is at that point continued through the emphasis of the unfolding tragic dimension. The lament is afterwards taken up by the maids, designated by the epic noun δμωή.³⁷ The description concludes with Araspas anticlimactically mentioning the exposure of face, neck and hands in 5.1.7.2-3. As an anaphoric repetition ἐφάνη³⁸ constructs a sequence of main clauses and closes the embedded narrative. Thereby, Panthea presents herself as grieving and desperate. The silent description of the situation eventually depicts her as weak and disempowered by being unable to talk to the delegation.

³² Xen. Kyr. 5.1.9-18.

³³ Tatum, 1989, 164-165.

³⁴ Schaps, 1977.

³⁵ Schaps, 1977, 328.

³⁶ Owen, 1852, 414.

³⁷ "Female slave"

³⁸ Xen. Kyr. 5.1.7.1-2.

XENOPHON'S USE OF EPIC ELEMENTS

Rarely used epic vocabulary such as δμῶη and θεραπαινὴ to describe Panthea's female slaves contribute to the story's vividness and sophistication, despite its brevity. Moreover, the description reveals an allusion to Penelope and evokes the image of a "Homeric Heroine" who utilises her sharp intellect to deceive the delegation.

Both women are initially separated from their husbands and mourn their absence. Panthea does so by sitting on the ground, completely covered and ignoring the delegation at 5.1.4.12-13. Tearing the garments and exposing her covered body proves an emotionally driven act, as she is inflamed with rage over potentially marrying Cyrus. Penelope, during Odysseus' absence of 20 years during the Trojan war and his voyage home, faces a similar fate in potentially marrying one of the suitors who try to take over her court. The same grief-motive is found in the Odyssey and will be demonstrated using the following example.

τὴν δ' ἄχος ἀμφεχύθη θυμοφθόρον, οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' ἔτλη
δίφρῳι ἐφέζεσθαι, πολλῶν κατὰ οἶκον ἐόντων,
ἀλλ' ἄρ' ἐπ' οὐδοῦ ἴζε πολυκμήτου θαλάμοιο
οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένη· περὶ δὲ δμῳαὶ μινύριζον
παῖσαι, ὅσαι κατὰ δώματ' ἔσαν, νέαι ἢ δὲ παλαιαί.
(Hom. Od. 4.716-20)

With impressive attention to spatial detail, this Homeric passage draws a similar picture of Penelope, who likewise sits on the ground and mourns the loss of her husband.³⁹ Similar to Panthea's situation, the servants mirror the lady's behaviour and join her.⁴⁰ Hence the comparison reveals that both women grieve sincerely and are presented as the dutiful wives *par excellence*.⁴¹

Further similarities can be found in other excerpts, rightfully mentioned by Gera, that describe tall physical stature as an indicator of beauty and the use of *dolus*.⁴² Whereas Penelope keeps the suitors at bay through weaving and unravelling the shroud of Laertes⁴³, Panthea attempts to hide her identity by imitating her maids. Panthea's passivity, therefore, does not only display vulnerability and disempowerment but also alludes to Penelope's strategy. At the end, both women are reunited with their husbands, despite not in the long run for Panthea.

Xenophon's diligent use of epic vocabulary in describing the slaves within 5.1.4-6 as δμῶη and θεραπαινὴ connects *Cyropaedia* and *Odyssey* on an intertextual basis. Furthermore, Panthea's well-composed plan of withdrawing from the situation should be read as an ingenious plan, purposefully messing with the male delegation.

³⁹ Hom. Od. 4.718-19.

⁴⁰ Gera, 1993, 223.

⁴¹ Gera, 1993, 223.

⁴² Gera, 1993, 223.

⁴³ Hom. Od. 19,143-151.

CONCLUSION

Summarised, the anonymous yet diligent and lengthy description of Panthea is indeed astounding, when read in the context of the whole novella. The investigation of the first encounter depicts Panthea as grieving and passive. This happens through a shift of the narrative perspective and the use of the dative, hiding her among the slaves and not specifically singling her out. Additionally, Xenophon uses figures of speech, such as alliteration or climactic progression, to further describe Panthea's external beauty. Anonymity serves as a rhetorical strategy, retrospectively highlighting her importance and actively engaging the reader to even revisit the narrative after her initial introduction by name at 6.1.41 and serving as an introduction that highlights the future role of Araspas. The subtle use of epic vocabulary increases the episode's vividness and evokes a comparison with Homer's Penelope. Furthermore, it covertly presents Panthea's ingenious plan to conceal herself that tricks the delegates at first. Xenophon as a matter of fact portrays her as a beautiful yet grieving woman, without depicting female intelligence superior to men's.

APPENDIX

Xen. Kyr. 5.1.4-7.3

κελευόμενος δὲ ὁ Ἀράσπας ἐπήρετο· ἐώρακας δ', ἔφη, ὦ Κῦρε, τὴν γυναῖκα, ἣν με κελεύεις φυλάττειν; μὰ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, οὐκ ἔγωγε. ἀλλ' ἐγώ, ἔφη, ἡνίκα ἐξηροῦμέν σοι αὐτήν· καὶ δῆτα, ὅτε μὲν εἰσῆλθομεν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτῆς, τὸ πρῶτον οὐ διέγνωμεν αὐτήν· χαμαὶ τε γὰρ ἐκάθητο καὶ αἱ θεράπαινοι πᾶσαι περὶ αὐτήν· καὶ τοίνυν ὁμοίαν ταῖς δούλαις εἶχε τὴν ἐσθῆτα· ἐπεὶ δὲ γινῶναι βουλόμενοι ποία εἴη ἡ δέσποινα πάσας περιεβλέψαμεν, ταχὺ πάνυ καὶ πασῶν ἐφαίνετο διαφέρουσα τῶν ἄλλων, καίπερ καθημένη κεκαλυμμένη τε καὶ εἰς γῆν ὀρώσα. ὥς δὲ ἀναστῆναι αὐτὴν ἐκελεύσαμεν, συνανέστησαν μὲν αὐτῇ ἅπασαι αἱ ἄμφ' αὐτήν, διήνεγκε δ' ἐνταῦθα πρῶτον μὲν τῷ μεγέθει, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τῇ ἀρετῇ καὶ τῇ εὐσχημοσύνῃ, καίπερ ἐν ταπεινῷ σχήματι ἐστηκυῖα. δῆλα δ' ἦν αὐτῇ καὶ τὰ δάκρυα στάζοντα, τὰ μὲν κατὰ τῶν πέπλων, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας. ὥς δ' ἡμῶν ὁ γεραίτατος εἶπε, θάρρει, ὦ γύναι· καλὸν μὲν γὰρ καγαθὸν ἀκούομεν καὶ τὸν σὸν ἄνδρα εἶναι· νῦν μέντοι ἐξαιροῦμεν ἀνδρὶ σε εὖ ἴσθι ὅτι οὔτε τὸ εἶδος ἐκείνου χεῖρονι οὔτε τὴν γνώμην οὔτε δύνανιν ἤττω ἔχοντι, ἀλλ' ὥς ἡμεῖς γε νομίζομεν, εἴ τις καὶ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ, καὶ Κῦρος ἄξιός ἐστι θαυμάζεσθαι, οὗ σὺ ἔση τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε· ὥς οὖν τοῦτο ἤκουσεν ἡ γυνή, περικατερρήξατό τε τὸν ἄνωθεν πέπλον καὶ ἀνωδύρατο· συνανεβόησαν δὲ καὶ αἱ δμωαί. ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἐφάνη μὲν αὐτῆς τὸ πλεῖστον μέρος τοῦ προσώπου, ἐφάνη δὲ ἡ δέρη καὶ αἱ χεῖρες·

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CONSTANTINIAN NUMISMATICS: NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ROMAN IMPERIAL DISPLAY.

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INTRODUCTION

This is an extract of a larger thesis that examined the political imagery of emperor Constantine and argued for the importance of numismatic studies when examining transitions in Roman imperial imagery during the Constantinian period. This study was interdisciplinary in form, integrating a review of primary texts and orations with the visual analysis of numismatic evidence. The following does not include a fully comprehensive review of all applicable primary sources nor a fully comprehensive comparative analysis to successor regimes to demonstrate the long-term influence of motifs introduced under emperor Constantine. Because of these omissions, this extract should be understood as a case study which illustrates how an interdisciplinary methodology can be applied to the study of Constantinian imagery¹ and the significance of the changes in Roman imperial display that occurred during the Constantinian period. Special attention will be paid to how motifs, such as the *labarum* and *chi-rho*, were depicted on both common and high value coinage to convey religious and political authority.² The introduction of these motifs will be contextualized with use of primary text including the works of Eusebius and Lactantius as well as a reading of a Latin panegyric given before Constantine in 310. To broaden this analysis a selection of key examples of coinage minted under the sons of Constantine and their opposing claimants, Magnentius and Vetranio, will briefly be comparatively analysed. By examining the various methodological challenges and visual trends the following paper will demonstrate the importance of numismatic evidence for understanding the political context of imperial imagery during the reign of emperor Constantine and its long-lasting impact on later Roman imperial display.

CONSTANTINIAN NUMISMATICS: COINS AND PANEGYRICS

It is essential to recognize that the materials examined are not exhaustive. Rather, they are representative of broader trends and thematic developments. Roman imperial coinage was a highly adaptable tool that projected evolving religious and political messages to elite and public groups through the modulation of traditional and Christian motifs.³ While Constantine

¹ For the purposes of this study, Constantinian imagery will refer to the visual representation of emperor Constantine throughout his reign—understood here as incorporating both traditional and evolving motifs to communicate authority and legitimacy to a diverse audience. See: Nicholson, 2018.

² Special mention for the similarities between the relationships depicted between Sol Invictus and the Christian God, both are patronal.

³ See, Stephenson, 2009, 64-71; Bardill, 2012, 1-3, 7-9.

may not have directly scrutinized the imagery on all coinage minted with his image, their visual elements still served as essential components of imperial display.⁴ Coinage performed a critical role in political communication, particularly through high-quality donative materials minted in gold and silver.⁵ These luxurious object were often distributed—sometimes personally by the emperor—to high ranking officials and military officers. These objects offer insight into how authority was conveyed to influential members of the administration and army during the Constantinian period.⁶ Further, it is important to include common issues of coinage because of its widespread circulation. Within military contexts, ordinary soldiers who did not receive high value donatives as frequently as their elite counterparts were engaging with common issues more often.⁷

The difficulties within contemporary literary representations of emperor Constantine can be re-contextualized and developed through the analysis of numismatic materials. By 315, coinage had begun to incorporate subtle Christian symbols, coinciding with the Christian attributes assigned to Constantine by Lactantius and Eusebius in their accounts of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312.⁸ After Constantine defeated Maxentius and became sole emperor in the west, the appearance of coinage changed, reflecting the introduction of new iconography that supplanted traditional symbols associated with Roman imperial authority.⁹ Coinage minted in Siscia presents examples of both the adoption of the *chi-rho* in Constantinian imagery and references to the emperor's divine ancestry.¹⁰ Dated to 319, a copper coin portrays the emperor on the obverse in military garb, wearing a high-crested helmet, cuirassed, holding a spear across the right shoulder and shield on the left arm, subtly presents a *chi-rho* symbol, a Christogram which served as Christian decoration of the cross, on the aforesaid helmet (Figure 1). Notably, Siscia had been part of the territories seized from Licinius by Constantine in their brief conflict in 317.¹¹ After Constantine's victory over Licinius, the emperors renewed their alliance, reestablishing their partnership as co-rulers. Following this, Constantine produced coinage honouring his divine ancestors—Claudius Gothicus, Constantius I, and Maximian (Figures 2A-C). The production of these materials may seem insignificant; however, the individuals referred to were solely associated with Constantine, not Licinius, emphasizing Constantine's legitimacy. This could be an implication of Constantine's greater claim to authority, recalling his divine ancestry to reinforce his legitimacy.

⁴ Abdy, 2012, 586-88, 591-94.

⁵ Usherwood, 2022, 28-30.

⁶ Johansen, 1994, 223-225.

⁷ Stephenson, 2009, 69-70.

⁸ Elsner, 2012, 260-62.

⁹ Bardill, 2012, 220-22.

¹⁰ Humphries, 2008, 92-93.

¹¹ Usherwood, 2022, 124-26.



Figure 1 RIC VII Siscia 61, Legend: IMP CONSTANT - INVS P F AVG, copper nummus, Constantine, helmeted, armed, chi-rho on helm. Minted in Siscia 319 CE. Münzkabinett Online Catalogue.



Figure 2 RIC VII Siscia 41(A), 42(B), and 43(C), Legend: DIVO MAXIMIANO SEN FORT IMP (A), DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO PRINCIPI (B), DIVO CLAUDIO OPTIMO IMP (C), copper-alloy nummus, Maximian (A), Constantius I (B), Claudius Gothicus (C), all figures presented in same display, veiled, laureate. Minted in Siscia 318-19 CE. American Numismatic Society. (A - <https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.7.sis.41>) (B - <https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.7.sis.42>) (C - <https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.7.sis.43>).

Here, a silver medallion displays Constantine in military dress with a *chi-rho* on his high crest helm. On the reverse, nine soldiers with four horsemen surrounding them are depicted (Figure 3). This object is dated to c. 315 and has been suggested to be a donative medallion that would have been a part of a set of medallions distributed to military officers within Constantine's army.¹² It provides evidence of Christian presence within Constantine's military and reflects an attempt to present Constantine through a Christian image possibly appealing to a specific Christian audience. However, the *chi-rho* appears partially visible and in small scale. This may depiction may have been done deliberately to the motif as a subtle and insignificant symbol, intended to be palatable to a mixed religious audience. Further, it is likely that medallion was issued as a donative during Constantine's *decennalia* in 315. This would suggest that Constantine was not only present for the celebration but may have personally distributed the medallions to his officers.¹³ If indeed the emperor was personally involved in

¹² Bruun, 2005, 364.

¹³ Ibid, 364, n. 36.

the gifting of the medallions this would underscore the importance of the symbolism conveyed through the motifs.

The intent and purpose of Constantinian imagery can be explored through examining both numismatic materials and the Latin panegyrics given during Constantine's reign.



Figure 3 RIC VII Ticinum 36, Legend: IMP CONSTANT-INVS P F AVG (obverse), SA-LVS REI-PVBLIC-AE(reverse), silver medallion, Constantine, military dress, trophy across shoulder, chi-rho on helm, on obverse. Constantine, military dress, platformed, holding trophy, cavalry soldiers around him, on reverse. Minted in Ticinum 315 CE. Ramskold and Gautier 2017: 25.

Panegyric VI(7), dated to 310, provides an oration prior to Constantine's consolidation of power as sole emperor, and is later reflected in the imagery of coinage. The panegyric was presented shortly after the execution of Maximian by Constantine, adding an interesting context to the oration. Previously, Constantine had used his marital connection through Fausta, Maximian's daughter, to reinforce his legitimacy as emperor.¹⁴ However, the orator omits any reference to Maximian, implying the strength of Constantine's legitimacy was through his hereditary claims via his descent from his father and emperor Claudius Gothicus.¹⁵ This omission suggests a deliberate attempt to strengthen Constantine's image by distancing his authority from the disgraced Maximian and reinforcing his imperial legitimacy through ancestral ties. This effort was further reinforced by the production of images linking Constantine with solar deities (Figure 4). The use of solar imagery to legitimize and stabilize imperial authority was a long-standing trend among emperors. It was employed by the first Roman emperor, Augustus, and later by the various Roman imperial dynasts, most prominently by emperor Aurelian in the late 3rd century CE.¹⁶ Its appearance in Constantinian imagery, while not novel, is still distinct as it departs from the previous claims made through associations with Maximian. Near the conclusion of the oration, the speaker relays that Constantine experienced a "vision of Apollo", during which Apollo, accompanied by Victory, offered him laurel wreaths

¹⁴ Rodgers, 1980, 164-66.

¹⁵ *Pan. Lat.* VI(7), 6.2.4-5).

¹⁶ Digeser, 2000, 75-77, 130.

as a symbol of divine favour.¹⁷ This portrayal of divine patronage was bolstered by of coinage from Trier displaying images of Sol.¹⁸



Figure 4 Legend: *INVICTVS CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG*, gold solidus, Constantine, laureate, beside Sol, radiate crowned. Minted in Ticinum 316 CE. Depeyrot 2012: 251.

CONSTANTINIAN NUMISMATICS: FROM SOL TO THE CHRISTIAN GOD

The relationship Constantine established with the Christian god bears similarities to the emperor's earlier association with Sol. Constantine had previously proclaimed Sol as his *comes* (companion), and depictions of the deity frequently appeared on his coinage, often accompanied by inscriptions referring to Sol as the protector of the emperor (Figure 5).¹⁹ Understanding this transition is essential to unravelling the complexities of Constantinian imagery and the evolving use of religious symbols to convey authority and legitimacy. Imagery of Sol appeared on Constantinian coinage as early as 307, demonstrating the intrinsic role of Sol's patronage in the display and projection of the emperor's authority.²⁰ The emergence of Sol as *comes* (companion) on coinage occurred a year after Constantine assumed the role of emperor. An example is presented on a copper-alloy coin minted in Londinium around 308 (Figure 6). The obverse features a laureate image of Constantine, while the reverse depicts Sol raising his right hand in a gesture that is symbolic of regal majesty.²¹ Sol also holds a globe, symbolizing his dominion over the world. The inscription on the reverse identifies Sol as Constantine's "protector," suggesting a deliberate portrayal of divine patronage. The appearance of Sol on commonplace coins demonstrates how Constantine communicated his association with the deity to a broad audience.

¹⁷ *Pan. Lat.* VI(7), 6.21.3-7.

¹⁸ Rodgers, 1980, 264-65.

¹⁹ Potter, 2013, 150-56.

²⁰ Halsberghe, 2005. 167-68.

²¹ *Ibid*, 167.



Figure 5 RIC VII Ticinum 21, Legend: *CONSTANTINVS P F AVG* (obverse), *SOLI INVICTO COMITI* (reverse), gold solidus, Constantine draped, cuirassed head, laureate, on obverse. Sol nude, cloaked, radiate crown, raised right hand, crowning Constantine, military dressed, spear in the right hand a globe in the left, on reverse. Minted in Sirmium 321 CE. British Museum. (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_R-160).



Figure 6 RIC VI Londinium 121a, Legend: *IMP CONSTANTINVS P F AVG* (obverse), *SOLI INVICTO COMITI* (reverse), copper-alloy AE1, Constantine laureate, cuirassed, on obverse. Sol, chlamys on left shoulder; right hand raised, holding a globe in left hand, on reverse. Minted in Londinium 310 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.6.lon.121a>).

This relationship is further highlighted in celebratory and donative coinage. For example, a gold medallion struck in Ticinum in 313 portrays Constantine and Sol beside one another, their portraits overlapping (Figure 4). Constantine appears youthful and dressed in military garb, with a shield depicting Sol rising from the ocean in a four-horse chariot. The reverse bears the inscription *FELIX ADVENTVS* (Happy entrance of our Augusti), celebrating Constantine and Licinius' ascension as joint rulers of the empire. This display serves as a visual declaration of Constantine's rise to power, likening it to the daily ascent of the sun, symbolizing the dawn of a new regime. A similar medallion produced at Ticinum in 316 continues this overlapping motif, depicting Constantine alongside Sol (Figure 7). The inscription on the obverse refers to Sol as Constantine's companion. The reverse inscription, *LIBERALITAS XI*

IMP IIII COS P PP, emphasizes the emperor's generosity.²² As this object was a donative, issued before Constantine's campaign against Licinius, the inclusion of Sol implies that Constantine attributed his presumed victory to his patronal relationship with the deity.²³ The continued association between Constantine and Sol is also evident in a pair of gold coins minted between 315 and 317 to commemorate Constantine's *decennalia* and his victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge.²⁴ One of these coins depicts Constantine adorned with a *nimbus*—a radiate orb or halo—above his head (Figure 8).²⁵ Although Sol's image is absent, the solar attributes remain prominent, suggesting that Constantine continued to visualize his patronage through Sol's likeness. The frequent portrayal of Sol as Constantine's patron through coinage demonstrates how the emperor sought to visually maintain and reinforce this divine relationship. By presenting himself in likeness to Sol, Constantine established a narrative of divine favour that would later transition into his association with the Christian god.



Figure 7 RIC VII Ticinum 53 Legend: *COMIS CONSTANTINI AVG* (obverse), *LIBERALITAS XI IMP IIII COS P PP* (reverse), gold solidus, Constantine and Sol, Constantine as laureate, draped, raised right hand, Sol with solar crown. Minted in Ticinum 316 CE. The British Museum.
(https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1863-0713-1).

²² Toynbee, 1944, 27-28.

²³ Bardill, 2012, 100-102.

²⁴ Ibid, 97.

²⁵ Ibid, 94-97.



Figure 8 RIC VII Ticinum 41, Legend: *CONSTANTINVS P F AVG* (obverse), *FELICIA TEMPORA* (reverse), gold solidus, Constantine nimbate, draped, cuirassed. Minted in Ticinum 316 CE. Ashmolean Online Collections. (<https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-725941>)

The earliest definitive Christian symbol on coinage appears in 326 CE, when medallions minted for Constantine's *vicennalia* depict the emperor holding a *labarum*—a military standard adorned with a *chi-rho* (Figure 9). Unlike earlier, more ambiguous iterations of the *chi-rho*, the *labarum*, a *vexillum*-style flag bearing a Christogram, served as an explicit declaration of Christianity.²⁶ While these coins were celebratory and circulated in limited quantities, their symbolism marked a decisive transition, signifying Constantine's new patronage under the Christian god.²⁷ The use of gold for these medallions suggests that they were donatives distributed in celebration of Constantine's *vicennalia* in 326, intended to reinforce his alignment with Christianity.²⁸ A similar motif appears on copper-alloy coins minted at Arles around 336 (Figure 10), depicting two soldiers flanking a standard inscribed with *GLORIA EXERC-ITVS* (glory of the army). This standard, crowned with a prominent *chi-rho* that visually resembles a cross, represents another significant adoption of Christian imagery.²⁹ The depiction of soldiers leaning towards the *labarum* emphasizes the standard's importance within the Roman military. As a widely circulated copper-alloy coin, it likely targeted regular soldiers, reinforcing the association between the Christian symbol and the success of both the soldiers and their emperor.

The *labarum* also appears on copper-alloy coins produced in Constantinople in 327 (Figure 11). In this case, the *labarum* is crowned by a *chi-rho*, distinct from the subtler *chi-rho* found on a silver medallion from 315 (Figure 3). Furthermore, the *labarum* is depicted piercing a serpent, an overt allusion to Constantine's triumph over his rival, Licinius.³⁰ The accompanying obverse inscription, *CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG* (Constantine the Great), underscores this assertion of authority and victory. Constantine discussed the imagery in his writings. In a letter quoted by Eusebius, he equates Licinius with a serpent, stating:

²⁶ Nicholson, 2018.

²⁷ Bardill, 2012, 176.

²⁸ Ibid, 176-78, 220-22.

²⁹ Ibid, 176-80.

³⁰ Ibid, 172.

*“Until the present time...while the impious policy and tyranny persecuted the servants of the Saviour God...with liberty restored and that dragon driven out of the public administration through the providence of the supreme God and by our service...”*³¹

The decision to mint Christian iconography in Constantinople, his newly established capital, suggests a purposeful effort to strengthen the association between his rulership and the Christian faith. By 317, coinage reflecting Constantine’s patronal relationship with Sol began to diminish, and between 320 and 323, the mints at Ticinum and Sirmium ceased producing Sol-related materials.³² Although Constantine’s sons briefly appeared on coinage between 317 and 326 wearing the radiate crown, even this association with Sol faded from circulation.³³ Notably, Constantine stopped using the title *Invictus* shortly after his victory over Licinius in 324, favouring the title *Victor* instead.³⁴ While Constantine had employed *Victor* before becoming sole emperor, the continued use of this title alongside the abandonment of *Invictus* suggests a deliberate transition from the patronage of Sol to the Christian god. This shift highlights Constantine’s attempt to redefine his divine support while maintaining the concept of invincibility and military success as products of his patronal relationship.



Figure 9 RIC VII Siscia 207, Legend: not available (obverse), GLORIA-SECVLI (reverse), gold medallion, Constantine diademed, heavenward gaze, on observe. Constantine military dress, holding a labarum on reverse. Minted in Siscia 326 CE. Bardill 2012: 176.

³¹ Eusebius, *Vit. Con.* 2.46.1-2.

³² Stephenson, 2009, 170-73.

³³ See, Stephenson, 2009, 138-40; Halsberghe, 2005, 173

³⁴ Bardill, 2012, 330-32.



Figure 10 RIC VII Arles 394, Legend: *CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG* (obverse), *GLORIA EXERCITVS* (reverse), copper-alloy AE2, Constantine diademed, draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Two soldiers with standards between them, note the chi-rho, on reverse. Minted in Arles 336 CE. American Numismatics Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.7.ar.394>).



Figure 11 RIC VII Constantinople 19, Legend: *CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG* (obverse), *SPES PVBLIC* (reverse), copper-alloy nummus, Constantine laureate on obverse. Chi-rho crowning a labarum, shaft piercing a serpent on reverse. Minted in Constantinople 327 CE. The British Museum. (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1890-0804-11?selectedImageId=164987001).

CONSTANTINIAN NUMISMATICS: LEGACY.

The context of Constantine's legacy begins with the turbulent period following his death in 337, during which his three sons—Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans—divided the empire among themselves. This division, however, led to intense conflict and rivalry over territorial control.³⁵ All three sons of Constantine continued to produce coinage featuring Constantinian imagery, including the *labarum* and *chi-rho*, as a means of asserting their legitimacy. The popularity of these motifs was to such an extent that the rival claimants to the Constantinian dynasts, Magnentius and Vetrano, also utilized them for their coinage. The *labarum* was prominently featured on celebratory issues of coinage commemorating the anniversary of Rome's founding, reinforcing an association between the *labarum* and the continued prosperity and stability of the Roman Empire.³⁶ This commonplace coin, minted in

³⁵ Heather, 2005, 130.

³⁶ Frakes, 2012, 105.

Rome between 348-350, displays Constantius II holding a globe, topped with a phoenix, and a *labarum* on the reverse (Figure 12).³⁷ The same image was produced with a portrait of Constans (Figure 13). Similar to the previous examples, this object depicts Constantine II and is made



Figure 122 RIC VIII Rome 107, Legend: D N CONSTAN-TIVS P F AVG (obverse), FEL TEMP - REPARATIO (reverse), billon AE2, Constantius II diademed, draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Constantius II draped, cuirassed, holding phoenix on a globe, labarum in the left hand, on reverse. Minted in Rome 348-350 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.rom.107>).



Figure 13 RIC VIII Rome 109, Legend: D N CONSTA-NS P F AVG (obverse), FEL TEMP - REPARATIO (reverse), billon AE2, Constans diademed, draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Constans draped, cuirassed, holding phoenix on a globe, labarum in the left hand, Constans and Victory on a ship, note oars and the rostrum that Victory straddles, on reverse. Minted in Rome 348-350 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.rom.109>).

from billon, recorded as a commonly circulated coin based on its rarity rating (Figure 14).³⁸ On the reverse are two soldiers standing on either side of a *labarum* with the inscription *GLORIA EXERC-ITVS* (the glory of the army), a mimicry of coinage struck during Constantine's reign (Figure 10).³⁹ The depiction of soldiers flanking the *labarum* likely reflects an intentional effort to appeal to ordinary soldiers by associating the Christian symbol with both the emperor and his army. This militaristic styling appears to be part of a broader numismatic trend that presented the *labarum* as a powerful military emblem, representing both the Constantinian dynasty and the divine favour of the Christian god, thereby legitimizing continued military

³⁷ Kent, 1981, 48-49, 256.

³⁸ Ibid, 178.

³⁹ Bardill, 2012, 172-78, 222-223.

success and imperial legitimacy.⁴⁰ The *chi-rho* is an integral part of this motif, frequently depicted upon the banner of the *labarum*. These representations are reminiscent of how Constantine portrayed the motif on his coinage, although most depiction of the *chi-rho* and *labarum* during that period featured the *chi-rho* crowning the *labarum*.



Figure 14 RIC VIII Lyon 6, Legend: *CONSTANTI-NVS MAX AVG* (obverse), *GLORIA EXERCITVS* (reverse), billon AE3, Constantine II laureate, diademed, draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Two soldiers draped, cuirassed, each holding a spear and shield, between them a *labarum*, on reverse. Minted in Lyons 337-340 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.8.lug.6>).

Early Magnentian coinage incorporated elements of Constantinian imagery, including the *labarum*, *chi-rho*, and the epithet “Liberator”.⁴¹ The *labarum* appears on a golden *solidi* minted at Aquileia in 350 (Figure 15). On the reverse Magnentius holds a globe which a Victory stands on, similar to the previous coins produced by Constantius II and Constans (Figures 13 & 14). Magnentius holds a *labarum* in his other hand, bearing the inscription *RESTITVTOR LIBERTAS* (“Restorer of Liberty”). The *labarum* likely symbolizes the restoration of freedom as a triumph of Christianity, suggesting the attempt to appropriate Constantinian motifs as to convey the favour of the Christian god and legitimize Magnentius’ authority.⁴² The inclusion of the *LIBERTAS* recalls motifs employed by Constantine following his conflicts with Maxentius and Licinius, which declared the restoration of peace due to the efforts of the emperor.⁴³ Similar epigraphy is depicted on the reverse inscription of golden multiples minted at Aquileia between 350-352 (Figure 16), here the inscription presents Magnentius as *LIBERATOR REI PVBLICAE* (liberator of the republic). Magnentius is depicted with a *nimbus*, reminiscent of Constantinian coinage presented in the previous chapter; however, the portrayal of the motif on Magnentian coinage presents it as a Christian symbol rather than one associated with a traditional deity such as Sol.

⁴⁰ Frakes, 2012, 104-05.

⁴¹ Kent, 1981, 40-41.

⁴² Hunt, 1998 16-17.

⁴³ Shelton, 1982, 118-22.

A particularly striking example is a coin minted at Amiens between 351 and 353, which discarded the subtle and obscure stylization of the Constantinian *chi-rho* and instead prominently displayed the symbol across the reverse of the coin. This deliberate enhancement of the *chi-rho* suggests an effort by Magnentius to emphasize his association with divine favour and to assert his legitimacy through a more explicit use of Christian iconography (Figure 17).⁴⁴ This coin presents the *chi-rho* explicitly as a Christian motif rather than a strictly Constantinian symbol, emphasizing Magnentius' Christian faith rather than a direct visual association with the Constantinian dynasty. It is also the first instance of the *chi-rho* being displayed prominently on coinage, suggesting Magnentius' intention to assert his legitimacy through a bold declaration of Christian authority.⁴⁵ Notably, this coin was likely struck following Magnentius' defeat by Constantius II at the battle of Mursa.⁴⁶ The enlargement of the *chi-rho* may indicate that Magnentius sought to present it as an unequivocal Christian motif, likely as an attempt to compensate for his military failings and assert divine support for his rule. This represents a subtle rejection of Constantius II's authority by redefining the *chi-rho* as a Magnentian symbol which conveyed specifically Christian imperial legitimacy rather than a mere appropriation of Constantinian imagery.⁴⁷



Figure 15 RIC VIII Aquileia 124, Legend: FL MAGNENTI-VS TR P F AVG (obverse), RESTITVTOR - LIBERTAS (reverse), gold solidus, Magnentius draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Magnentius draped, cuirassed, holding globe topped by Victory and a labarum, on reverse. Minted in Aquileia 350-352 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.aq.124>).

⁴⁴ Abdy, 2012, 594-96

⁴⁵ Ibid, 596.

⁴⁶ See, Omissi, 2018, 168-70; Shelton, 1982, 223-33; Lewis, 2003.

⁴⁷ Omissi, 2018, 176.



Figure 36 RIC VIII Aquileia 122, Legend: IMP CAES MAG-NENTIVS AVG (obverse), LIBERATOR REI PVBLICAE (reverse), gold multiple medallion, Magnentius draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Magnentius draped, cuirassed, wearing mural crown, holding cornucopiae, on reverse. Minted in Aquileia 350-352 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.aq.122>).



Figure 17 RIC VIII Amiens 34, Legend: N MAGNEN-TIVS P F AVG (obverse), SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES (reverse), billon AE1, chi-rho flanked by Greek letters alpha and omega on reverse. Minted in Amiens 350-353 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.amb.34>).

The appropriation of Constantinian motifs to promote imperial authority is also observable on Vetranian coinage. The rival imperial claimant produced a variety of coinage reflecting continued loyalty and association with the Constantinian dynasty.⁴⁸ A billon issue minted at Siscia in 350 employed a common Constantinian motif (Figure 18). The reverse inscription, *HOC SIG-NO VICTOR ERIS* (by this sign you will conquer), echoes a phrase depicted on coinage from the reign of Constantius II, further emphasizing the continued adaptation of Constantinian imagery to assert legitimacy and divine favour.⁴⁹ As demonstrated by this example, *HOC SIG-NO VICTOR ERIS* was a clear Constantinian motif associated with Constantine's vision at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. It had evolved into a powerful message of divinely ordained success, serving as both a religious and political affirmation of legitimacy

⁴⁸ Bardill, 2012, 177.

⁴⁹ Kent, 1981, 44.

for subsequent emperors.⁵⁰ The *labarum* is part of this vision, becoming an imperial and Christian symbol of continued military success through divine favour.⁵¹ It is significant that the reverse of this coin presents Vetranio holding a *labarum* as he is crowned by the figure of Victory, an overt imitation of a Constantinian motifs.⁵² Notably, the majority of the donatives produced under Vetranio bore the image of Constantius II.⁵³ One gold medallion from Siscia (Figure 19), minted in 350, inscribed Vetranio as the saviour of the republic (*SALVATOR REI PVBLICAE*), a message that was also communicated Constantius II's coinage.⁵⁴ The obverse depicts a portrait of Vetranio adorned with a laurel, rather than a diadem. This is an example of how Vetranio conformed to Constantinian hierarchal imagery, as the laurel distinguished him as a junior emperor to Constantius II, who would be portrayed with an ornate and bejewelled diadem to represent his senior status.⁵⁵ However, the *labarum* presented here differs from how the motif was commonly portrayed during the reign of Constantine. The iconic *labarum* coin, discussed previous as depicting the standard piercing a snake after Constantine's victory over Licinius, features the *chi-rho* crowning the standard. In contrast, the *labarum* on the reverse has the *chi-rho* on the banner. Although this variation was introduced in the coinage of Constantine's sons, it was used infrequently under Constantine,⁵⁶ demonstrating the gradual popularity and development of the *labarum* over time.⁵⁷ Despite these differences, Vetranian coinage remained distinctly Constantinian in design—more so than Magnentian demonstrating the influence that Constantinian imagery and the use of the *labarum* and *chi-rho* motifs as symbols of legitimacy.

⁵⁰ Van Dam, 2011, 5-11, 53-54, 61-66.

⁵¹ Frakes, 2012, 104-05.

⁵² Kent, 1981, 44.

⁵³ Van Dam, 2011, 48-50.

⁵⁴ Kent, 1981, 367.

⁵⁵ Dearn, 2003, 181-86.

⁵⁶ The *labarum* is depicted with the *chi-rho* over the banner on Figure 10, RIC VII Siscia 207, dated to 326; See, Bardill, 2012, 176.

⁵⁷ Dearn, 2003, 188-89.



Figure 18 RIC VIII Siscia 279, Legend: *D N VETRA-NIO P F AVG* (obverse), *HOC SIG-NO VICTOR ERIS* (reverse), billon AE2, Vetranio laureate, draped, cuirassed, on obverse, Vetranio diademed, draped, cuirassed, holding labarum with Victory crowning him, on reverse. Minted in Siscia 350 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.8.sis.279>).



Figure 19 RIC VIII Siscia 260, Legend: *D N VETRA-NIO P F AVG* (obverse), *SALVATOR REI PVBLICAE* (reverse), gold solidus, Vetranio laureate, draped, cuirassed, on obverse. Vetranio diademed, draped, cuirassed, holding a spear and labarum, chi-rho on the banner, Victory stands crowning him, on reverse. Minted in Siscia 350 CE. American Numismatic Society. (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/results?q=fulltext%3ARIC+VIII+Siscia+260>).

The use of Constantinian motifs, including the *labarum* and *chi-rho*, reflects the enduring legacy of Constantinian imagery. While these motifs were augmented and adapted by later emperors, they continued to echo the original symbols employed under Constantine. Yet, pinpointing the precise moment when these motifs transitioned from Constantinian to explicitly Christian remains challenging. In essence, they developed a dual-meaning which drew upon the authority of Constantinian imagery while simultaneously evolving into representations of Christian imperial legitimacy.⁵⁸ While the *labarum* continued to serve as a powerful representation of military success, the portrayal of imperial victory evolved. The *chi-rho*, once ambiguously displayed, became prominently featured on the banner itself rather than as a crowning motif. This shift reflects a broader adaptation of Constantinian imagery to align with the changing religious and political landscape of the empire. This reflects the evolution of these

⁵⁸ Dearn, 2011, 187.

motifs from ambiguous representations to clear expressions of Christian authority.⁵⁹ The epigraphic motifs that were reused by succeeding emperors were a partial continuity of the fabrication of Constantine's vision at the Milvian Bridge and were used by Constantine following his conflicts with Maxentius and Licinius.⁶⁰ The epigraphy had evolved into a divine portent of imperial success due to the favour of the Christian god, but remained intimately connected to the Constantinian dynasty.⁶¹ Additionally, the imperial regalia depicted in Constantinian coinage persisted into later coinage, with the diadem emerging as a distinct symbol of an emperor's seniority and authority.⁶² It is evident that Constantinian motifs were augmented into Christian symbols associated with imperial legitimacy, military success, and divine favour while maintaining a clear connection to their original Constantinian context, revealing the lasting impact of Constantinian imagery.

CONSTANTINIAN NUMISMATICS: CONCLUSION.

The transition of Constantinian imagery from traditional to developing motifs should be understood as neither immediate nor absolute; rather, it was a gradual adaptation marked by various applications across different rulers and contexts. Because of this complexity it is imperative to utilize an interdisciplinary approach that problematizes literary and material evidence. It has been understood that Constantinian numismatics incorporated both traditional and evolving motifs to consolidate the emperor's tumultuous ascent to supreme authority over the Roman Empire. Through a discussion centred around the use of the *labarum* and *chi-rho* motifs, it was determined that these images were inherently ambiguous yet were employed to communicate messages of divine support and imperial military success to a diverse audience. Through the comparison of motifs related to Sol and the Christian god it was demonstrated that the gradual development of Constantinian imagery could be observed through coinage. The divine patronal relationships discussed alongside this comparison demonstrated the methodology used to communicate and visually maintain the perception of divine favour and associate this favour with Constantine's military success and ascent in authority. Further, the enduring legacy of Constantinian imagery lies in its ability to convey legitimacy through evolving religious and political circumstances. By depicting motifs commonly displayed in Constantinian imagery, but within new styles and associations, later imperial authorities reinforced their authority as a distinctly separate entity from the previous Constantinian rulers. This re-contextualized the motifs of *labarum* and *chi-rho* as specifically Christian imperial authority.⁶³ The observable influence of Constantinian imagery upon later Roman imperial coinage is indicative of how numismatics can be used for the study of continuity within Roman imperial display across periods of transition and internal discord.

⁵⁹ Frakes, 2012, 104-05.

⁶⁰ Van Dam, 2011, 53-54, 61-66.

⁶¹ Ibid, 61-66.

⁶² Dearn, 2011, 189-91.

⁶³ Storch, 1970, 1-2, 112-16.

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THE RESONANCE OF MAGICAL SILENCING IN ATHENIAN AND ROMAN LEGAL CULTURES

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οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο δρᾷτε πλὴν δικάζετε.

You're doing nothing but... judge in the courts!

Aristophanes, *Peace* (505)

In the ancient world, speech was power. The democratic developments of the late sixth century BC brought oratory to the centre of both political and legal agency. Particularly in Aristophanic comedy, as Crichton has outlined, the legal system was omnipresent.¹ It is therefore unsurprising that rituals and anxieties surrounding speech failure permeated both material and literary cultures. Curse tablets (Greek κατάδεσμοι, Latin *defixiones*) offer a revealing window into how supernatural practices were employed to influence legal outcomes. Through magical silencing, especially the ritual binding of the tongue, these predominantly lead inscriptions aimed to pre-emptively dismantle a rival's persuasive capacity.

This study traces the evolution and cultural logic of such practices across material and literary cultures. It begins with two κατάδεσμοι: an early, minimalistic example from Selinus (Source 1), and then a more elaborate and formulaically developed specimen from Attica (Source 2). It then turns to their literary echoes in two legal episodes: the trial of Thucydides (son of Melesias) in Aristophanes' *Wasps* and *Acharnians* (Sources 3 and 4), and Curio pater's collapse at the trial of Titinia in Cicero's *Brutus* and *Orator* (Sources 5 and 6). Both pairs of texts come from the same authors, written within just a few years of each other, allowing us to examine both internal and external contrasts within their differing accounts of these trials.

In the literature, the variety of explanations suggests that magical silencing was far from a universal belief, but nevertheless a recognisable cultural phenomenon. It is employed as a sensationalist strategy to explain rhetorical collapse, appealing to the imaginative power of the jury. Its reception is either sympathetic or satirical: Aristophanes presents such an explanation without narrative judgement, whereas Cicero uses it to belittle and discredit his former adversary. However, in both cases magical silencing does not appear in isolation, as the respective authors provide alternative explanations to the same episodes of oratorical failure. This study then discusses the judicial and cultural differences that allowed magical accusations to be more resonant in Athens than in Rome. It finally analyses Tacitus' report of Piso's alleged poisoning of Germanicus (Source 7) as evidence of later Romans' refusal to accept magical accusations as a realistic explanation.

Ultimately, this study argues that by the late Roman republic accusations of magical silencing had lost their viability as an acceptable legal strategy. However, from early κατάδεσμοι to Imperial Roman history, the widespread recurrence of this motif reveals that

¹ Crichton (1997), 37-57.

such accusations remained culturally recognisable, evidencing the ancient world's profound entanglement between speech, power, and the fear of losing both.

CURSE TABLETS

SOURCE 1: SGD 95

Τὰν Ε[ὺ]κλέος γλῶσαν κ-
αὶ τὰν Ἀριστοφάνιος
καὶ τὰν Ἀγγελίος κα-
ὶ τ[ὰν] Ἀλκ[ί]φρονο[ς] κ-
αὶ τὰν Ἡᾱγεστράτο ·το-
ν συνδίφῳν τῶν [Ε]ὺ[κ]λί-
ος κα[ὶ] τ[ὸν] Ἀριστοφάνε-
ος [τὰς γ]λό[σ]ας κα[ὶ] τ[ὸν]
[....] λ [.]ονος [γλῶσαν]
καὶ τὰν Ο[ἰ]νο[θ]έο καὶ τ-
ὸν α[....] γ[λό]σ[αν].

Dubois (1989), 41-42

The tongue of Eucles and the tongue of
Aristophanis and the tongue of Angeilis and
the tongue of Alciphron and the tongue of
Heagestratos. The tongues of the advocates
of Eucles and Aristophanis. The tongue of
... [lacuna]
And the tongue of Oinotheos and the tongue
of ... [lacuna]

Trans., Ogden (2002), 211

Source 1 is one of five lead tablets found near the Necropolis at Buffa, in the Greek colony of Selinus in Sicily.² It has been dated as early as the sixth century, making it among the earliest extant judicial curse tablets.³ As Dubois notes, many early tablets are minimal, with a large proportion of the text being listed names.⁴ This tablet follows a notably simple and repetitive formula: Τὰν [Name] γλῶσαν καὶ τὰν [Name] καὶ τὰν [Name] ('The tongue of [Name] and that of [Name] and that of [Name]'). Noticeably, the surviving text contains no verb. Dubois suggests supplying one of cursing ('Je maudis') to guide modern interpretation, though this is a translational aid rather than a feature of the original.⁵ The absence of an explicit verb reflects the textual economy characteristic of early Greek epigraphy, where formulaic brevity often left implicit what was ritually or contextually understood.

The decision to isolate the tongue as the object of the curse is striking. Judicial tablets like this one do not simply invoke 'silence' in the abstract; they target the tongue, the physical instrument of persuasion, as a means of pre-emptive legal control. Faraone draws a parallel with *defixiones* aimed at charioteers, in which specific limbs are bound to disable performance, attacking the precise point where their 'competitive skill lay'.⁶ This reflects a shared magical methodology across curse tablets, and a belief that effective curses required precision, with the targeted body part acting as a metonym for the desired outcome. Although supernatural in

² Jordan (1985), 174-5 – SEG 94-98.

³ Gager and Jordan record that Brugnone dated the tablet to the end of the sixth century, although Gager states that 'this date must be treated as uncertain': Gager (1999), 138; Jordan (1985), 175; Dubois (1999), 39 – 'milieu du VI^e siècle à la fin du V^e siècle'.

⁴ Dubois (1989), 39.

⁵ Ibid. 42.

⁶ Faraone (1989), 157.

nature, such tablets were not all-powerful; their effectiveness depended on a logic of ritual specificity. Thus, correct instructions were required for the intended effect to be realised.

The presence of the word σύνδικος (here συνδίqων), referring to an accuser's advocate, situates the curse firmly within a legal context.⁷ The defendant appears to have enlisted supernatural aid not only to silence his accusers but also to disable their legal representatives. This act implies a belief that speech alone could determine judicial outcomes, and that the tongue itself was the instrument through which victory was secured. While one might read such magical silencing as a tacit admission of guilt, it more plausibly reflects the defendant's anxiety about the persuasive strength of his opponents. In a system where justice hinged on rhetorical performance rather than only objective evidence, magical intervention became a rational strategy. The curse reveals an uncomfortable truth about the legal process: that speech, not facts, determined outcomes, and that to lose one's voice was, in effect, to forfeit one's civic agency.

SOURCE 2: DTA 107

Φερένικος πρὸς τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸν χθόνιον καὶ
τὴν Ἑκάτην χθονίαν καταδεδέσθω·
Γαλήνην, ἣτις Φερενίκῳ, καταδέω πρὸς
Ἑρμῆν χθονικὸν καὶ Ἑκάτην χθονίαν
καταδιέω· καὶ ὥς οὗτος ὁ
βόλυβδος ἄτιμος καὶ ψυχρὸς, οὕτω ἐκένος
καὶ τὰ ἐκένω ἄτιμα κίαι ψυχρὰ ἔστω καὶ
τοῖς μετ' ἐκείνο ἃ περὶ ἐμὸ λέγοιεν καὶ
βολευοίατο.

Let Pherenikos be bound before Hermes of
the underworld and Hekate of the
underworld. I bind Pherenikos' [girl] Galene
before Hermes of the underworld and to
Hekate of the underworld I bind her. And
just as this lead is ἄτιμος and cold, so let
that man and what belongs to him (ἐκεῖνος
καὶ τὰ ἐκείνου) be ἄτιμα and cold, and for
those who are with him the things they have
spoken and planned concerning me.

Θερσίλος Οἰνόφιλος Φιλώτιος καὶ εἴ τις
ἄλλος Φερενίκῳ σύνδικος, πρὸς τὸν Ἑρμῆν
τὸν χθόνιον καὶ Ἑκάτην χθονίαν
καταδεδέσθω· Φερενίκου καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ νῦν
καὶ γλῶτταν καὶ
βολὰς καὶ τὰ πράττει καὶ τὰ περὶ ἐμὸ
βολεύεται, ἅπαντ' αὐτῷ ἀντία ἔστω καὶ
τοῖς μετ' ἐκένο βολεύουσιν καὶ πράττοσιν, ἰ
καὶ ὅσον

Let Thersilos, Oinophilos, Philotios and any
other supporter of Pherenikos be bound
before Hermes of the underworld and
Hekate of the underworld. Pherenikos' soul
and mind and tongue and plans and the
things that he is doing and the things that he
is planning concerning me, may all these
things be contrary for him and for those
planning and acting with him, whatever they
are.

Trans., van't Wout (2011), 130

A chronological gap of approximately a century separates Sources 1 and 2, and this temporal distance is reflected in the evolving formulaic structure and increasing standardisation

⁷ Gager (1999), 138.

evident in the latter. The recurrence of σύνδικος again anchors Source 2 firmly within a judicial context, but the denser use of established formulae marks a shift towards greater conventionalism by the fourth century.⁸ Source 2 employs three major formulae:

The first of these develops a motif already present in Source 1: a detailed focus on the victim's body parts. While the tongue (γλῶττα) remains central, Source 2 expands this list to include the soul (ψυχή) and the mind (νοῦς). This progression from external speech to internal cognition suggests a more deliberate attempt to bind not only outward expression but also thought, intention, and judgement, indicating an increasingly sophisticated understanding of ritual influence and control.

The second formula centres on divine invocation, specifically the appeal to Hermes and Hekate, both addressed with the epithet Ἑρμῆς/Ἑκάτη, 'of the underworld'. These deities are commonly invoked in curse tablets regardless of genre, their presence here reinforcing the inscription's ritual legitimacy and magical authority.⁹ As chthonic figures linked with liminality and nocturnal activity, they occupy a symbolic space aligned with secrecy and marginal power. Their invocation complements the hidden nature of the curse itself: a private, subversive appeal for influence made beyond the formal structure of the law.

The third formula is what Tambiah termed the 'persuasive analogy', in which the curser reinforces the spell's intended effects by comparing the victim to the tablet's material.¹⁰ The opponent is to become worthless (ἄτιμος)¹¹ and cold (ψυχρός), just like the lead upon which the curse is written. This operates within the logic of sympathetic magic, designed not only to describe but to actualise the curse's intent. Although coldness is both physically and symbolically evocative of death, Faraone argues that such curses should not be read as expressing a desire for the victim's death.¹² His interpretation is more restrained, focusing strictly on the specific qualities invoked by the analogy without extending the meaning beyond what the text explicitly states. This reading is persuasive, particularly given that other κατάδεσμοι do explicitly call for death, suggesting that when death was intended, it was stated unambiguously.¹³ Edmonds supports this caution, explaining that κατάδεσμοι often avoid 'extravagant demands, since the performer has little to offer the divinity as inducement to do what he or she wishes at the immediate moment in which the deity's action is needed.'¹⁴

The developments in Source 2 are not only formulaic but also stylistic. The inscription is markedly more complex than the concise and compressed Source 1. A broader range of verb tenses and moods marks a move away from the earlier textual economy of Source 1. For example, indicatives (πράττει), optatives (λέγειεν), and imperatives (ἔστω) all appear. This elaboration reflects the growing conventions of curse tablets in the fourth century BC. For example, καταδεῖν, a verb of binding, which appears in both the imperative (καταδεδέσθω) and indicative (καταδέω), is the most frequent verb on Attic κατάδεσμοι from the classical era.¹⁵ The increasing stylistic and structural complexity of Source 2 reflects the maturation of judicial

⁸ Van't Wout (2011), 131.

⁹ Edmonds (2022), 15; *DTA* 103, 106; *DT* 22, 50.

¹⁰ Tambiah (1973), 209. *similia similibus* (Faraone (1991), 8-10); see also van't Wout (2011), 131.

¹¹ *CGL*: 'Relatively without honour'; 'cheap' (Gager (1999), 352); 'held in no esteem' (Price (1999), 101-2).

¹² Faraone (1991), 8.

¹³ *DTA* 109; Edmonds (2022), 16.

¹⁴ Edmonds (2022), 19.

¹⁵ Hence the name; Faraone (1989), 158.

κατάδεσμοι into a more standardised and rhetorically sophisticated form, suggesting that by the fourth century, cursing had become a ritual practice governed by established conventions.

ARISTOPHANES

SOURCE 3: ARISTOPHANES, *WASPS* (944-951)

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

ἀνάβαιν', ἀπολογοῦ. τί σεσιώπηκας; λέγε.

Bdelycleon

(to Labes) Take the stand and present your defence. Why don't you say something? Speak up!

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔχειν οὗτός γ' ἔοικεν ὅ τι λέγει.

Philocleon

This one seems to have nothing to say for himself.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό μοι δοκεῖ πεπονθέναι, ὅπερ ποτὲ φεύγων ἔπαθε καὶ Θουκυδίδης· ἀπόπληκτος ἐξαίφνης ἐγένετο τὰς γνάθους· πάρεχ' ἐκποδών· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀπολογήσομαι. χαλεπὸν μὲν, ὦνδρες, ἐστὶ διαβεβλημένου ὑπεραποκρίνεσθαι κυνός, λέξω δ' ὁμῶς.

Bdelycleon

No, I think the same thing's happened to him that once happened to Thucydides when he was on trial: his jaws suddenly got paralyzed. Move over from me; I'll present your defence. It is difficult, gentlemen of the jury, to speak on behalf of a slandered dog, but speak I shall.

Trans., Henderson (1998b), 342-345

The circulation of these conventions in the Attic world is suggested by their reappearance in Old Comedy. In *Wasps*, Aristophanes parodies Athenian legal culture through the figure of Philocleon, a 'compulsive juror' (φιληλιαστής, 88).¹⁶ In an attempt to cure his addiction, his son Bdelycleon hosts a mock trial at home, in which the dog Labes is tried for stealing cheese.¹⁷ In Source 3, the dog, earlier described as good at barking (ἀγαθὸς γ' ὑλακτεῖν, 904), is called upon to present his defence, before he suddenly and inexplicably falls silent (οὐκ ἔχειν οὗτός γ' ἔοικεν ὅ τι λέγει, 945). Bdelycleon responds by invoking the case of Pericles' political opponent Thucydides, noting that he too had once fallen silent due to the sudden paralysis of his jaws (ἀπόπληκτος ἐξαίφνης ἐγένετο τὰς γνάθους, 948).¹⁸

Although the diction differs (γνάθους vs. γλώσσα), what remains strikingly similar across Sources 1, 2, and 3 is the corporeal specificity with which the act of silencing is imagined and enacted. While the *Wasps* passage does not contain a binding verb in the spoken text, the

¹⁶ Sommerstein (1983), 13.

¹⁷ See MacDowell (1971), 243 for Labes's name.

¹⁸ Starkie (1897), 298 stressed the paralytic nature of ἀπόπληκτος, citing Hippocrates. Opposed to the 'struck dumb' of Blaydes (1893), 356-357.

scholia vetera on this scene uses the participle ἐγκατεχομένην, which functions similarly.¹⁹ Its absence from the dialogue reflects Aristophanes' external perspective, depicting the visible effects of magical silencing rather than articulating a desire for binding through direct ritual invocation. Bdelycleon's comparison between Labes and Thucydides suggests that magical silencing was a culturally recognisable explanation for a rhetorical failure, even in relation to prominent political figures.

SOURCE 4: ARISTOPHANES, *ACHARNIANS* (703-718)

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

τῷ γὰρ εἰκὸς ἄνδρα κυφόν, ἡλίκον
Θουκυδίδην, ἐξολέσθαι συμπλακέντα τῇ
Σκυθῶν ἐρημίᾳ, τῷδε τῷ Κηφισοδήμου, τῷ
λάλῳ ξυνηγόρῳ; ὥστ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἡλέησα
κάπεμορξάμην ἰδὼν ἄνδρα πρεσβύτην ὑπ'
ἄνδρὸς τοξότου κυκώμενον ὃς μὰ τὴν
Δήμητρ', ἐκεῖνος ἡνίκ' ἦν Θουκυδίδης, οὐδ'
ἂν αὐτὸν Ἀρταχαίην ῥαδίως ἡνέσχετο,
ἀλλὰ κατεπάλαισε μὲν <γ'> ἂν πρῶτον
Εὐάθλους δέκα, κατεβόησε δ' ἂν κεκραγῶς
τοξότας τρισχιλίους, περιετόξευσεν δ' ἂν
αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς τοὺς ξυγγενεῖς. ἀλλ'
ἐπειδὴ τοὺς γέροντας οὐκ ἔαθ' ὕπνου
τυχεῖν, ψηφίσασθε χωρὶς εἶναι τὰς γραφάς,
ὅπως ἂν ἢ τῷ γέροντι μὲν γέρων καὶ νωδὸς
ὁ ξυνήγορος, τοῖς νέοισι δ' εὐρύπρωκτος
καὶ λάλος χῶ Κλεινίου. κάξελαύνειν χρὴ τὸ
λοιπὸν κἂν φύγῃ τις ζημιούν- τὸν γέροντα
τῷ γέροντι, τὸν νέον δὲ τῷ νέῳ

Chorus Leader

Yes, how can it be fair that a stooped man
of Thucydides' age should be destroyed in
the grip of that Scythian wilderness, this
man here, Cephisodemus' son, the prattling
advocate? I for one felt pity and wiped away
a tear at the sight of an old gentleman being
confounded by a bowman. By Demeter,
when Thucydides was himself, he wouldn't
lightly have brooked Artachaeus himself,
but would have first outwrestled ten
Euathluses, outshouted with a roar three
thousand bowmen, and shot circles round
the kinsmen of the advocate's father. But
since you won't allow the old men to get a
moment's sleep, at least decree that their
cases be separate; then an old man's
prosecutor would be old and toothless, and
the young men's would be the wide-arsed,
prattling son of Cleinias. From now on you
should banish elderly defendants by using
elderly prosecutors, and youths by using
youths.

Trans., Henderson (1998a), 142-145

However, just because magical silencing was culturally recognisable does not necessarily mean that it was culturally accepted. Even within Aristophanes' own corpus, we find competing explanations for Thucydides' silence. In *Acharnians* (Source 4), Thucydides is

¹⁹ *Scholia in Aristophanem* (1978), 150; cf. Raubitschek (1960), 90-1. *CGL* (2021), 784: κατέχω - literally 'hold down/back' (1-5), but in this sense, it functions like a binding verb. Faraone (1989), 158: 'The verb κατέχειν is (after καταδεῖν) the second most frequent verb to appear on Attic *defixiones* from the classical era'.

not portrayed as the victim of magical silencing, but as an ageing orator (ἄνδρα κυφόν, ἡλίκον Θουκυδίδην, 703) unable to match the rhetorical agility of the younger, sophistic generation.²⁰ The Chorus Leader appeals directly to the sympathetic figure that Thucydides cuts, feeling pity and shedding a tear at the sight (ὥστ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἡλέησα κάπεμορξάμην, 706). There is not one reference to magic or supernatural interference; Thucydides is simply too old to defend himself.

Faraone makes the intriguing argument that such variance reflects a broader cultural pattern: while victors and neutral observers may have explained these failures as defeat by superior argument, sympathetic or defensive sources could invoke magical interference as a socially acceptable explanation for an otherwise humiliating collapse.²¹ But the sincerity of our consideration of magical silence as social acceptance is undermined by the genre of *Wasps*. Not only did Old Comedy have the goal of inducing laughter, but one of its chief means of doing so was by embellishing the whimsical and wacky side of public figures, such as Socrates in *Clouds* or Cleon in *Knights*. Furthermore, Dover's observation about the limited number of verbal roles in actual performances of Aristophanic comedy is relevant here, offering a practical reason for why Labes must remain silent.²²

In *Wasps*, Bdelycleon's reference should be understood as belittling, highlighting a particularly embarrassing moment, while in *Acharnians*, the account creates sympathy for the outmatched and defeated Thucydides. That is not to say that magic was not used as an explanation by sympathetic or defensive sources (as we shall see with Source 5), but rather that such explanations could often be rejected and were not socially acceptable, merely recognisable.

CICERO

To evidence the cultural consistency of this conclusion, this study now turns to the Roman world, and Cicero's two accounts of Curio *pater's* rhetorical collapse at the trial of Titinia in 79 BC.²³

As an associate of both Verres and Clodius,²⁴ Curio naturally became a target of Cicero. The context of their enmity is essential for understanding Cicero's references to the trial of Titinia, which occurred at the very beginning of his public career. Three decades later, after years of political and personal animosity with Curio, he recounts the events of the trial in *Orator* and *Brutus*. Far from neutral, these accounts are rhetorically crafted versions of the same event, deployed for two distinct purposes. In *Orator*, Cicero uses the episode to elevate his own legacy; in *Brutus*, to undermine Curio's credibility as an advocate. In both accounts, Curio cites magical interference as the cause of his demise, although Cicero gives them no credence and dismisses them readily.

²⁰ Starkie (1909), 149; Faraone (1989), 151, n.6.

²¹ Faraone (1989), 151.

²² Dover (1972), 123.

²³ The wife of the Consul Gaius Aurelius Cotta (75 BC). Frier (1987), 275.

²⁴ *Ver.* 1.18-19; *Att.* 1.16.

SOURCE 5: CICERO, *ORATOR* (128-130)

*illud superius come, iucundum, ad
benevolentiam conciliandam paratum, hoc
vehemens, incensum, incitatum, quo causae
eripiuntur; quod cum rapide fertur,
sustineri nullo pacto potest. Quo genere nos
mediocres aut multo etiam minus, sed
magno semper usu impetu saepe adversarios
de statu omni deiecimus. Nobis pro familiari
reo summus orator non respondit
Hortensius; a nobis homo audacissimus
Catilina in senatu accusatus obmutuit;
nobis privata in causa magna et gravi cum
coepisset Curio pater respondere, subito
assedit, cum sibi venenis ereptam
memoriam diceret*

The former is courteous and agreeable, adapted to win goodwill; the latter is violent, hot and impassioned, and by this cases are wrested from our opponents; when it rushes along in full career it is quite irresistible. My ability is mediocre or even less than that, but I have always used a vigorous style, and by this kind of oratory I have often dislodged opponents. Hortensius, a consummate orator, made no reply in defence of his friend whom I brought to trial; the brazen Catiline was arraigned by me in the senate and was struck dumb; the elder Curio began his reply to me in a private case of grave importance, and suddenly sat down, alleging that magical potions had robbed him of his memory.

Trans., Hendrickson and Hubbell (1939), 402-403

In *Orator* (Source 5), Cicero frames Curio's courtroom collapse as one of his greatest professional triumphs, placing it alongside his prosecution of Verres and the suppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy in a climactic tricolon of rhetorical victories (129). According to Cicero, Curio, struck suddenly speechless by the overwhelming onslaught of Cicero's oratory, could offer no defence except to claim that 'magical potions had robbed him of his memory' (*sibi venenis ereptam memoriam*). Although this lacks the bodily specificity present in both the judicial curse tablets and *Wasps*, it nonetheless participates in the same cultural logic: unexplained speech failure is attributed to supernatural forces. Yet here the magical claim serves to enhance Cicero while undermining Curio, suggesting that the former's oratorical and rhetorical superiority left the latter grasping for an explanation.

SOURCE 6: CICERO, *BRUTUS* (217-218)

*qui in iudicio privato vel maximo, cum ego
pro Titinia Cottae peroravissem, ille contra
me pro Ser. Naevio diceret, subito totam
causam oblitus est idque veneficiis et
cantionibus Titinae factum esse dicebat.
magna haec immemoris ingeni signa; ...*

Again in a private suit of great importance, when I had finished my plea in behalf of Cotta's client Titinia, and he was speaking in rebuttal for Servius Naevius, he suddenly forgot the whole case, and could only say in explanation that the potions and incantations of Titinia were the cause of it. The sort of thing is evidence enough of a feeble memory.

Trans., Hendrickson and Hubbell (1939), 184-187

In *Brutus* (Source 6), Cicero revisits the same episode, but this time to explicitly discredit Curio's reputation as an orator rather than to celebrate his own victory. The focus in this passage is on Curio's memory: precisely the faculty he had claimed, in *Orator*, was impaired by magical interference. Here, Curio names a specific perpetrator, attributing his failure to 'the spells and incantations of Titinia' (*veneficiis et cantionibus Titiniae*). Tatum notes that accusations of magic made against women were common, but regardless Curio's excuse is 'glaringly lame'.²⁵ Cicero rejects Curio's explanation, responding with the cutting remark: 'these are clear signs of a forgetful mind' (*magna haec immemoris ingenii signa*). Unlike in *Orator*, where the magical explanation enhances Cicero's rhetorical stature, here it merely amplifies Curio's failure, as Cicero's tone makes clear that he sees it as an evasive and embarrassing attempt to justify incompetence.

Cicero's differing accounts of Curio's failure in *Orator* and *Brutus* illustrate his strategic use of magical accusations to suit contrasting rhetorical aims. In *Orator*, his rhetorical superiority overwhelms and silences Curio: a dynamic that echoes *Acharnians*, where an older speaker is outmatched by the rhetorical skill of the younger generation. In *Brutus*, Cicero allows the magical claim of his opponent to be voiced, as Curio blames his silence on the spells of Titinia, mirroring Bdelycleon's suggestion that Thucydides was struck mute by magical means. However, the two authors differ in the degree of narrative intervention. Aristophanes presents the magical explanation without comment, allowing the audience to assess its plausibility, whereas Cicero immediately rejects the idea of magic, labelling it a weak excuse and thereby further demeaning Curio.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In Sources 3-6, it appears that magical accusations had greater cultural resonance in Athenian legal culture than in Rome, as they were more readily dismissed in the latter. This may be seen as a reflection of their respective genres, but also their respective judicial cultures and processes.

Although little is known about Thucydides' trial, his portrayal as an old man in *Acharnians* suggests that it took place after his ostracism from 444/3 to 434/3 BC, by which point he was around seventy years old.²⁶ By this time Pericles had introduced pay for Athenian jurors,²⁷ which broadened the participation across the populace, regardless of financial station. Although this reform caused juries to be a more accurate representation of the populace, the artisans and farmers who now were able to act as jurors often had limited formal education.

Furthermore, as we see in *Acharnians*, there were no lawyers to speak on behalf of their clients, so defendants were forced to provide their own defence. Oratorical and rhetorical training was to become far more accessible in this period with the rise of the sophists. It is clear from *Acharnians* that Thucydides' legal methods predate this, as he is so outmatched by the

²⁵ Tatum (1991), 364 n.2, 368.

²⁶ Borthwick (2000), 202, 204.

²⁷ Podes (1994), 101.

sophists' manoeuvres. Therefore, before such developments, the combination of relatively unsophisticated orators and popular juries rendered sensationalist strategies, such as magical accusations, forensically viable.

By contrast, the Roman jury (*iudices*) was composed of senatorial or equestrian²⁸ Romans who, although they required no legal training, were more traditionally educated and far fewer in number than the Athenian jurists.²⁹ Of course, bribery and incompetence remained,³⁰ but elite Roman authors often presented the *iudex* as more concerned with rationality and demonstrative proof.³¹ Furthermore, defendants were allowed advocates, as we see Cicero acting as the defence for Titinia in 79 BC, defeating the prosecution of Curio. Roman advocacy was a profession and, by the late republic, a highly developed art, with rhetoric of the utmost importance. A strategy such as a magical accusation was therefore considered unserious and rightly dismissed as such by Cicero: 'that sort of thing is evidence enough of a feeble memory' (*magna haec immemoris ingeni signa*).

Although by the late republic the Romans may not have been convinced by magical accusations, they remained culturally resonant and 'ubiquitous'.³² Tatum noted that Curio's allegation may have brought the Titinia case under Sulla's *lex de sicariis et veneficiis*.³³ This law concerned primarily the punishment of those who use or carry weapons illegally, yet Justinian records that: *eadem lege et venefici capite damnantur, qui artibus odiosis, tam venenis quam susurris magicis homines occiderunt vel mala medicamenta publice vendiderunt* (Under the same law, poisoners too are condemned to death, who by hateful practices, both by poisons and by magical whisperings, have killed people or have publicly sold harmful drugs).³⁴ This specific law was introduced by Sulla in 81 BC,³⁵ just two years before the trial of Titinia in 79 BC.

SOURCE 7: TACITUS, *ANNALS* 2.69

saevam vim morbi augebat persuasio veneni a Pisone accepti; et reperiebantur solo ac parietibus erutae humanorum corporum reliquiae, carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum, semusti cineres ac tabo obliti aliaque malefica quis creditur animas numinibus infernis sacrari.

The severity of the disease was intensified by the belief that Germanicus had been given *venenum* by Piso. Excavations of the floor and walls revealed the remains of human bodies, incantations, lead tablets bearing the name of Germanicus, half-burnt ashes smeared in gore, and other evil instruments by which it is believed souls may be devoted to the gods of the underworld.

²⁸ Brunt (1983), 43.

²⁹ Frier (1987), 272; Greenidge (1901), 15-16, 38.

³⁰ Twelve Tables 9.3.

³¹ Frier (1987), 271-272.

³² Jackson (1931), 495 n.1.

³³ Tatum (1991), 364 n.3.

³⁴ *Inst.* 4.18.5. My own translation.

³⁵ Appian 1.99. It has been noted that it was a reworking of previous laws: Cloud (1968), 137; Rives (2003), 318 n.14.

Text of Jackson, (1931). My own translation.

The most famous charge of *venenum* came in 19 AD with the trial of Piso for the murder of Germanicus. Within this passage we see reference to curse tablets similar to Sources 1 and 2, in that they are lead (*plumbeis tabulis*) and engraved with Germanicus' name (*nomen Germanici... insculptum*). Cassius Dio also reports these two features: ἔλασμοι μολίβδινοι and ἀράς τινὰς μετὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.³⁶ We see that five centuries later, and across nations, there is a consistency in the material and nominal targeting of these κατάδεσμοι/defixiones.

Tacitus' stance is merely observational, as he qualifies each of his statements: Germanicus' illness was intensified by his belief (persuasio) that Piso had given him poison; and the malefica by which it is believed (creditor) souls can be devoted to the infernal gods. In a similar fashion, Suetonius reports that Germanicus died at Antioch not without the suspicion that he was 'poisoned' (non sine veneni suspicione).³⁷ Whilst these qualifications may be read as a refusal to blame Piso, they should instead be understood as a refusal to cite magic as the cause of Germanicus' death.

The sentiment that Piso adamantly wanted Germanicus killed is expressed in Source 7 through Tacitus' catalogue of methods (veneni...humanorum corporum reliquiae, carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum, semusti cineres ac tabo). Many translate Tacitus' veneni as 'poison',³⁸ which gives a realistic and acceptable explanation as to how Piso's schemes caused the death of Germanicus. However, Rives quite broadly defines venenum as 'substances that had the power to affect something else'.³⁹ In this Tacitean context, venenum is clearly used in reference to its entanglement with the occult.⁴⁰ Whilst 'poison' may work, it must be considered within the semantic field of the magical world, alongside the likes of incantations and spells. Indeed, Rolfe's translation of Suetonius' veneficiis... et devotionibus as 'potions and spells' more accurately encapsulates the implication of venenum in the context of the death of Germanicus.⁴¹

Suetonius' and Tacitus' refusal to personally attribute Germanicus' death to Piso's magical schemes reflects Cicero's refusal to believe the magical causes of Curio's silence. Although writing in very different genres, all three authors display a reluctance to accept magical explanations as sufficient causes in themselves. The judicial and intellectual environments in which they wrote encouraged appeals to plausible and demonstrable explanations, even when accusations of magic remained culturally resonant.

- Conclusion -

The vast number of κατάδεσμοι and defixiones recovered by archaeologists evidences the ancient world's entanglement with magical silencing, particularly in judicial contexts. The literature presents another story, in which accusations of magic are deployed for comic effect or dismissed in favour of more rational explanations. However, it is important to consider that those dramatists and authors whose works we read today were among the most highly educated

³⁶ Dio 57.18.9.

³⁷ *Cal.* 3.3.

³⁸ Jackson (1931), 495; Kline (2017), 155; Yardley and Barret (2016).

³⁹ Rives (2003), 318-9. See *dig.* 50.16.236 for Gaius' distinction between *malum an bonum venena*.

⁴⁰ *OLD*, 2027.

⁴¹ N. 38.

members of their societies, versed in the works of their preceding philosophers and intellectuals. In legal cases of the utmost importance, such writers therefore tend to require demonstrative proof and logical causation to make judgement.

By the late republic, magical accusations were often dismissed by Roman elites as unserious and fantastical, but they nevertheless remained culturally recognisable. Although magical explanations may have been more acceptable in Athens than in Rome, they rarely existed in isolation and without alternative interpretations, as we see in *Acharnians* with the explanation of Thucydides' silence as his incompetence in comparison to the sophists. Nevertheless, that some believed magical strategies could produce such effects testifies to their deep imaginative power.⁴²

In the ancient world, losing one's voice in court meant forfeiting civic agency, making its prevention and explanation a cultural priority. Any and all methods were employed, regardless of the absence of rational justification. Thus, magical silencing remained culturally resonant from Classical Athens to the Roman Imperial period, despite elite authors recognising its flaws and rejecting it as a credible explanation.

⁴² Faraone (1989), 160.

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CATULLUS' *PASSER* AS AN ALLEGORY FOR HIS LOVE

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ABSTRACT

The theory that Catullus' second and third poem are, in fact, intended to be his opening poems is supported by a considerable amount of evidence, most notably Martial's references to Catullus' body of work as his *passer*, the metrical dissimilarities between C.1 and the following poems, and the references to Sapphic and later Hellenistic poetry. This paper argues that, through a comparison between C.2 and 3 and C.51 and 8 respectively, it can be proven that the *passer* poems are also thematically programmatic, and that Catullus uses the *passer* as an extended metaphor for his love affair. Firstly, this paper examines the similarities in diction between the two sets of poems, noting the erotic and romantic connotations that many chosen words hold. Secondly, this paper compares the events that these four poems describe, as well as diving into the connections between these poems and Sappho. Lastly, this paper aims to argue that the *passer*'s uniquely doting personality (which has generated a great amount of scholarly debate about the nature of the pet bird) illustrates Catullus' desire for ownership over Lesbia.

C.2

Passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,
cui primum digitum dare adpetenti
et acris solet incitare morsus,
cum desiderio meo nitenti
carum nescio quid libet iocari
(et solaciolum sui doloris,
credo, ut tum gravis adquiescat ardor),
tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem
et tristis animi levare curas!
... Tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae
pernici aureolum fuisse malum,
quod zonam solvit diu ligatam.

Sparrow, my lady's pet, with whom she often plays whilst she holds you in her lap, or gives you her fingertip to peck and provokes you to bite sharply, whenever she, the bright-shining lady of my love, has a mind for some sweet pretty play, in hope, as I think, that when the sharper smart of love abates, she may find some small relief from her pain—ah, might I but play with

you as she does, and lighten the gloomy cares of my heart! ... This is as welcome to me as to the swift maiden was (they say) the golden apple, which loosed her girdle too long tied.¹

C.3

Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque
et quantum est hominum venustiorum!
passer mortuus est meae puellae,
passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quem plus illa oculis suis amabat;
nam mellitus erat, suamque norat
ipsa tam bene quam puella matrem,
nec sese a gremio illius movebat,
sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc
ad solam dominam usque pipiabat.
qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum
illuc unde negant redire quemquam.
at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae
Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis;
tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis.
o factum male! o miselle passer!
tua nunc opera meae puellae
flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

Mourn, ye Graces and Loves, and all you whom the Graces love. My lady's sparrow is dead, the sparrow my lady's pet, whom she loved more than her very eyes; for honey-sweet he was, and knew his mistress as well as a girl knows her own mother. Nor would he stir from her lap, but hopping now here, now there, would still chirp to his mistress alone. Now he goes along the dark road, thither whence they say no one returns. But curse upon you, cursed shades of Orcus, which devour all pretty things! Such a pretty sparrow you have taken away. Ah, cruel! Ah, poor little bird! All because of you my lady's darling eyes are heavy and red with weeping.

C.8

Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.
fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla.
ibi illa multa tum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat.
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.

¹ Transl. of C.2, 3, 8, and 51 from Cornish

nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque, impotens, noli,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive,
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
vale, puella! iam Catullus obdurat,
nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam:
at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
scelestas, vae te! quae tibi manet vita!
quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?
quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?
quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?
at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.

Poor Catullus, 'tis time you should cease your folly, and account as lost what you see is lost. Once the days shone bright on you, when you used to go so often where my mistress led, she who was loved by me as none will ever be loved. There and then were given us those joys, so many, so merry, which you desired nor did my lady not desire. Bright for you, truly, shone the days. Now she desires no more—no more should you desire, poor madman, nor follow her who flees, nor live in misery, but with resolved mind endure, be firm. Farewell, my mistress; now Catullus is firm; he will not seek you nor ask you against your will. But you will be sorry, when you are a nobody in favours asked for. Ah, poor wretch! what life is left for you? Who now will visit you? to whom will you seem fair? whom now will you love? by whose name will you be called? whom will you kiss? whose lips will you bite? But you, Catullus, be resolved and firm.

C.51

Ille mī pār esse deō vidētur,
ille, sī fās est, superāre dīvōs,
quī sedēns adversus īdentidem tē
spectat et audit

dulce rīdentem, miserō quod omnīs
ēripit sēnsūs mihi: nam simul tē,
Lesbia, aspexī, nihil est super mī
vōcis in ōre.

Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artūs
flamma dēmānat, sonitū suōpte
tintinant aurēs, geminā teguntur
lūmina nocte.

Ōtium, Catulle, tibī molestum est:
ōtiō exsultās nimiumque gestīs.
Ōtium et rēgēs prius et beātās

perdidit urbēs.

He seems to me to be equal to a god, he, if it may be, seems to surpass the very gods, who sitting opposite you again and again gazes at you and hears you sweetly laughing. Such a thing takes away all my senses, alas! for whenever I see you, Lesbia, at once no sound of voice remains within my mouth, but my tongue falters, a subtle flame steals down through my limbs, my ears ring with inward humming, my eyes are shrouded in twofold night. Idleness, Catullus, does you harm, you riot in your idleness and wanton too much. Idleness ere now has ruined both kings and wealthy cities.

The issue of how to interpret Catullus' *passer* in his C.2 and 3 has been actively explored for centuries. Much of the disagreement centers around whether or not the sparrow was a euphemism for the male reproductive organ, with pro-erotic theorists such as Hooper (and the fifteenth-century Florentine scholar Poliziano, who introduced the theory) reading C.2 and C.3 as Catullus expressing sexual frustration, while Jocelyn and Jones insist on a more literal interpretation.² This paper argues that the *passer* is neither wholly a sexual euphemism nor a literal pet bird, but functions primarily as a both metrically and thematically programmatic summary of Catullus and Lesbia's love affair, as they bear multiple similarities with later poems (i.e C.51 and C.8), as well as showcase many recurring themes in Catullus' relationship.

While the order of Catullus' poetry is widely debated, there is significant metrical and contextual evidence to support the theory that C.2 and 3 are programmatic, since C.1, often treated as the introductory poem in Catullus' works, has both trochaic and iambic line openings, breaking the trend of Phalaecian hendecasyllables from poems 2-26.³ Also, in one of his epigrams, Martial references Catullus' *passer* as such:

sic forsan tener ausus est Catullus
magno mittere Passerem Maroni.
'Thus, perhaps tender Catullus dared
to send his Sparrow to great Virgil.'
(Martial 4.14.13)

While Hooper uses the undertone of Martial's epigram as evidence supporting the pro-erotic *passer* theory, Martial referring to Catullus' *passer* is first and foremost a reference to his corpus of poetry, following the tradition of calling a poet's collection of works by the first word of the first poem.⁴ Catullus' Hellenistic use of elegiac epigram to mourn the death of a pet and the multiple allusions to Sappho in C.2 and 3, provide strong evidence that C.2 and 3 are programmatic, since both Sappho and the Hellenistic poets are consistently celebrated in his works as his greatest influences.⁵

² Cf. Hooper (1985) contra Jocelyn (1980), Jones (1998)

³ Ingleheart (2003) 562

⁴ Hooper, (1985) 167, Ingleheart (2003) 558

⁵ Fordyce (1961) 92

Lastly, C.2 and 3 also introduce the reader to Catullus' lover, who is unnamed in these poems but is likely Lesbia. Catullus' love affair is a central theme and great inspiration to many of his works of poetry, so it would be fitting for his introductory poems to mention this romance. All of these elements add to the argument that it is indeed the *passer* poems that should be treated as the opening poems, instead of C.1.

Both Jocelyn and Johnson have written previously about the possibly erotic subtext of the diction in C.2, as Catullus has chosen words that evoke sensual imagery like *sinus*, *noscere*, *gremium* and *devorare*, words that are favorites of both Catullus and love elegists which doesn't seem to fit at first glance with the topic of a pet bird.⁶ But other word choices also suggest a more romantic lens as well. In comparison with poem 8 (an important poem in regards to Lesbia and Catullus' relationship), there are many similarities in Catullus' word choice. For instance, in C.2, Catullus describes Lesbia as "*desiderio meo nitenti, the bright-shining lady of my love*" (2.5). In comparison, Catullus states that "*fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles, Bright for you, truly, shone the days*" (8.3). But this comparison is not the only example. In C.2, the word *iocari* is used when Catullus describes Lesbia's interaction with the bird. Later in C.8, Catullus uses the word *iocosa* when referring to his relationship with Lesbia. Catullus refers to himself as *miser* in C.8, and refers to the *passer* as the diminutive *miselle* in C.3, which strengthens the connection between the two figures, and is also a word choice that Hejduk claims has a "persistent association...with unhappiness in love."⁷ Finally, Catullus uses the phrase *acris morsus* when speaking about the bird's pecks in C.2. In C.8, Catullus recalls this phrasing with his rhetorical question to Lesbia: "*Cui labella mordēbis?, whose lips will you bite?*" (8.18). The repetitive diction of C.2 and 3 causes the reader to view Lesbia's relationship with her pet bird as something distinctly passionate. When it is taken into account that Catullus is clearly yearning to have a relationship such as theirs at the end of C.2, the purpose of the romantic tone becomes clear.

Through further comparison with C.8 and C.51 as well, it becomes clear that not only do the *passer* poems present themselves as a programmatic pair, but they also prove to be thematically programmatic as well. Along with the word similarities, the *Passer* poems also share similarities in content with these poems. In C.51, which describes the beginning of Catullus' infatuation with Lesbia, Catullus enviously watches a happy interaction between Lesbia and someone else. This image is strikingly similar to the voyeuristic scene with the *passer* in C.2. When comparing his physical anguish in C.51, where he states that "*misero quod omnis eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te, Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi, such a thing takes away all my senses, alas!*" (51.5) to his state of mind in poem two, as he mentions the "*tristis animi...curas, the gloomy cares of my heart*" (2.10), it becomes clear that Catullus is distraught by both scenes. In both poems, Catullus is tormented by the intimacy she shares with another and he is desirous of a relationship with her of his own.

Another clear thematic similarity between C.2 and C.51 is their allusion to Sappho. As a devoted fan of the Greek poetess, Catullus very frequently chooses to include references to Sappho in his work (even his lover is given a nickname after the island which Sappho inhabited). No poem demonstrates Catullus' literary appreciation of Sappho as strongly as C.51

⁶ Jocelyn (1980) 427, Johnson (2003) 22

⁷ Hejduk (2008) 110

does, as this poem is almost a word-for-word rework of Sappho's Fragment 3, which reads as follows:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν ὦνερ, ὅττις ἐναντίος τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδῃ φωνεῖ-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἱμερόεν τό μ' ἦ μάν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόησεν·
ὥς γὰρ εἰσίδω βροχέως σε, φώνας
·οὐδὲν ἔτ' ἵκει·
ἀλλὰ κάμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον
δ' αὐτίκα χροῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδὲν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι.
καδ δέ μ' ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομαι [...].
ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον ...

*He seems as fortunate as the gods to me, the man who sits opposite you and listens nearby to your sweet voice and lovely laughter. Truly that sets my heart trembling in my breast. For when I look at you for a moment, then it is no longer possible for me to speak; my tongue has snapped, at once a subtle fire has stolen beneath my flesh, I see nothing with my eyes, my ears hum, sweat pours from me, a trembling seizes me all over, I am greener than grass, and it seems to me that I am little short of dying. But all can be endured, since ... even a poor man ...*⁸

Sapphic allusions can be found throughout C.2, as the *passer* itself could be a reference to the sparrows (or στρουθοί) that pulled Venus's carriage, mentioned in Sappho fr.1.⁹ In this fragment, Sappho begs Aphrodite to make the object of her desire return her affections, in order to "χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον ἐχ μερίμναν, deliver her from cruel anxieties," which Brenk has compared to Catullus' wish to "tristis animi levare curas, lighten the gloomy cares of my heart" (2.10).¹⁰ Catullus further solidifies the bond between his work and Sappho's by commanding the *Veneres Cupidinesque* in C.3 to mourn the death of the sparrow, harking back to the connection Sappho made between the bird and the goddess of love. Catullus referencing fr. 1 throughout C.2 only further proves that the *passer* poems stand as more than just a pair of epigrams about a pet bird, they are an allegory for a romance worthy of association with the great love poet.

⁸ Transl. Campbell

⁹ Ingleheart (2003) 555

¹⁰ Brenk (1980) 713

Further similarities can be found between C.3 and C.8. In C.3, Catullus starts the poem with a command, utilizing the imperative: “Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque, *Mourn, ye Graces and Loves*” (3.1). C.8 also begins with a set of commands, this time with the less forceful jussive: “Desinas ineptire, *‘tis time you should cease your folly*” (8.1). Then, both of the poems hit upon themes of death. C.3 is Catullus grieving the death of the sparrow, and Catullus describes his relationship with Lesbia in C.8 as “quod vides perisse, *what you see is lost*” (8.2), which can be read as a death or decay of their love. Also, both poems start with a mournful tone, remembering the better days. In C.3, Catullus describes the sparrow as a bird “quem plus illa oculis suis amabat, *whom she loved more than her very eyes*” (3.5). Contrastingly in C.8, Catullus claims that Lesbia is “amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla, *she who was loved by me as none will ever be loved*” (8.5). Later on in both poems however, the tone switches from mournful to angry. Catullus exclaims in C.3, “at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis, *But curse upon you, cursed shades of Orcus, which devour all pretty things!*” (3.13-14). In comparison, Catullus directs his anger at Lesbia in the latter half of C.8: “scelestas, vae te! quae tibi manet vita!, *wicked girl, woe is you! What life remains for you!*” (8.15). Catullus chooses to curse Orcus and Lesbia in these two poems, because he perceives Orcus to be the killer of the pet bird, and Lesbia the killer of his relationship.

As a programmatic pair, these two *passer* poems accomplish the task of putting the romance between Catullus and Lesbia in a greater context. C.2 and 3, when read as a greater metaphor for the author's love affair, reveal a great deal about the nature of the struggle Catullus goes through while courting Lesbia. When discussing the sparrow, Thompson and Fordyce have gone back and forth about the breed of the bird since the *Passer domesticus* is notoriously unaffectionate.¹¹ The sparrow's naturally wild and undomesticated nature has been used by Hooper as evidence that the pet bird couldn't have been a literal bird.¹² But in her recent work, Green suggests that if the bird was reared from birth, it would imprint on its owner and would naturally act docile and seemingly loving, in the way that Lesbia's *passer* does.¹³ If Lesbia *did* raise her pet bird from birth (a theory which would be supported by Catullus describing the sparrow as “suamque norat ipsa tam bene quam puella matrem, *he...knew his mistress as well as a girl knows her own mother.*” (3.6-7), then the sparrow, an untamed creature, would have been transformed by her to a docile possession of hers. Possibly Catullus witnesses this transformation and yearns for this relationship himself. In C.8, Lesbia's unfaithful and untamed nature ultimately cannot be contained by Catullus and her infidelity becomes the breaking point of their relationship. Lesbia's delight in her control of the bird could serve as Catullus giving the reader an early indicator that she is the type of girl who “clasps three hundred [of her lovers] at a time” with great amusement, and takes pleasure in controlling her men through sexual means. (11.17-18) Catullus wishes Lesbia to be the sparrow, tamed by her love for him, but like the sparrow, his hope perishes.

With diction meant to invoke feelings of love and lust, Catullus hints at a greater meaning behind Lesbia's sweet pet. The events of C.2 and 3, when compared to those in C.51 and 8 respectively, clearly show the evolution and eventual dissolution of a relationship. From

¹¹ Thompson (1895) 162, Fordyce (1961) 88

¹² Hooper (1985) 163

¹³ Green (2022) 15

the jealous coveting of Lesbia's goodwill to the mournful reflection over a lost beauty, Catullus' *passer* poems mirror his other works and provide the reader with a short but sweet version of Catullus' romance. The *passer* itself furthermore provides the reasoning for the end of Catullus' relationship, as Catullus wishes for something he can never have: a love that is truly his, and only his, to behold.

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FROM NATIONAL DESTINY TO INDIVIDUAL SALVATION: THE EVOLUTION OF FEMALE DEITIES IN VIRGIL, OVID, AND APULEIUS

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INTRODUCTION

The evolution of female deities in Roman literature is closely linked to the cultural shift from the Republic to the late Empire and the development of literary genres. The female deities examined in this paper are not static mythological symbols. Instead, they serve as cultural vehicles that represent a progression from the grand construction of national narratives to the microscopic view of individual emotions, and finally to spiritual salvation.

By examining the works of Virgil, Ovid, and Apuleius, this essay aims to reveal how the evolution of literary genres shaped theological concepts. It also explores how these portrayals responded to the increasingly internal spiritual world of the Romans. Previous studies often limited themselves to analyzing single authors or examining divine evolution purely from a religious perspective. Few have compared the generic constraints of literature with the dynamic transformation of divine functions over a long period. This paper will combine close reading with historical context analysis to trace the evolution of Venus, Juno, and Isis across the three genres of epic, epic poem, and novel. This perspective helps capture the subtle tension between divinity and humanity in the texts. However, focusing on specific elite texts may simplify the complexity of Roman religious beliefs across different social classes. The main argument is that the evolution of Roman female deities is not a random rewriting of myths. It is a transformation from political tools serving imperial teleology to emotional symbols driven by private desires, and finally to universal saviors who transcend fate.

The first part will analyze the *Aeneid* to explore how Virgil balances the private emotions of Venus and Juno with their public responsibilities as drivers and obstacles of the Roman Empire. The second part focuses on *Metamorphoses* and explains how Ovid uses a strategy of ‘de-epicization’ to reduce gods to ‘technical props’ dominated by jealousy and desire, thereby weakening Augustan political theology. Finally, the paper will examine the appearance of Isis in *The Golden Ass* to argue that in the spiritual void of the late Empire, the literary focus shifts from collective destiny to individual salvation.

1. Venus and Juno in Virgil’s *Aeneid*: The Tension Between Motherhood and the State

As early as the third century BCE, Venus was already seen as the protector of all desires that can inspire gods and humans. However, her political and military roles had not yet

developed.¹ During the Punic Wars, the Romans introduced Venus Erycina from Sicily (originally the Greek goddess Aphrodite) to defeat Carthage, leading to Venus becoming increasingly influenced by the Aphrodite cult and gradually merging with it. As a result, her associations with love, fertility, and even war and diplomacy grew stronger.² In the first century BCE, the Roman dictator Sulla began claiming Venus as his patron deity.³

Later, to surpass Pompey, Julius Caesar declared himself a descendant of Venus Genetrix,⁴ a tradition continued under Augustus. This transformed Venus into the ancestral deity of the Julian family. Meanwhile, Aeneas, described in the *Homeric Hymn* as the son of Anchises and Aphrodite,⁵ and as an enemy of the Greeks, had his story of leaving Troy and heading west to Italy absorbed and reshaped within Roman culture, including the tradition of Venus. According to *Vita Vergilii* by Aelius Donatus, Augustus showed great interest in the *Aeneid*. He repeatedly urged Virgil to finish it.⁶ However, this does not mean that Augustus directly commanded Virgil's writing. Modern scholars like Karl Galinsky⁷ and James Zetzel⁸ tend to view the so-called 'imperial instruction' with caution, arguing that it oversimplifies the complexities of literary creation. Instead of seeing Virgil as a political tool working under orders, it is more accurate to see him as an author operating within the cultural environment of the Augustan age, actively responding to contemporary political expectations and creatively reshaping the myth of Aeneas to align with imperial ideology. In the poem, Virgil repeatedly lets gods and humans (such as Anchises) speak of the inevitable destiny of Roman history, a destiny even Jupiter cannot change. But in the process of achieving this destiny, the female deities in the *Aeneid*, especially Venus and Juno, assume highly complex narrative roles, and their struggle reveals the scale and hardship expected of an epic story. They are not only supernatural forces driving the plot but also concrete embodiments of national narrative and collective fate.

However, in Virgil's writing, there is always a deep tension between the grand political mission of divinity and the personal emotions or maternal concerns of the goddesses themselves. In the *Aeneid*, Venus's character has clear political and religious significance. As the ancestor of the Julian family, Venus is not only the mother of Aeneas but also a divine source of Augustus's political authority. However, Virgil does not portray her solely as a noble protector of the state. He combines in her character both the role of guiding the founding of Rome and the personal concerns of a mother.

First, Venus is the main force driving Aeneas's journey. Throughout the poem, Virgil repeatedly shows moments of cooperation between Venus and Aeneas, highlighting her importance for his mission.⁹ Although Aeneas's destiny is a fixed plan that cannot be changed,

¹ Scheid, 2005

² Pirenne-Delforge and Motte, 2005

³ Scheid, 2005

⁴ Zanker, 1998, 24–25

⁵ Harrison, 2005

⁶ Donatus, sec. 31

⁷ In *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction*, Galinsky rejects the term 'propaganda' for Augustan art because it implies top-down coercion and manipulation (pp. 4–5). He also introduces *auctoritas*, arguing that Augustus relied on the persuasive force of his political achievements rather than direct commands (pp. 10–12, 248–49).

⁸ Zetzel, 1982, 87–102

⁹ Lyne, 2023, 71

Venus consistently prays and intervenes during its progress to ensure the plan unfolds. In Book 1 (lines 227–254), for instance, when Aeneas and his companions escape a storm, Venus immediately goes to Jupiter in tears to ask for help, and Jupiter’s response indicates that Venus’s words matter greatly to him. Before this, he had seen the troubles on earth but had not acted. After Venus’s plea, he speaks about the future and confirms Aeneas and his descendants will ultimately succeed. He also sends Cyllenius to Carthage to prepare Aeneas’s next steps (lines 254–300). Later, she also pleads with Neptune and again with Jupiter in Books 5 and 10. Notably, Venus doesn’t only plead for her son; she emphasizes the suffering of the Trojans, as seen in her words: “What wrong so great has my Aeneas done? Or what crime have the Trojans committed, that after suffering so many deaths the whole world is closed against them? Italy they crave, the land that the Fates allow; yet from every sea they are driven away” (lines 231–233).¹⁰

However, this political role is often overshadowed by her strong, almost exclusive, focus on motherhood. For example, her concern for the Trojan cause is frequently reduced to worry over Aeneas’s safety, revealing her selfishness and limitations as a mother. Lyne notes that although Venus holds a prominent position, Virgil does not fully portray her dignity and kindness. Instead, he uses both direct and indirect descriptions to show her selfishness and anxiety as a mother.¹¹ Many of her actions on behalf of Aeneas are driven not by loyalty to the broader idea of the Roman Empire but more by worries about her son’s safety. This narrowing of political concern into private maternal anxiety is laid bare in Book 10, when Venus’s plea to Jupiter reveals a contingency plan that effectively abandons the broader Trojan cause: “If thy cruel wife will grant the Teucrians no abode on earth, by the smoking ruins of Troy torn, O father, I pray thee, let Ascanius at least escape the conflict unscathed; let my grandson live. Aeneas may be tossed on unknown waters; let him follow what fortune gives but let it be mine to save his son and take him out of the battle” (lines 46–62). Here, Venus’s long-term concern is not to secure Rome’s destiny but to protect her bloodline at whatever cost—a stark revelation of where her deepest loyalties truly lie.

It is also important to recognize that Venus’s original role as a goddess of love and sexuality has been transformed into a tool for political and military purposes. Virgil hints at this in Book 1 when Venus disguises herself as a young woman dressed for hunting, which causes Aeneas to think of Diana, the goddess of the hunt (line 329). Later, in line 498 and following passages, Dido is directly compared to Diana. This emphasizes the connection and reveals the tension between Venus’s hunting disguise and her identity.¹² In fact, the hunting costume is not just a disguise; Venus is engaged in a form of hunting herself, and Dido, metaphorically described as a wounded hind in Book 4, is her intended prey (lines 69–73). Venus coldly and deliberately uses her powers of love on the unfortunate Dido, directing Cupid and working with Juno to weave a carefully crafted web of desire. Here, Venus acts like a ruthless hunter. To capture her victim and secure her son’s safety and her plans’ success, she is willing to use deceitful methods. A similar pattern appears in Book 8 when Venus uses her sexual charm on her husband Vulcan to obtain weapons for Aeneas. Lyne argues that this scene

¹⁰ All translations of Virgil’s *Aeneid* are from John Conington, trans., *P. Vergili Maronis Opera: The Works of Virgil, with a Commentary* (Whittaker and Co., 1876).

¹¹ Lyne, 2023, 37

¹² Lyne, 2023, 196–97

shows how the goddess's morally questionable actions support a mortal's moral mission. It also highlights Venus's maternal instinct, pushing her beyond normal moral boundaries to ensure her son's survival,¹³ unlike the solemn behavior of gods in Homer. It is also clear that Virgil consciously conceals the past relationships between Venus and her two partners, Anchises and Vulcan, because those stories are not entirely respectable. This suggests that Virgil carefully shapes the gods' moral images, balancing the tension within Venus between her identity as a mother and her role in founding the Roman Empire. Still, this balance is not always perfect, and the tension sometimes surfaces painfully—as seen in Book One, when Aeneas accuses Venus of being 'cruel' (line 407). To fulfill her role as a 'divine mother' and political guardian, Venus must sacrifice close human bonds with her son. This contradiction shows Virgil's deep understanding of the conflict between divinity and humanity.

Additionally, Venus hides Aeneas in a cloud several times in Book 1 to help him escape danger. She even deflects arrows for him in Book 10 and uses divine herbs to fully heal severe wounds in Book 12. These events demonstrate that Venus's interventions are a form of supernatural favor that only a goddess and a mother can give. This 'all-powerful' motherly role clearly stands out when compared with other protectors in the poem. For example, in the group of Trojan women in Book 5 (lines 613–663): driven by a mother's anxiety to find a safe home for their children, they were nonetheless overcome by irrational despair. Unable to bear the fear of endless wandering, they finally committed the destructive act of burning the ships. Similarly, Turnus's sister, Juturna, plays a similar protector role with clear motherly qualities in Book 12. Although she has divine power and tries to alter fate by steering her brother away from the battlefield (lines 468–480), her efforts ultimately fail. Compared to other mother figures, Venus's help is defined not only by emotional, maternal motivation but also by a logical, 'unshakable' power. She is capable of successfully turning this protective desire into reality, making her essential to the destiny of both Aeneas and Rome.

If we say Venus symbolizes the force driving the path toward Rome, then Juno represents the strong resistance opposing it. Juno is an Italian goddess associated with women and the protection of towns from an early time. Juno was a threefold goddess who initially had military, fertility, and political roles.¹⁴ Additionally, Hera influenced Juno, and qualities of ruling over marriage and royal authority gradually became part of her character. By the time of Plautus, Juno was well established as Jupiter's wife and the goddess of marriage. Later, the image of the Carthaginian goddess Tanit was also integrated into her persona.¹⁵ This explains why the *Aeneid* depicts Juno as supporting Carthage. Furthermore, the destructive and unpredictable nature shown by Hera from the *Iliad* onward is fully reflected in later literary portrayals of Juno.¹⁶

In the *Aeneid*, Juno is the most influential negative figure. At the start of the poem, she is defined as the incarnation of anger (Ira). Feeney notes that Juno's anger is not just a simple emotion. It represents a meeting point between Ennius's historical view and Homer's mythological view:¹⁷ on one side, she recalls the judgment of Paris against her beauty and the

¹³ Lyne, 2023, 41–43

¹⁴ Boykin Rives, 2005

¹⁵ Rives, 'Juno'.

¹⁶ Motte and Pirenne-Delforge, 2005

¹⁷ Feeney, 1991, 145

shame caused by Jupiter's abduction of Ganymede, both of which affect her dignity and status, these old grudges lie deeply buried within her heart (lines 25–28). On the other side, as the protector of Carthage, she foresees that Rome will someday destroy the city she loves, which fuels her anger (Book 1, lines 19–22). It can be said that Juno's anger comes from both mythological and historical causes. Because of this, her actions are very destructive and hard to predict, but they are always aimed at Aeneas. Early in the poem, Juno persuades Aeolus to stir up a sea storm to destroy Aeneas and his crew (lines 29–81). In Book 5, she tries to keep the Trojans in Sicily by causing their ships to catch fire (lines 605–663). By Book 7, she reaches the height of her anger and even descends to the underworld herself to send the goddess Allecto to break the alliance between the Trojans and the Latins; she also opens the gates of war (lines 286–622). Both instances show the extreme nature of her character.

Besides her direct destructive actions, Juno also seeks to hinder the founding of Rome by manipulating marriage as a social contract. As the goddess overseeing marriage, Juno controls two marriages in the story. In Book 1, Juno bribes Aeolus to unleash a storm, promising to arrange a marriage by giving him the most beautiful of her nymphs (lines 71–75). In Book 4, she tries to trap Aeneas in Carthage through a marriage that exists only in name, hoping to change the historical course between Rome and Carthage. However, her intervention, driven by personal feelings and political motives, ultimately fails. After the marriage, Aeneas and Dido fall into irreconcilable conflict; Dido kills herself, and Carthage is deeply affected (lines 90–172). This tragedy results from the joint actions of Venus and Juno. Like Venus, Virgil intentionally preserves some of Juno's traditional qualities, but he uses them to show their desire to protect the nation they oversee. Both goddesses also have a broad sense of history and are even willing to abandon many ordinary moral principles for the sake of future generations—a quality not typically possessed by gods in the earlier Homeric poetry.¹⁸

Although Juno displays extreme chaos and destructive power, she is eventually integrated into the emerging Roman order. In the final Book 12, Juno's last effort to destroy Aeneas through Turnus fails, and when she faces Jupiter's advice, which is more like a threat, she has no choice but to submit. However, she makes an exceptionally bold request. As the defeated party, she demands that the language, the name, and all elements of Trojan identity be eliminated from the victorious side, and Jupiter grants her request. He preserves the language and customs of the Latins and allows the Trojan name to vanish, which finally calms Juno (lines 795–837). Ultimately, she achieves a victory of her own and indirectly influences the course of history. Virgil crafted this key plot with a deep purpose: First, it provides a clever explanation for the historical fact that the Romans adopted the Latin language and customs despite having Trojan ancestry. More importantly, by allowing the Trojan name to fade away and merge with the Latins, Virgil emphasizes that Rome was not a colony of foreign invaders but a perfect blend of Trojan blood and native Italian strength. This setup not only calms Juno's anger, turning her from a fierce enemy into a protector of Rome (Juno Regina), but also symbolizes the final unity and reconciliation of Italy during the age of Augustus.

In summary, Virgil's portrayal of Venus and Juno is influenced by the requirements of the epic genre, which demands that gods participate in the narrative of national origins. Compared to Homer's gods, Virgil's deities are more human in their emotions, yet their actions

¹⁸ Lyne, 2023, 64–65

align more closely with the teleological goals of Roman history. Feeney notes that the gods in Virgil's poem exist in a space that is neither fully mythological nor entirely historical.¹⁹ The female deities are not limited to the private sphere of emotion or family. Their joys, sorrows, and anger are directly connected to the rise and fall of the state. Just as every outburst of Juno's anger—such as storms or war—symbolizes a historical obstacle that Rome must overcome to achieve nationhood, each maternal intervention by Venus signals the eventual establishment of the Julius family's rule. Lastly, it is essential to recognize that neither Venus nor Juno seeks to protect all of humanity. Instead, they only defend the nations, peoples, and interests that relate to their own concerns.

2. Venus and Juno in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Emotional Intervention and the Removal of Epic Structure

If Virgil, in the *Aeneid*, tries to bring divine emotion into harmony with Rome's destiny, Ovid, in *Metamorphoses*, aims to remove this veneer of political theology. Unlike Virgil's consistent seriousness, Ovid's attitude toward Augustan ideology appears more complex. Although he builds a grand political framework in Book 1 (comparing the Palatine to Olympus) and Book 15 (the deification of Caesar and Augustus), this is often viewed as a formal tribute or a 'double voice' with ironic meanings. Born in the post-Republic era, he adopts an attitude toward Augustus's rule that is not simple 'indifference' but rather a way of keeping his distance and questioning authority with wit. He does not aim to revive solemn Roman heroism or moral values; instead, he removes this heaviness through the ever-changing nature of myth.²⁰ Overall, Ovid introduces a significant innovation to epic storytelling in the *Metamorphoses*, which develops as a chain of outward-spinning stories. Otis notes that while Ovid claims in his prologue that he will create a 'continuous song' (*Carmen Perpetuum*) from creation to the age of Augustus, this is only a superficial historical outline. This loose structure means the gods no longer need to serve as long-term guardians of a grand historical plan. Instead, they become short-term 'technical props' that facilitate individual transformation stories.²¹ Because the poem blends elements of epic, fable, tragedy, pastoral poetry, and other genres, it functions as a unique type of 'Epic Poem.' Within these genre characteristics, the gods' function changes fundamentally: this marks a return to the 'Homeric mode' to some extent. Their actions and thoughts no longer rely on advancing a national mission but depend entirely on their momentary emotional shifts and private relationships (such as lust and jealousy). This shift is especially evident in the reshaping of Venus and Juno.

In *Metamorphoses*, Venus shifts from being the mother of the nation to an embodiment of desire. In Ovid's description, she returns to her original nature as a goddess of desire, but this return is often linked with punishment and tragedy. This echoes the tragic tone in Book 4 of Virgil's the *Aeneid*: there, Venus's manipulation of desire directly led to Dido's destruction (lines 660–692). However, unlike Virgil, who attributes this destructive power to a 'mission for the empire,' Ovid restores it to a pure, purposeless emotional disaster. In Book 4, Ovid has Vulcan devise a plan that allows all the gods to witness the shameful affair between Venus and

¹⁹ Feeney, 1991, 132.

²⁰ Otis, 1970, 24, 345.

²¹ Otis, 1970, 3–4.

Mars, and the scene ends in laughter: “The Gods were moved to laughter, and the tale was long most noted in the courts of Heaven” (lines 188–189).²² This leaves Venus thoroughly humiliated. What is striking is that Venus is not angry because her adultery has been discovered, nor is she punished for it. She is furious because her privacy has been exposed. Therefore, she does not seek revenge on Vulcan. Instead, she turns her anger toward Apollo, the first to witness the affair, and forces love and desire upon him, Leucothoe, and Clytie, leading them all into disaster (lines 192–270). In Book 10, Venus herself experiences what it is like to be ruled by desire. Because of Cupid’s mistaken shot, she falls madly in love with the mortal Adonis and even dresses like Diana, the goddess of the hunt (lines 532–538). This scene echoes Virgil (Book 1, lines 314–324). She gives up her divine status and shows none of the ambition one might expect from a true hunter. Otis concludes that Venus in Ovid’s poem no longer serves Rome’s destiny but serves love itself. This is a kind of unlawful passion that carries disastrous consequences.²³

Although Venus still plays some political roles in the scenes with Aeneas and Caesar in Books 13 to 15, these roles are often presented in a deliberately modern, somewhat superficial, or even ironic way. In Ovid’s retelling of the ‘Little *Aeneid*,’ Venus continues to appear as Aeneas’s protector, but Ovid removes most of her nation-building influence and shifts his focus to episodes with erotic overtones or fantastical transformations. For example, in Book 14, when Venus prays to Jupiter for Aeneas’s deification, she says: “My father, ever kind to me, I do beseech your kind indulgence now; grant, dearest, to Aeneas, my own son and also your own grandson, grant to him a godhead power, although of lowest class, sufficient if but granted. It is enough to have looked once upon the unlovely realm, and once to have gone across the Stygian streams” (lines 585–591). Ovid intentionally mimics Venus’s plea to Jupiter in the *Aeneid*, making the whole scene seem humorous: unlike Virgil’s Venus, who worries about the nation’s destiny, she here sounds like she is bargaining. She not only uses a coaxing tone (‘dearest’) but also absurdly emphasizes that a godhead of the ‘lowest class’ is enough. This treatment, which turns divinity into a commodity and cheapens it, completely dissolves the original sense of seriousness and divine dignity. In Book 15, when Venus foresees danger approaching Caesar, she anxiously asks the gods for help. She even calls him ‘the only legacy left to me by Trojan Julius’ (line 767). In her view, the rest of Rome is no longer the people of Venus.²⁴ The scene of Caesar’s deification resembles a typical political campaign, and, along with the earlier pleas, it highlights a strong tendency toward personal motivation. Galinsky notes that these narrative choices primarily serve as satire and imitation of the procedures of the Roman Senate.²⁵

Moreover, the Italian war between Aeneas and Turnus is no longer shown as a noble historical mission but as a superficial emotional conflict focused on competing for Lavinia. This shift in perspective deeply reflects Ovid’s background as a poet of ‘Love Elegy’: he reduces the grand war of epic to a typical ‘rivalry for a girl’ found in love poetry, replacing public duty with private emotion. Ovid intentionally undermines the seriousness and epic

²² Otis, 1970, 193

²³ All translations of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* are from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Brookes More (Cornhill Publishing Co., 1922).

²⁴ Feeney, 1991, 214–15

²⁵ Galinsky, 1975, 96.

significance that Virgil imbues in Aeneas's story. His goal is not to oppose Virgil but to demonstrate his own unique literary approach and to make a subtle criticism of certain unhealthy tendencies under Augustus's rule.

Similarly, Juno's character also develops into a more personal form. In the *Aeneid*, although Juno's anger includes personal resentment, it is also closely connected to the historical conflict between Carthage and Rome. This gives her actions a sense of noble purpose and importance. In *Metamorphoses*, however, Juno's anger is simplified to the jealousy typical in domestic drama. In Ovid's account, Juno is driven almost entirely by her anger at Jupiter's repeated acts of infidelity. Her motives shift from political reasons to purely domestic ones. Whether in the stories of Io in Book 1 (lines 568–750), Callisto in Book 2 (lines 381–541), or Semele in Book 3 (lines 253–315), Juno appears solely to punish Jupiter's lovers. Ovid removes anything that might limit Juno's malice or give her dignity. Since she cannot punish her all-powerful husband directly, she directs her divine fury onto mortal women who cannot resist.²⁶ Furthermore, Juno's anger turns into a form of pure cruelty. In Book 4, to take revenge on Ino and Athamas simply because Bacchus is their foster son, she even descends to the underworld to summon Tisiphone (lines 465–480). This scene imitates the *Aeneid*, but it omits the political background found in Virgil's version. It becomes a tragic parody that only highlights Juno's pure malice and injustice.

It is also notable that although Ovid keeps Juno's role in marriage, she no longer embodies fertility, setting her apart from Venus. Venus retains her role as the goddess of love, and when Iphis and Ianthe married, she served alongside Juno as a witness to their marriage and love in Book 9 (lines 791–797). More importantly, Venus does not lose her children, Cupid and Aeneas. Juno, on the other hand, loses Ares and Vulcan. Although they appear in the poem, Ovid never explicitly calls them her children. Because she is deprived of motherhood's foundation, she loses control when facing her rivals' children and becomes determined to destroy them. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid deliberately removes the religious significance and divine roles of these two highly respected goddesses, making their portrayals more human and sometimes even less than human. Like many transformation episodes in the poem, the goal is to avoid deep moral questions and to create humor in the story.²⁷ Their portrayals lack the profound maternal strategy Virgil gives them for the nation's sake, and they also lack the universal redemptive power later attributed to divine figures by Apuleius. Instead, they exist in a confusing middle ground—both divine and enslaved by their own passions.

III. Isis in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*: Redemption and Spiritual Renewal

Ovid's epic poem makes a subtle but significant literary impact by deconstructing divine figures, but this does not mean that religion completely disappeared from Roman society. Feeney points out that Ovid intentionally emphasizes the 'fictionality' of myth in the *Metamorphoses*, creating a divide between literary representation and actual belief.²⁸ This suggests that in the literary world, the old gods have lost their moral authority. At the same time, the emerging Imperial Cult struggles to fill this gap. As Galinsky argues, the deification of emperors in Ovid serves a 'political function primarily'. It lacks genuine 'religious feeling'

²⁶ Otis, 1970, 134.

²⁷ Galinsky, 1975, 244.

²⁸ Feeney, 1991, 222–24.

or spiritual depth, making it unable to address the internal anxiety of individuals facing blind fate.²⁹ Consequently, a large ethical and spiritual void develops within the literary world. In response to this crisis in mythological storytelling, Apuleius introduces the goddess Isis in his novel *The Golden Ass*, giving her transcendent maternal and redemptive powers. Unlike Ovid's unpredictable gods or politicized emperors, Isis attempts to fill this spiritual gap for the individual soul through a divinity capable of controlling fate and rising above jealousy and desire.

The Latin novel *The Golden Ass* was written in the second century CE, more than a hundred years after the reign of Augustus, during the stable period known as the 'Five Good Emperors.' Unlike the epic genre, which focuses on stories of national history and shared destiny, the novel form—though the concept was still evolving at the time—allowed the narrative to focus more on the individual's fate and inner life, while also reflecting the collective religious anxiety of the society. Apuleius crafts a captivating story that combines realism and fantasy, entertainment and philosophy: the young Lucius, driven by curiosity about magic, accidentally turns himself into a donkey and goes through a series of absurd and dangerous adventures. At the end, he prays to the goddess Isis in desperation and is restored to human form through her help. The story ends with Lucius joining the cult of Isis. Isis was initially an Egyptian goddess. By the early first century BCE, the worship of Isis was already established in Rome. However, the Senate made multiple attempts to restrict or eliminate her cult but faced repeated public resistance. It is important to note that these actions were not simply a result of anti-Egyptian sentiment, but rather a reflection of Rome's internal political struggles. The Senate attempted to reassert its control over religious matters by suppressing Isis, to counter the 'unofficial' worship supported by the populace. Therefore, the cult of Isis always retained a specific 'exotic' character in the Roman context of the time: she was defined as a novel and strange foreign power, representing a mystical experience that was distinct from the traditional Roman state religion.³⁰ Her worship spread and developed, absorbing deities from various regions; alongside her creative and nurturing functions, she acquired a universal character, gradually becoming the 'mother of all gods' and the magical 'mistress of heaven.'³¹

Before analyzing the specific divine figures in *The Golden Ass*, we must consider the impact of genre differences on the representation of gods: we should not expect gods in a novel to behave consistently with those in an epic. Epics (like Virgil's work) require gods to uphold a serious, collective historical mission. In contrast, the novel—as a genre focused on individual adventures and entertainment—allows for a secular, even theatrical, deconstruction of the traditional Olympian gods. Therefore, the Venus we see in the book resembles a stock character in Hellenistic drama, reflecting the gods of literary tradition; meanwhile, the solemn Isis at the end (and Lucius's life after conversion) reflects the religious experience of believers in actual history. These two distinct presentations represent a dual projection of genre characteristics and historical religious reality within the text. In *The Golden Ass*, Venus and Juno (Hera) appear rarely, featuring only in retold myths (Books 4–6) and the dramatic performance of the Judgment of Paris (Book 10), with Venus appearing slightly more often. Aside from references

²⁹ Galinsky, 1975, 253–55

³⁰ Orlin, 2010, 203–7

³¹ Gordon, 2005

to daily acts of love and desire, her most important appearance occurs in the tale of ‘Cupid and Psyche’ told by the old woman in Book 4. In this story, Venus resembles Juno in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: extremely selfish and cruel, sparing no effort to torture Psyche out of jealousy. However, behind this tyranny lies a twisted but strong maternal logic: as Cupid’s mother, Venus, though controlling, is ultimately trying to protect her son—albeit in a warped way—from the disgrace of marrying a mortal. This forms an ironic contrast with Psyche’s mortal parents, who, simply because of an oracle, cowardly abandoned their daughter on a rock to be devoured by a so-called ‘monster’ (Book 4, para. 32–35). But throughout the story, Venus is not the central figure; her ‘mission’ is to subject Psyche to trials. After these three trials, Psyche finally gains immortality. It is important to note, however, that Venus does not redeem her, nor does experience cure Psyche of her dangerous curiosity; everything is driven by a higher ‘Fate.’ In fact, as revealed by Isis’s speech in Book 11, Venus and Juno are essentially just different aspects of Isis. Throughout *The Golden Ass*, she is the only true deity.

Apuleius puts the story of ‘Cupid and Psyche’ here for an apparent reason: to show the incredible power of Isis by showing the weakness of humans. In the main story, Lucius is very similar to Psyche. Both get into trouble because of reckless curiosity. When facing deadly trials, both are weak, blind, and keep making the same mistakes. However, their failure to learn is not just a critique of their character. Instead, it highlights how special Isis’s salvation is. Lucius prays to the traditional Goddess of Fortune, but it does not help. This proves that before Isis comes, humans are trapped by a cruel ‘Blind Fate’ (Fortuna Caeca). Neither human effort nor gods like Venus can truly save them. In this hopeless situation, Isis shows her unique power. As the priest says in Book 11, Isis is not like the unpredictable forces that hurt Lucius before. She is the ‘Seeing Fortune’ (Fortuna Videns, Book 11, para. 15). She does not need the hero to be morally perfect to get a reward. Instead, she directly averts the tragedy through her divine grace. Therefore, the trials in Psyche’s story are not meaningless. They serve as a setup to establish Isis as the supreme power capable of transcending blind fate to offer universal salvation.

What is even more important is how she intervenes. In Ovid’s poems, gods often punish humans by turning them into animals, like when Juno transforms Callisto into a bear. These transformations are usually permanent and tragic. However, in the case of Isis, divine power becomes a force that reverses tragedy. She intervenes directly and restores Lucius from being a donkey back to being human using roses. In her revelation in Book 11, Isis declares to Lucius that she is not just a specific deity, but the ‘mother of nature’ and ‘mistress of all elements’ (Book 11, para. 5).³² When Lucius eats the crown of roses from the priest’s hand during the festival (Book 11, para. 13), a miracle happens: this is not just a physical return from beast to human but symbolizes a spiritual rebirth. Lucius changes from a victim driven by blind curiosity into a believer who willingly submits to the goddess’s order. The new possibility for restoration from animal form to human symbolizes a shift in divinity from a random punisher to a sympathetic savior. This is one of Apuleius’s main goals in writing the novel. Whether his purpose is to promote religion, entertain with comedy, or satirize philosophy, this transformation has had a strong and lasting impact on later literature and cultural thought.

³² All translations of Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass* are from Apuleius, *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*, trans. by J. Arthur Hanson, Loeb Classical Library 44 and 453, 2 vols (Harvard University Press, 1989).

In summary, Isis's appearance in *The Golden Ass* continues an ancient tradition of blending religious elements into literature and drama, while also reflecting broader historical trends of cross-cultural religious integration and the personalization of religion in the Roman Empire. During this period, the traditional Olympian state religion increasingly failed to satisfy individual concerns about the meaning of life and the nature of the afterlife. Eastern mystery cults such as the cult of Isis offered a more direct response, suggesting that personal spiritual downfall requires personal faith for salvation.³³ So, Isis does not offer victory on a grand historical scale but instead provides a spiritual home that depends on complete obedience. This redemption is a gift granted by the supreme deity, but it also requires humanity to return to a divinely ordered way of life.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of female deities in Virgil, Ovid, and Apuleius reflects not only a literary transformation but also a profound cultural and spiritual shift within Roman civilization. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Venus and Juno are anchored within the teleological framework of imperial epic: their emotions, rivalries, and interventions serve the grand narrative of Rome's foundation, even as individual maternal concerns persistently surface beneath their political roles. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* systematically dismantles this framework, reducing the same goddesses to figures driven by jealousy and desire, stripped of divine dignity and national purpose. This 'de-epicization' of divinity functions not merely as poetic playfulness but as a subtle critique of Augustan ideology and the hollowing of collective meaning. By the time Apuleius writes *The Golden Ass*, the Olympian gods have been all but abandoned as moral authorities. Isis emerges in their place not as a protector of nations or a vehicle of political power, but as a personal savior who meets the individual soul in its moment of greatest helplessness. Taken together, these three texts trace an arc from the public to the private, from the political to the emotional, and ultimately from collective destiny to individual salvation—a trajectory that mirrors Rome's own transition from a republic of shared civic identity to an empire in which the search for personal meaning increasingly turned inward, and finally outward toward the mystery cults of the East.

³³ Winkler, 1985, 124

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CREATIVE PIECES

ANACHRONISTIC PORTRAIT OF DIOCLETIAN

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Figure 1

The century prior to Diocletian's reign was a disaster of succession following the death of Severus Alexander (235CE) with multiple generals claiming the Imperial title, economic, martial and political strife ensued. Diocletian was one such general, rising through the ranks under Aurelius and Probus until securing cavalry command under Emperor Carus and subsequently taking the Imperial title upon the former's death in battle. Diocletian implemented various reforms to stabilise the economy and state, most prominently among which was the Tetrarchy.

D.S Potter¹ reads that Diocletian saw his role as a restorer, to bring the empire to peace and drag it from the quagmire of the previous century. He did so by massively centralising the administration and exerting imperial will over all areas of the empire while simultaneously breaking it into manageable regions and assigning a college of emperors to rule. Two senior Augusti and two junior Caesars made up the Tetrarchy.

¹ Potter, D.S. (2009)

Diocletian's other major attempted reform was the Edict of Maximum Prices in which he attempted to offset inflation by prescribing the price of massive number of goods in the empire. This monumental task failed, leading not to economic stability but to a black market. Potter describes the edict as “an act of economic lunacy” that fails to understand the very principle of supply and demand.

Diocletian was a revolutionary figure for the Roman empire, drawing it from the previous century. Additionally, it was his system of Tetrarchy that led to Constantine's rule and the subsequent Christianisation of the empire. Diocletian became the first and only emperor to retire, retreating to his palace where he was begged many times to return as emperor. He refused and instead witnessed the collapse of his system, eventually dying in 311.

The marble portrait of Diocletian in a corona civica from the Istanbul Archaeological Museum², has always been a striking depiction of the emperor to me. It stands in stark difference to much of his imagery which depicts him as a rounder faced man – normally with a double chin, especially on coinage. The bedraggled and dogged man featured in the marble portrait exhibits similarities, but the age and stress can be seen etched in his face. Perhaps providing some reason for his abdication. This is a framing I wanted to enhance and exemplify, the worn man retired in Dalmatia, the occasional confidant to the emperors but removed from rule, forced to watch his legacy torn to pieces. I wished to portray the man Aurelius Victor claimed to have stated: “If you could see the cabbages I have planted here with my own hands, you surely would never have thought to request this.”³ in reference to calls for his return to the throne.

I wanted not just to redraw the portrait and give it a body but instead add some kind of flair. My idea was drawing him in a pose resemblant of a royal portrait from the late medieval period. Through this approach comparisons can be made between the visual cultures of monarchs hundreds of years apart and in utterly different contexts. Roman statues were built to push forward narratives as Medieval paintings would later do too, but where emperors were deified, royal families got a more naturalistic treatment. This demonstrates the changing artistic culture and the way in which religion interacted with monarchy, from divine despots to merely divinely ordained. Diocletian himself fits this role succinctly, an administrator and reformer that elicits images of Henry VII.

My style of drawing is less focused on outlines and more building broad shapes from scribbles and then defining them with denser crops of linework and in some cases – mainly the eyes – outlines. I like to akin the process to reverse sculpting: where in sculpting you chip away at a stone to form a piece, large pieces then smaller and smaller, my drawing involves building up pieces. Large and then more refined.

Diocletian stands out to me in the corpus of emperors for attempting to redefine a broken system and then retiring in a fashion unique to him. Although his reforms were not long lasting, nor was the stability, his effects on the history of the Empire are too significant to ignore and his image as a work worn ruler worked too well for an anachronistic portrait.

² University of Oxford: LSA-298

³ Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus*

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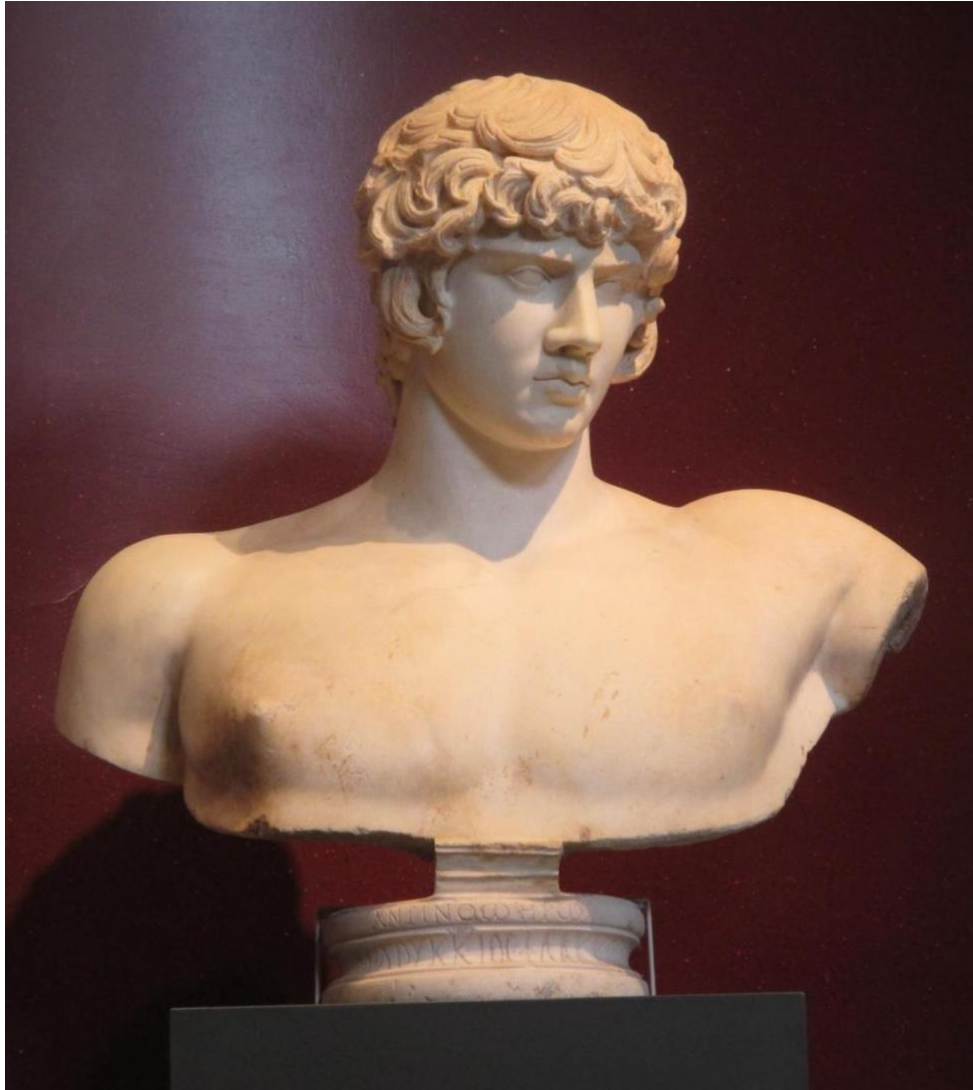
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SEEING ANTINOUS
HEATHER CHAPMAN
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*Figure 1. Bust of Antinous in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford.
Image credit: Heather Chapman*

Written after the bust of Antinous in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Fig. 1). As a teenager, Antinous became the lover of emperor Hadrian, before tragically drowning in the Nile age 19.

His shoulder curls smooth
as sleep. Try to imagine red
muscle or marrow –

you can't. Breathless,
he is tall as a pedestal, invisible
under sibilant light. His mouth

stings with minutes, trembles
to kiss history
at the door. Three locks

of his hair are lost –
think marble scissors
closing over marble strands.

In the winter the statues
are wrapped for warmth – he vanishes
to a gesture, a line between two points.

Full as a tooth, Antinous sleeps
by heavy handywork and dreams
of nothing, dreams of a god

who thinks all creation is kindness.

COMMENTARY

On the hottest day of the year, I visit Antinous in the Ashmolean Museum. Outside, crowds move fast down narrow streets; birds stretch their wings and peck at red dust. But inside, everything is blue-cool and infinite. Antinous is in the first gallery on the left: sculpted around AD 130-140, shortly after its subject's death, his statue glances to the side as if someone has called his name.

This is not the only sculpture of Antinous. Representations of him are scattered across continents, his face superimposed onto each sculpted figure: Antinous frowns and stares at the ground in Athens, pushes his shoulders back in Crete. In a photograph of a Delphi excavation, archaeologists blur with distracted movement – rooted to the waist, he is the only one in focus. In one representation of Antinous as Dionysus, holes are bored into his sculpted head to attach a bronze wreath, connecting the young man to the god, but also hinting at Antinous' own divinity. Indeed, after his early death, the emperor Hadrian, Antinous' lover, had the man deified: statues of Antinous are not simply artworks, but idols, objects of worship. This

deification not only twists the meaning of the statues themselves, but turns the act of looking at them into something like worship. By honouring Antinous' image with continued attention, we ensure his immortality – as long as we look at him, he still exists. It's this idea which initially inspired my poem: I wanted to write not only about the statue itself, but about the act of observation, and the politics of this action.

Antinous' real life was brutally brief. As a teenager he became the lover of the much older Hadrian, remaining at the emperor's side for several years before drowning in the River Nile at the age of nineteen. The circumstances of Antinous' death remain debated: whilst some argue the incident was simply a tragic accident, others suggest Antinous could have acted, willingly or unwillingly, as a human sacrifice – perhaps in an attempt to magically rejuvenate the ailing emperor.

Either way, 1895 years after his death, Antinous still shines with uncanny youth: only those dead, divine, or immortalised in art can stay young forever, and he is all three. In Antinous' case, the overlap between these categories is uneasy – all come at the cost of his individual humanity and his life, securing the young man a tragic legacy. An inscription around the base of the Ashmolean bust dedicates the artwork 'To the Hero Antinous'. This phrase connects Antinous to the tradition of Ancient Greek heroism: young men who achieved greatness before (and, perhaps, by) suffering an untimely death. This labelling, alongside Antinous' deification by Hadrian and his portrayal in sculpture, all work to raise the young man above his mortal status – he becomes a hero, a god, a work of beauty. My poem's first lines ("Try to imagine red / muscle or marrow – you can't.") aim to depict this: the transformation of Antinous into art distances him from the "muscle" and "marrow" of mortal life to the point where such an existence cannot even be imagined.

Indeed, there is a darker side to this transformation: in rendering Antinous immortal, Hadrian encourages us – consciously or unconsciously – to forget the young man was ever human to begin with. Admiring the beautifully carved sculptures or the grandiose temples, we are encouraged to ignore the darker reality: forget the abusive power imbalance in their relationship, forget the potentially horrific circumstances of Antinous' death. This is something I wanted to focus on in my poem. Description of Antinous as "tall as a pedestal" will (hopefully!) suggest the extent to which Antinous' immortal fame defines his continued existence in the modern world, both ensuring he is remembered, but also by setting strict parameters on *how* he is remembered.

Antinous' duplicated face is something like long-distance pop-art, akin to Andy Warhol's neon duplicates of Marilyn Monroe: spread across continents, Antinous ducks his head and frowns at nothing, individual only as you keep his eyes on him, and him alone. In the same way Monroe's individual images form only a fraction of the overall piece, each Antinous sculpture feels fragmentary, a piece of a broader image. Together, they represent reverence, divinity – but individually, they seem smaller. The humanity of the sculptures as individual pieces is diminished by their duplication: instead of each representing an individual person, they signify a fragment of a supposedly divine whole. This idea inspired the final lines of my poem, where Antinous "dreams of a god / who thinks all creation is kindness": through this description, I aimed to capture the disintegrating effect of Antinous' duplicated depiction, where the "creation" of artwork is not a "kindness" but an erasure.

Michelangelo supposedly once described the creation of sculpture as a process of liberation: “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free”. But the representation of Antinous in art is more akin to entrapment, where certain parts of the young man are preserved, and others forgotten. Even in what seems like a realistic sculptural portrait, the very act of artistic depiction transforms Antinous into an aesthetic object at the sacrifice of his humanity. This objectification shakes the foundations of Antinous’ supposed immortality: he does not truly live on as himself, but as an artwork to be admired. This is something I wanted to capture in my poem, where the “sibilant light” of observation renders Antinous “invisible”. Indeed, it is his famous beauty – what he was revered for in life, what he may have died for – which artistic depictions of him preserve. Sculptures of Antinous capture not the man himself, but the act of perceiving him. The very design of the Ashmolean sculpture echoes this: instead of facing towards the viewer to return their gaze, Antinous is positioned looking away, solidifying the one-sided nature of perception of him.

This sculptural aestheticization of Antinous is a large part of how we know and recognise the man now, but it is a fragile sort of immortality, particularly because, in Antinous’ case, it is so connected to his death. If we believe the theory that Antinous’ death was a sacrifice, consenting or otherwise, to Hadrian’s continuing life and vitality, then the process of artistically immortalising Antinous’ physical self in artistic works becomes almost a monument to what was taken from him. If Antinous was compelled to sacrifice himself, those encouraging him to do so would have deemed his physical youth and beauty the most crucial aspect of himself – worthier than his life. To some extent, carving images of Antinous after his death perpetuates this view, selecting a physical lens as the primary way he will be remembered. To what extent, by choosing to remember Antinous through these statues, and recreating them through poems, am I perpetuating it still?

Leaving the Ashmolean Museum, the day has cooled, softening into evening. After standing in front of Antinous’ statue, it is difficult not to see him everywhere. The curled hair of a stranger waiting for the bus; the frown of a teenager sat outside a café. His profile through a shop window, lifting his chin to look me, at last, in the eyes.

HEROIDES XXII

THEA DICKIN

University of Durham

O lost and damned! This is my last and only word to you for ever!
If it were not for your egregious temper, my life would be pure
and my marriage bed undefiled. Alas, your deeds have tainted
my soul, for all anguish I endure begins with your transgressions.
That fateful day, my beloved husband came across a foreign
traveller and acted with most regrettable hostility.
That spiteful stranger you provoked with trenchant orders, charging
him to concede to your passage with such disdain.
That same stranger brought utmost disgrace to the house of Cadmus.
After you incited his rage and lost your own life thereafter,
that fateful stranger approached the Sphinx that oppressed our city
and defeated it, surpassing its command with an answer to
those words which had caused the failure of so many before him.
And thus I, the grieving widow Iocasta, was reduced
to the bride of a foreign stranger before my lament
for my former husband was complete. That man, the valiant and mighty Oedipus,
unreputable in these lands, gained everything, whilst I lost it all.
Even the revelation of my cherished son's life could not
be celebrated: nothing can detract from the sin
of that misdeed that so marred our reunion. Beloved husband,
I can but express utter detestation of myself
for this harrowing circumstance. But more still, I am tormented
by my anger at you, my love, that I must harbour it towards
a man I should rather pity for his untimely death.
My soul is torn between loving a man for who he was in life,
and despising him for the desolation he brought in its
aftermath. I am pressed to join you in Elysium by the very guilt
that I am reduced to such feelings, to escape
the tyranny of the living world for the grassy plains and breezy meadows
you now bask in. How ironic, as others rarely
consider what I want; that much was proven to me when my cry
of mourning was cut short, and I was dragged back to reality
by the clattering wheels of my wedding chariot.
Clearly I cannot exist if not in the context of being another man's wife.
But my dear, all this is not to say that I hate Oedipus,
after all, what mother can hate her son, regardless of
the misfortune and misery he causes? It was not his intention

to harm us so, in fact, it was his very desperation
to evade his destiny that prompted him to walk headfirst into
it. For that I cannot condemn him, and for the fact that our own actions
towards him were equally heartless. Can his mother rebuke
him for the murder of his father, when she willingly allowed the murder
of her newborn son? Our insight rendered our deeds more sinful
than his could ever be. Yet if he is not the one to blame
(and I cannot to hold you at fault either), then
I will turn the fault of my misfortune onto the gods. O divine
Phoebus, what harm did guiltless Iocasta
ever inflict on your honour?
What desecration did honest Laius cause to your temple?
Mortals are forever at the mercy of your prophecies,
for not even the King of Thebes could elude his own fate.
My vexation at my husband must also be mixed with sympathy
for his pitiful end. My sole response now must be to join him,
for I cannot foresee a future for myself in this dastardly life.
This message to you ends here, my love,
for the hands that grip this stylus are now intended for the hangman's noose.

COMMENTARY

The *Heroides* are a collection of twenty-one poems written by the Roman poet Ovid, who lived most of his life under the Emperor Augustus in the late 1st century BCE and early 1st century CE. Each poem is composed in an epistolary format, with the overarching theme of being from the perspective of a female mythological figure, directed towards her lover who has in some way mistreated her. Notable examples include the first poem, *Penelope Ulixi*, describing Penelope's tantalisingly long wait for her husband Odysseus' return from the Trojan war, or poem twelve, *Medea Iasoni*, directed to the leader of the Argonauts by his wife Medea, based on the same myth used in the play by Euripides. Although often overshadowed by Ovid's more famous works, such as the *Metamorphoses* or *Ars Amatoria*, *Heroides* serves as a particularly interesting insight into portrayals of women's perspectives and experiences in ancient poetry. A variety of readings can be gleaned from analysis of the text: both of women presented as powerless and passive in lamenting their fates, or conveying quite forcefully their anger and a sense of agency from their strong techniques of persuasion. In either, or any alternative interpretation, the concept of understanding marginalised voices rather than purely villainising or dismissing them is integral.

In my poem, I chose to replicate the theme of Ovid's poetry, but exploring the perspective of another mythological woman not included in Ovid's original collection, thus labelling this poem as if the twenty-first piece of the original text. Jocasta was a figure from ancient Greek mythology and the Queen of Thebes, most known in the myth as Oedipus' wife and, as later revealed to him, his mother. Although none of Ovid's women are writing to a man they know is dead, as is the case for Jocasta, her story fits well amongst the other figures in *Heroides*, especially as she too is wronged by a lover with the result being her own downfall.

Rather than writing a letter to Oedipus himself, I chose instead to focus on Jocasta's late husband Laius, the King of Thebes who was murdered by Oedipus on his arrival in the city. If tracing back the chain of events that led to the dire situation Jocasta finds herself in, they arguably originate with the actions of both Jocasta and her husband.

I chose to open my poem with the lines "O lost and damned! / This is my last and only word to you / For ever!", as these are the final lines spoken by Jocasta in Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*, preceding Jocasta's final exit, before Oedipus and the audience learn of her suicide. Whilst they are directed towards Oedipus in the play, her words can also be framed as to Laius, as if this letter to her late husband is her final mode of communication to him before her own death. In the interest of preserving the fluidity of the piece to convey more strongly the depth of Jocasta's turmoil, I felt it better to not to write in elegiac couplets like Ovid's Latin, although the syntax of lines is still deliberately formed to draw focus to the most dramatic aspects of Jocasta's monologue, akin to Ovid's frequently melodramatic tone.

The storyline of Jocasta's circumstances is notably complicated, and thus I thought it important to consider her equally complex emotional state as a result of her experiences. I wanted to convey a sense of resentment and blame towards Laius for his inflammatory words to Oedipus that were the cause of his own downfall, but also the pity of a woman for her husband living in a world where mortals are ultimately powerless in the hands of the gods, and the inevitability of Laius' fate as expressed by divine prophecy. Furthermore, I imagined that Jocasta would harbour a great deal of guilt herself, mingled with a combination of rage and sympathy for Oedipus to a similar degree of intricacy of that for her husband. Ultimately, there are a lot of contradictory feelings here that demonstrate the emotional turmoil that Jocasta is in, forming an important aspect of her character to explore. I also thought it relevant to explore how her grief is often sidelined in presentations of the myth, as she is married off to the new king, a stranger, remarkably soon after the death of her first husband, with little time to mourn or regard for the fact that she now must face marriage to someone she (thinks she) has never met. Finally, the title of this piece translates from Latin to "Jocasta to Laius" and is intended to emulate the format used by Ovid in his original work.

FORM ME; PIG-NOSED; THE DREAMS OF WORSHIPPERS

CHARLOTTE GLYNN

University of St Andrews

FORM ME

The god has strangled my soul.
The others are busy tripartite-ing themselves,
Their horses whipped on a sunny day...
Outside the cave quipping
'*Logos* this and *logos* that'.
Edgy, little bees.
Buzzing to find themselves judging the pleasant and the pain.
It's always been luck.
Mourning stories of glory,
I know they don't worry about me...
Always stuck in doorways of knowing.
Little shadows play in front of my eyes.
This jewellery on my wrists getting heavier and heavier.
No longer can I move.
The chains rub and pull at my skin
So that shaking them off moves me to agony.
Do you care, anymore, philosophers?
The Forms won't worry for you.
Will you risk death to come back to save me?
I'm stuck in stalemates and tights at the back of the club.
Or maybe these are just the stalagmites.
Maybe I am still in the cave and still, I am alone.
Those that have chained me laugh and laugh and laugh.
Buy me more and more drinks and watch as I fall into
Endless nothing, endless illusion.
In the darkness of this world,
Treat me with love, philosopher.
I am dead and it's your god that has killed me.

PIG-NOSED

On the light of the rising sun,
I bank all that has been left unsaid.
When the world was brand new,
They told us that fire would save us.
But the fires we start extinguish themselves
Just to be lit again and again and again.
There has never been mercy for the dark.
It exists, unjust, to end.
In turn, we are born and born again.
Snide and mean, I laugh at the pig-nosed man.
How dare he be unafraid...
He will shit at the end like the rest of us
when the lights go dark.
Slowly slipping, he will laugh, I am sure.
His conviction, unbelievable.
People die all the time
I chant, over and over.
The pig-nosed man will die.
No more a loss than a mosquito on a cold day.
Angry, angry men will be happy
and there will be no more blood left
for the pig-nosed man to suck.
That torrid, angry blood:
the infecting of a wound.
But the lover of life cringes when an insect dies,
even the mean ones.
As the sun rises on the day the pig-nosed man will laugh and shit,
I think that maybe,
I have been cringing all my life.

THE DREAMS OF WORSHIPPERS

Baking bread on a dark day,
We all huddle round.
Covert converts whispering,
Almost sensuous.
I'd kiss you all if we had time.
Enough of that poppycock,
Enough of the startling and upsetting,
Enough of throwing paint.
Get down to business.
In the eaves of the roof,
The gods match our whispers.
Out of the light of the fire,
Slow and creeping,
In voices barbarous and unholy,
"We are here, we are here, we are here.
In the end, like all living things,
You will realise you should not have made us this way,
made in your image to hold the weight of your sin,
a kind of power so ancient you cannot begin to understand.
Drinking up your waterfalls, your witnesses are blind to you.
Us, empty tools, whom you have asked so much of, will
be your own voices echoing as the darkness falls."
The night blurs in a series of endless stars.
Whispers fade to quiet contemplation.
Out there, in the cosmos,
There is a beautiful chariot.
That holds the weight of no thing.
Only the pleasure of existing.

COMMENTARY

As a creative practitioner and a student of Classics, it is difficult to avoid engaging with the classical canon when writing. Certainly, Classics is to be found in much of the great poetry of the Anglophone world. My poetry, especially regarding its involvement with the classical world, acts as an imaginative attempt to convey a range of ancient voices and the difficulty of accessing them from a modern standpoint. My own feelings of detachment when I read ancient literature is something that provides a lot of poetry-fodder. I feel disconnected from the ancients as what they were, people. This is especially true of philosophy, as the ideas overtake their authors and eventually become them. Plato was a person. Heraclitus was a person. Socrates was a person. The juxta-positioning of philosophical images with images of modern personhood is one way I try to reframe the ancients as people and their ideas as being as much about personhood and embodiment as ethics and morality. In my academic work, my research interests revolve around ancient philosophy and how voices and bodies are heard or silenced. This filters through to my creative work. I draw particularly on Plato as well as Presocratics, like Heraclitus and Parmenides, in the following poems. The main pursuit in my creative practice is to draw in the classical world for the modern reader, to veil modern issues with ancient ideas and to create stark images through poetic language to force the reader into thinking about these modern/classical concepts differently, as they sit in relation to one another. I often find that the only way to really hear the classical world is to let it sit in harmony or discord with something new. I hope that these poems will push the classicists, who I hope shall read, to remember the *realness* of the works we have come to know so well. Classics is about people, as everything is. Philosophy is by, about and for people. This is as true today as it was then. If Classics and Philosophy cannot exist for people as they are today, if it cannot be made into something you can feel, touch and understand, then it all remains an idea, something far away and ineffable. It is in this way that I write for classicists and philosophers, as hopefully, a reminder of the realness of art and the ways in which Classics can and should be something that touches you, with all the fullness of the word 'touch' in mind.

THANK GOODNESS FOR WRITING

ROSALIND WATKIN

University of Law

I'm tremendously glad I've been sent a listener who can read and write. I mean it. Any individual who reads and writes should treat these twin skills like they're the most magnificent products of human ingenuity ever to exist, because they are.

Let's imagine you're a wine-merchant. You sell wines from all over the world: rich, red ones from Tuliso, light and fizzy ones from Elephantinē, and heavy, sweet ones brewed from the grapes they cultivate at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. If a wine exists, you have it. Problem is, you can't read (or write, for that matter). There are too many wine varieties to keep track of in your head. So, how do you tell them apart? The wines are in identical ceramic vases, and it's not like you can uncork them and take a swig of the contents. That would ruin the trust merchants have with their clientele. Go on, hazard a guess.

Great answer. You need a set of representative symbols. (I suppose your further suggestion to "simply learn to write" *would* work, but I'll pretend you didn't say that.) You'd stamp each vase with a little image representing the region of its manufacture. That way you can tell your Aswans from your Aminisos. As long as you don't get asked for the precise location of the vineyard or the names of the workers who crushed the grapes, you can go about business as usual across the Great Green. There you go! You've begun to rely on written communication.

That was an easy example. Now let's try something else.

Picture this. You're employed as a messenger by a king. Though, like the merchant, you're obviously still incapable of reading and writing, you speak many languages and can decipher a foreign nation's transport system faster than any of your co-workers. You're quick on your feet and can navigate by the stars. Really, for a messenger, you hit all the boxes. Well... almost.

One day, the king gives you a tablet glistening with symbols you can't comprehend and sends you abroad on a diplomatic mission. Under the guidance of a favourable messenger-god — personally, I'd recommend wing-sandalled Hemaha if you have the option — you carry this tablet into unknown territories, relying on your knowledge of trade routes and the limited number of phrases you know in your destination's spoken dialect.

The entire time, you're fascinated by this tablet. The script doesn't look like anything you've seen before, and to be honest it rather resembles chicken scratch, but it must have a sepulchral meaning unavailable to mere messengers such as yourself. Perhaps it contains an enchantment, or a prayer to one of the highest divinities. Maybe it records the history of an obliterated people.

It's beautiful to look at, anyway, no matter what it hides. The mystery of its contents makes it the loveliest thing ever to exist by your standards, so it gives you the courage to continue with your journey. What a brave little messenger!

You arrive at your destination, battered, but having protected the tablet like it's your own child. When you present it to the king's herald, you're led into the throne room. It's beautiful. The lamps fizz. The polished walls glow. The railings on the staircases flare in the light. This is so exciting! Here you are in a wealthy palace, bearing crucial diplomatic information that took you weeks to carry over land and sea. (Your efforts will be rewarded with immense riches, I'm sure.) The foreign king reads the tablet and immediately sends his trusted advisor to you, no doubt to share the knowledge; yes, yes, how eager you are to hear what it says! She leans in to whisper the contents and slices your head clean off. *Thunk*, goes your warm skull on the concrete. You never do learn what that tablet says.

That happened to my good friend Demeo. As it turned out, the end of the tablet read "Please kill the messenger. He knows too many languages, and frankly it makes my other employees quite jealous."

See? It's important to know how to read and write.

In the UAR, most people can use cuneiform nowadays because of literacy initiatives funded by the Government at Uruk. Cuneiform is a super flexible writing system, which means lots of varieties have arisen to account for the myriad languages spoken across the Union. Standard Akkadian is the primary one, though, so as long as you know it — and obviously you do — this place is easy to navigate. Of course, other writing systems are common beyond the border. Egyptian, particularly the Gizan dialect, tends to be preferred for trade and Crete's languages are also common, but as long as you don't interact with foreign wine-merchants you'll be fine. Anyway, you have me to guide you.

The Government presents a narrative that cuneiform is a writing system older than time itself, and it certainly seems to be once you acquaint yourself with its extensive history. It began as a sign-system similar to the one we gave our illiterate wine-merchant and evolved over time into more complex, abstract forms suitable for recording messages: not just names, but ideas and phrases, too. Scribes of old would use styluses to impress wedge-shapes on wet clay. They baked the tablets so they wouldn't dissolve or melt, and thus our first libraries were born!

Nowadays, our technology is sleeker — digital, naturally — but still we press styluses to our screens to mimic the ancient shapes written by our ancestors. Other than that, little has changed: it's still easy to write a cuneiform sign incorrectly and thereby produce another word, so children continue to be yelled at when they get stroke orders wrong, just like how I tell you off when you confuse "cow" and "semester" by finishing a line on the left rather than on the right.

The history of cuneiform is entrancing for a lot of its users. I suppose it comes with the territory— Mesopotamia, that is. The UAR is merely the most recent "empire" in a chain extending back until the dawn of humanity.

Once upon a time, I was on a barge along the Euphrates when I came across a great ziggurat. Centuries ago, it had honoured some god, but now it lay deserted, its storm-worn stones praising the works of a king whose name I no longer remember. There are many such sites. Young shepherds send their flocks out to graze in the ruins of Sumerian palaces, and children return home after days spent playing hide-and-seek in half-demolished temples.

It's impossible not to fall in love with this world— to fall in love with its living, breathing history. When the shepherd sends his flocks out, does he read written tales like the

rest of us to pass the time? Do the shades that see those cryptic symbols realise he's pronouncing their phonemes in his head? Writing is more uniting than any river could be.

COMMENTARY

Thank Goodness for Writing! is an extract from a science fiction story I'm in the process of writing, which is set in a loosely retro-futuristic version of the Bronze Age Mediterranean. This part is taken from near the beginning and follows the narrator's efforts to explain the importance of the written word to their audience, ultimately concluding that it is humanity's greatest invention.

The most prominent elements of this passage are its quasi-ancient setting and its emphasis on human society. The narrator refers to several Bronze Age sites and languages, as well as the Greek god Hermes — in the proto-religious, Linear B form “Hemaha” — to ground their discussion in real history. Furthermore, the narrator references both ancient and modern approaches to reading and writing to show its development. Rather than attempting to invent an entirely new “in-world” approach to literacy, I have stuck closely to contemporary practices of digital note-taking and readership, in an effort to connect a modern audience with the history of a skill they may take for granted.

A central element of my main story is the impact of artificial intelligence on human society. Therefore, I classify it as science fiction. In the chapters following this extract, an artificial intelligence is created by two like-minded architects to complete a seemingly impossible linguistic task. Despite not being centred upon the main action, this extract reflects my approach to the tale overarching it. The narrator's discussion frames writing as a fundamentally human technology, and likens it to the Tigris and Euphrates: two major rivers which have connected *Homo sapiens* across the Near East for millennia. Writing was created as a tool for communication or an *aide-mémoire*. Unlike mere speech, it lasts for a long time and can be carried over vast distances— the original maker doesn't even need to be in the same room as their audience to be understood, as my writing itself demonstrates!

My emphasis on our urge to document our thoughts continues to define my story beyond this extract, bringing to the forefront humanity's place within a world dominated by new technologies.



MATERIAL CULTURE

TOPOGRAPHY, EXPERIENCE, AND CULTURAL HISTORY IN PAUSANIAS' HELLADOS PERIEGESIS

EVE JEFFREYS

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INTRODUCTION

This is a write-up of my fieldwork investigation into the practical use of Pausanias' *Periegesis*. I spent a week in Athens, with trips to Olympia and Delphi, and used Pausanias' work as my travel guide to varying levels of success.

My findings are written out with the quote from Pausanias followed by my experience. If I was unable to find something as it is probably not extant, this is highlighted with a '-'. I used Google Earth to create the maps.

NOTE: My full investigation included Athens (the Kerameikos, the Agora, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Akropolis, and Plato's Academy), Delphi, and Olympia. Due to word count constraints, I have only included the Olympia section in full, because I believe that this section highlights the structure of Pausanias' work most clearly. However, I have included the maps from the Athenian Akropolis & Agora as well as Delphi, as I feel that they are valuable for understanding Pausanias' work.

OLYMPIA



Figure 1 Map of Olympia, with Pausanias' suggested route in orange and the route I ended up taking in purple.

ATHENS



Figure 2 Map of the Athenian Agora, with Pausanias' suggested route in orange and a more logical route in



Figure 3 Map of the Akropolis, with Pausanias' suggested route in orange and the route I ended up taking in

DELPHI

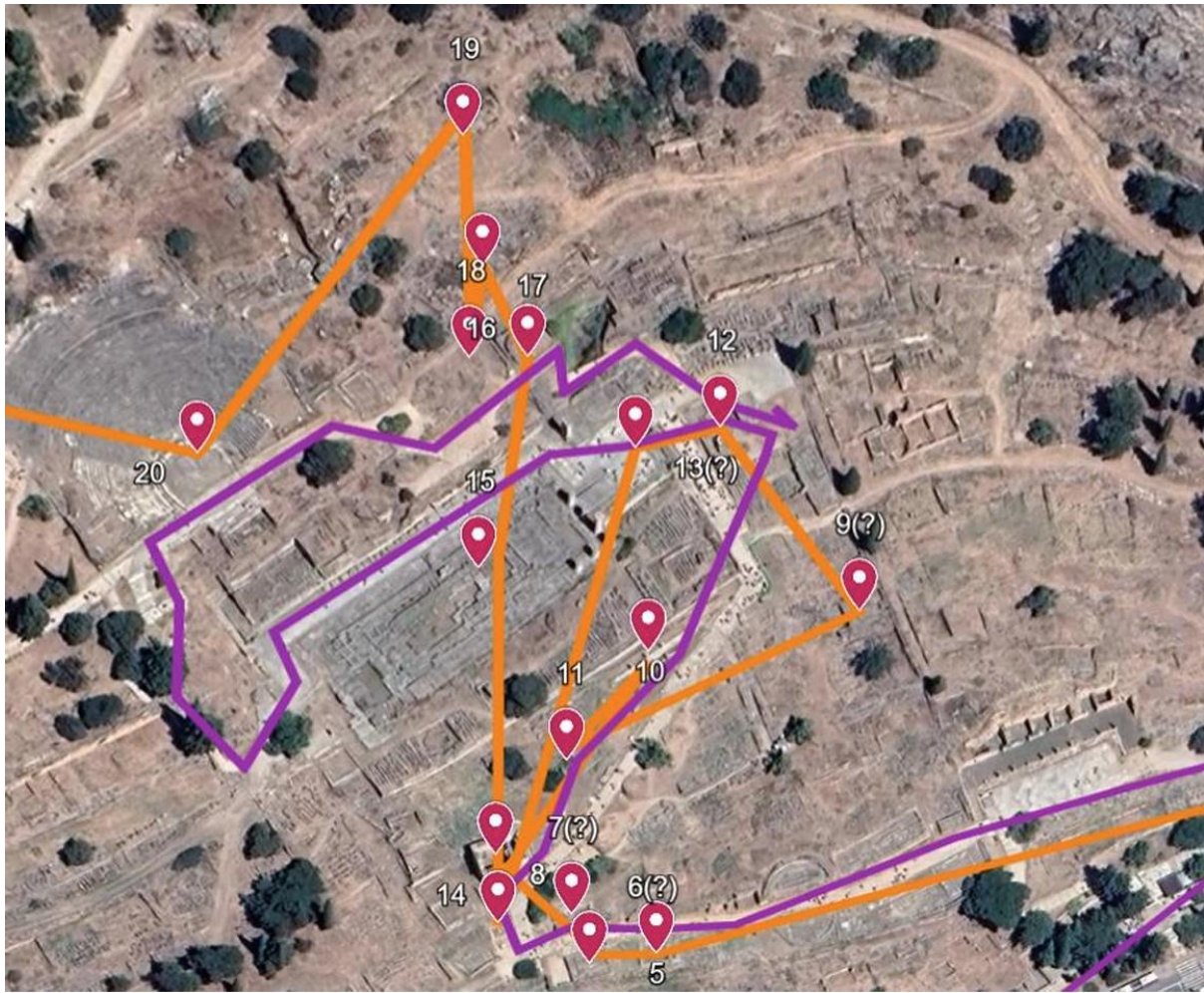


Figure 4 Map of Delphi, with Pausanias' suggested route in orange and the route I ended up taking in purple

Table 1 Descriptions of locations labelled on Figure 1

Number on Map	Description from Pausanias	Reality
	The road to Olympia follows the river Alpheius (5.7.1).	I did not come across this, but it is still extant.
	The main section of Olympia is the sacred grove of Zeus, called the Altis (5.10.1).	It is true that the whole archaeological site is contained in one big enclosure.
1	There is the massive Temple of Olympian Zeus in the centre of this enclosure, containing an impressive cult statue and many offerings and decorations (5.10.2-3).	Although not fully restored, the temple is still somewhat extant. Nothing remains of the cult statue or the decorations that Pausanias describes.

Number on Map	Description from Pausanias	Reality
2(?)	Near this temple are the foundations of Oenomaus' house, along with two altars: Zeus of the Courtyard and Zeus of the Thunderbolt (5.14.7, 5.20.6).	
3	Within the Altis, to the right of the entrance to the Temple of Zeus, there is a sacred enclosure dedicated to Pelops known as the Pelopion (5.13.1).	This is somewhat extant, in the position indicated.
4(?)	Near the Pelopion is an altar dedicated to Dionysus and the Graces, which is near an altar of the Muses, and another to the Nymphs (5.14.10).	
5	Close to this is an ash altar dedicated to Zeus (5.13.8).	This is somewhat extant, in the position indicated.
6(?)	Near this altar is an altar of the Unknown Gods, as well as altars to Zeus Purifier, Victory, Zeus Underground, Olympian Hera, and Apollo and Hermes (5.14.8).	
7	Right next to the Zeus altar and the Pelopion is the Temple of Hera (5.13.8).	This is still extant, but a bit further from the Zeus altar than Pausanias implies.
8	Outside the Altis is the workshop of Pheidias (5.15.1).	This is to the west of the Altis, quite close to the Temple of Olympian Zeus.
9	Close by here is the Leonidaeum, which is right outside of the processional entrance into the Altis (5.15.1-2).	This is somewhat extant, in the position indicated. There are some Roman buildings around here that are not mentioned, such as a bathhouse.
10{?}	To the left of the Leonidaeum are altars for Aphrodite and the Seasons (5.15.3).	Could not identify these, but there are many remains in this area that could belong to these altars.
11(?)	Near here is a wild olive tree from which the Olympian crowns are made, and an altar of the Nymphs (5.15.3).	

Number on Map	Description from Pausanias	Reality
12(?)	On the right of the Leonidaeum is an altar for Artemis of the Market, and one for a goddess they call Mistress (5.15.4).	
13(?)	By the starting point of the chariot race is an altar to Zeus the Bringer of Fate, along with the Fates, Hermes, two more to Zeus Most High, Poseidon and Hera, and the Dioscuri (5.15.5).	Could not find these - probably not extant. There is a house built by Nero near this racecourse now, which Pausanias does not mention.
	In the so-called Wedge there are altars to Ares, Athena, Fortune, Pan, Aphrodite, Artemis, and the Nymphs (5.15.6).	Could not find these, especially as I am not sure what "the Wedge" is referring to - probably not extant.
14(?)	Re-enter the Altis by the processional gate and you will find altars to the river Cladeus, Artemis, Apollo, Artemis Coccoca, and Artemis Thermius all behind the Temple of Hera (5.15.7).	There is a spring altar near the Temple of Hera, but this is not really close to the processional gate, which Pausanias has already established is by the Leonidaeum, and then later says is by the Hippodameium. This is a very confusing direction. The other altars do not seem to be extant.
15	The Town Hall (Prytaneion) is near here (5.15.8).	These are both somewhat extant, in the position that Pausanias indicates.
7	The Temple of Hera is incredibly big and contains many important objects (5.16.1).	I am not sure why he decides to go back to the Temple of Hera now, when he has already mentioned it multiple times. Many of the statues he mentions are not extant, but amazingly the Praxiteles he describes has survived in very good condition, and can be seen in the museum.
16 (Metroum), 17 (Philippeum)	Near here is a temple called the Metroum, near a tholos called the Philippeum (5.20.9).	These are both somewhat extant, with the Metroum to the left of the Temple of Hera and the Philippeum to the right.
18	If you walk along the road to the stadium from the Metroum, on the	The place where these were kept is still extant, but none of the statues

Number on Map	Description from Pausanias	Reality
	left at the foot of Mount Cronius is a platform of stone that holds bronze images of Zeus, made from the fines of cheating athletes (5.21.2).	are. It is true that Mount Cronius is on the left of this road.
19(?)	Near here, by the side of what is called the Hippodamium, is a semicircular pedestal covered in statues (5.22.2)	
20	Behind the Heraeum, in front of Mount Cronius, is a terrace filled with treasuries in this order: Sicyonians, Carthaginians, Epidamians (x2), Sybarites, Libyans of Cyrene, Megarians, Gelans (6.19.1 6.19.15).	These are all in front of Mount Cronius as Pausanias says. In between these treasuries and the Temple of Hera is a theatre built by Herod of Athens, which Pausanias does not seem to mention. He later says that Herod dedicated some statues for the stadium (6.21.2), but does not mention his building here.
21(?)	Near the Treasury of the Sikyonians is an altar of Herakles (5.14.9).	There are many treasury buildings and buildings near the treasuries, but I could not identify this altar.
22(?)	Behind the treasuries, at the foot of the mountain, is a sanctuary dedicated to Eileithyia, and near this is the Sanctuary of Heavenly Aphrodite (6.20.2, .6).	I could not access this part of the site, so had no way to verify.
23	There is a processional entrance to the stadium near the Hippodameium, as well as a secret entrance (6.20.7-8).	Today, there is a big tunnel marking the entrance to the stadium, which is likely one of these entrances. Near here, there is a stoa known as the Echo Stoa, as well as some Roman buildings, neither of which Pausanias mentions.
24(?)	There are altars to Hermes of the Games and to Opportunity near the entrance to the stadium (5.14.9).	
25(?)	At the end of the stadium is the tomb of Endymion (6.20.9).	
26(?)	There is a sanctuary to Demeter Chamyne within the Stadium (6.21.1).	

Number on Map	Description from Pausanias	Reality
27 (gym), 28 (wrestling ground)	In the Gymnasium, there is a stone basement holding a trophy, and to the left of the Gymnasium is the wrestling-school and the athletes accommodation (6.21.2).	Pausanias jumps across the Altis to the Gymnasium here. The Gymnasium is somewhat extant but is in ruins, so it is hard to tell which section is which; it is feasible that the different rooms could have been accommodation and training rooms.
29(?)	On the other side of the Cladeus river is the grave of Oenomaus (6.21.3).	I could not access this part of the site, so had no way to verify.
	Other altars that he mentions, with no proper directions: Zeus Laoetas; Poseidon Laoetas; Alpheius; Herakles and his brothers; Concord, Athena, and the mother of the gods; the Earth (Gaeum); Pythian Apollo (5.14.4-15.9).	Could not find any of these altars; they are likely not extant, and regardless he does not provide any directions to try and find them.

NOTE

This section is the least usable as a travel guide. Pausanias makes a lot of jumps around the site and returns to different points multiple times. He also lists the altars in the order in which they are sacrificed at, not the order in which they appear on the site. These factors made it incredibly difficult to use his narrative as a route planner. I also got very confused as it feels like he is giving conflicting directions. At one point he says that the processional entrance is by the Leonidaum, but then later he suggests that it is near the Temple of Hera, which is on the other side of the Altis. This could indicate that there are multiple processional entrances, but this is unclear. When preparing for this section of my research, it felt like I was assembling a puzzle by putting together pieces of information from all over the description to create a cohesive route. As with other sections, he has neglected to mention a lot of Roman buildings. While it is true that some of these could have been built after his time, it is undeniable that a house built by the emperor Nero would have been visible to Pausanias, and yet he does not choose to mention it.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, there is some value in using Pausanias' *Periegesis* in modern day Greece. I found that by using it as my travel guide, I was pushed to examine more of the ancient sites around me. I also gained a greater understanding of the context behind a lot of these sites and the way they were connected. However, I struggled a lot with using this work as a straight-forward "travel guide". The fact that so many of these ancient sites have been preserved and restored allowed me to see many of the landmarks Pausanias mentions, but these sites are all enclosed spaces, meaning there is none of the interconnectivity that Pausanias describes. In

addition, I do not really think that Pausanias even intended his work to be used as I have used it. He does use directional language, sometimes accurately, but mostly in an incredibly vague manner which is left up to the reader's interpretation. Following his guide as I have leads you on paths that double back and cross over each other multiple times. This, coupled with the constant tangents, gives the impression of a stream of consciousness as opposed to a guidebook. If not a guidebook, what was Pausanias actually intending to write? This will be examined in the second half of this paper.

TOPOGRAPHY, EXPERIENCE, AND CULTURAL HISTORY IN PAUSANIAS' HELLADOS PERIEGESIS

While undertaking my research in the field, I developed many theories about Pausanias' motivations behind how he chose to construct his work. My investigation has led me to believe that Pausanias did not actually intend to write a travel guide to be used in the way that I used it. This essay argues that he was more focused on capturing the experience of travelling through Greece and recording what he felt was most important to Greek society and culture in the wake of a Roman occupation.

It seems evident from the way that Pausanias constructed the *Periegesis* that he was not intending to create a straight-forward travel guide. The main indicator of this is the regular lengthy 'digressions', which make it considerably difficult to use when just walking around Greece (as I personally discovered). These 'digressions' appear to demonstrate Pausanias going off-topic, but upon further examination of the work as a whole, this is not the case. Pausanias clearly felt that they were crucial to his work. The use of regular cross references, over 100 across the work, demonstrates that he planned which information he would deliver in each section.¹ This also suggests that he expected the work to be read in its entirety.² Ebeling even argues that Pausanias was intentionally manipulating topography to fit the 'digressions' he wanted to include, especially in his book on Attica (book 1) which highlights Hellenistic works and landmarks as a vehicle to discuss the Hellenistic successor states.³

This points towards the conclusion that what have historically been called 'digressions' are in fact a fundamental element of the work.⁴ Both the λόγοι (*logoi*, words and stories) and θεωρήματα (*theoremata*, what you can see) were intended to be equally important parts of the work, with the result being both a travel guide *and* a historical/literature piece.⁵ Ebeling believes that the historical elements, although often overlooked, are in fact the forefront of

¹ C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (University of California Press, 1998), 7.

² M. Pretzler, "Pausanias," in *Characterisation in Ancient Greek Literature*, ed. K. De Temmerman and E. van Emde Boas (Brill, 2018), 285, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356313>.

³ H. L. Ebeling, "Pausanias as an Historian," *The Classical Weekly* 7, no. 18 (1914): 139-40, https://link-gale-com.eux.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/ZXEVHL900329885/LCO?u=ed_itw&sid=bookmark-LCO&pg=174&xid=bd961bd1.

⁴ This conclusion is supported by Pretzler, "Pausanias," 271, 275-6; Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 20, and Ebeling, "Pausanias as an Historian," 138.

⁵ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 21, 95.

Pausanias' work, with the topographic elements only serving as a framing device.⁶ This is not entirely accurate, however, as his strong commitment to recording so many minute elements of so many sites does indicate that topographic information was a crucial part of his work.

It is clear that Pausanias was intending to write something that would be read as an educational tool. He claimed that "most people have no historical knowledge", but with his work, he wanted to set records straight (1.3.3). However, in choosing to cover so many different elements of the Greek world, Pausanias' work suffers somewhat. Habicht accurately states that Pausanias was catering to an audience that did not exist.⁷ As a record of history and culture, it is cluttered with lists of statues and vague directions that would frustrate any historian. As I have stated, it is incredibly difficult to practically use as a travel guide. Indeed, it did not even appear to have been read in his own time.⁸ Pausanias clearly wrote the *Periegesis* with a specific idea of structure and content, but it is unfortunate that this structure makes it quite difficult to read practically. I cannot believe that he was intending to create a straight-forward travel guide, because if he was, he failed. Therefore, why did Pausanias choose to cover so much information?

One of the stand-out elements of the *Periegesis* is the close emphasis on mythic and religious landmarks, which further suggests that he was not solely intending on creating a travel guide.⁹ He was writing with the intention of recording "all things Greek" but overlooked secular sites like the prison and houses in the Athenian agora in favour of religious ones.¹⁰ Pausanias comes across as a strongly religious individual, which could explain why he chose to focus so much on this element of Greek life. He refrained from elaborating on the Eleusinian mysteries as it would be impious to do so (1.14.3, 1.38.6). He also frequently argued that his opinion is supported by the gods' actions, such as someone who he believes to be a bad person being punished by the gods in some way.¹¹ Pausanias' journey can also be interpreted as a religious pilgrimage, seeing as he is travelling to so many different religious sites and engaging in various rituals and rites.¹² He used these religious landmarks as a way to connect with Greek culture, emphasising that the glory of Greek history was not the distant past, but something alive and thriving in his own time.¹³

By focusing on Greece's rich past, Pausanias was responding to the Roman occupation and the changing fabric of his homeland. In Pausanias' mind, Greek freedom, and subsequently history, ended with the sack of Corinth in 146 BC.¹⁴ This is exemplified in the fact that he barely mentioned any contemporary individuals and focused almost exclusively on pre-Roman

⁶ Ebeling, "Pausanias as an Historian," 138.

⁷ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 22.

⁸ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 1.

⁹ This religious focus has been noted by J. Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in a Roman World," *Past & Present* 135 (1992): 8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650969>, and Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 23.

¹⁰ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 3, 6.

¹¹ Pretzler "Pausanias," 278.

¹² Elsner, "Pausanias," 8.

¹³ H. C. Maltezou and A. Pavli, "Pausanias, the first travel writer: a historical perspective," *Journal of Travel Medicine* 29, no. 5 (2022): 2, <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/jtm/taac066>; Ebeling, "Pausanias as an Historian," 139.

¹⁴ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 123.

art and architecture.¹⁵ By connecting the Greek landscape of his time to its history, Pausanias is rejecting a Roman presence which would have been overwhelming and unavoidable.¹⁶ His work presents a strong, united Greece with a shared history and culture as a pushback against the Romans.¹⁷ Ironically, the only reason that the Greece of Pausanias' time was united was under the totality of Roman oppression; the Greece of the past Pausanias describes are constantly warring with each other.¹⁸ This lack of reality in Pausanias' description suggests that he had the specific intention of presenting a united Greece through his work as a way to reconcile Greece now, defeated and subjugated, with the glory of its past.

Pausanias can also be seen rejecting the Roman occupation through his clear disdain towards Rome. In my experience, I found that he neglected to mention Roman buildings whenever he could, such as the Roman Agora in Athens. He also was openly bitter about the occupation and briefly mentions the violent involvement of Roman colonial power in Corinth and how that has led to Greek traditions fading (2.1.2, 3.6).¹⁹ However, he did acknowledge some of the better parts about the Romans, as long as they are related to his theme of Greek religion and culture. He mentioned offerings given by Nero at Olympia, but did not mention the house that Nero built there, clearly only concerned with Nero's religious contribution (5.12.8). He was favourable towards Hadrian, a hellenophile who, in Pausanias' view, had "gone the furthest to honour religion" (1.5.5, 1.3.2, 1.20.4). Therefore, although Pausanias was not *ignoring* Roman rule by any means, he was certainly trying his best not to highlight it, instead focusing on Greek culture and religion as a response to their position as a province of a foreign power.

In writing this work, Pausanias was recording and communicating the *experience* of travelling through Greece in his time, documenting cultural, historical, and geographical elements alongside directions. This means that he often discounted accurate directions in favour of emphasising a certain cultural experience. In Olympia, he listed the altars in the order they are sacrificed at, not in the order they appear (5.14.4). This provides for the reader a more culturally accurate experience than you would have simply walking around this area.²⁰ Also in Olympia, he favoured describing the spiritual impact of the great cult statue of Zeus over simply listing the measurements (5.11.9). Additionally, he withheld certain pieces of information that those uninitiated cannot be allowed to learn, which mirrors the experience of someone living within Greece who is not privy to such mysteries (1.14.3, 1.37.3, 1.38.6). Pausanias was purposefully choosing to not deliver an accurate, usable travel guide, and was instead focused on conveying the *experience* of Greece.

What is interesting about the experience Pausanias chose to convey is that it is inextricably linked to himself. Pretzler argues that Pausanias does not often mention his own experience when travelling with the intention of appearing objective, but Elsner, by

¹⁵ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 18, 102, 123-40.

¹⁶ Elsner, "Pausanias," 16-7.

¹⁷ Elsner, "Pausanias," 5, 14.

¹⁸ Elsner, "Pausanias," 19.

¹⁹ Elsner, "Pausanias," 18.

²⁰ Elsner, "Pausanias," 13.

comparison, claims that Pausanias' work is incredibly personal and relates to his own journey.²¹ Pausanias certainly placed great emphasis on his own experiences and interaction with the world. Although he rarely revealed information about himself, he is at the forefront of the narrative. Previous historians have theorised that he based his work solely on the topographic writings of other authors, but this cannot be the case as there are so many instances of Pausanias directly interacting with the landscape or information that he is describing.²² There are no less than 144 instances of the phrase "in my time", along with a further 136 variations of the phrase "still at present".²³ This clearly points towards the fact that Pausanias witnessed the things he described. He personally sought out little-known information and prided himself as revealing it, such as a story about the death of tyranny in Athens commonly discussed by the locals but not yet recorded in history (1.23.1-2). He was very enthusiastic about his subject as he would have had to commit a significant amount of time and money, and this enthusiasm is clear in the inclusion of the seemingly 'useless' digressions that he must have had a personal interest in (1.4.6, 1.24.7, 1.26.5, 10.13.2).²⁴ He also regularly provided his personal opinion, which does not indicate an objective observer (1.5.4, 1.10.3, 1.15.2, 1.12.4, 1.27.1, 5.10.1, 2.30.6). Overall, Pausanias' personal involvement in the journey he described is a crucial element of the experience of the work.

Pausanias' direct involvement with the journey makes him an excellent source in many ways. Although I had many issues with his work as a travel guide, it is highly likely that most of the information he provides is accurate (aside from a few seemingly honest mistakes, as well as the purposeful Roman omissions).²⁵ Being a direct eyewitness, he was able to openly state how he came by a lot of information, or state that he personally saw certain things (1.28.7, 5.12.3, 5.20.9). He summarised or sometimes even directly quoted inscriptions, which must have been accurate because they would have been verifiable by his readers at the time (e.g. 5.10.2). He is also helpful for providing context around extant inscriptions.²⁶ He was frequently very open about his use of written sources as well, and presented different versions of stories to allow his readers to decide (such as 10.32.6). He was open about instances when he did not know something, or had only heard about a site but not visited it himself (1.38.3, 8.10.2). While it is true that Pausanias did not position himself as the main character of his journey, it is undeniable that he quite regularly referenced himself and the effort that he had undertaken to complete this work. He presented the act of travelling through and experiencing Greece as something personal and real that those reading his book can experience themselves. The glory of Greece's past is not just an abstract concept, it is something tangible that can be accessed through interaction with the country's landscape.

In conclusion, Pausanias was not intending for someone to utilise his work in the way I have. He certainly wanted it to be read, but he cared more about recording the culture and

²¹ M. Pretzler, "Travel and Travel Writing," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. B. Graziosi, P. Vasunia, and G. Boys-Stones (Oxford University Press, 2012), 357, <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286140.013.0031>; Elsner, "Pausanias," 5, 12.

²² Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 3-4.

²³ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 176-7.

²⁴ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 139, 142, 162.

²⁵ R. E. Wycherly, "Pausanias and Praxiteles," *Hesperia Supplements* 20 (1982): 182, 188, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1353960>; Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 95, 148.

²⁶ Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, 64-94, 70, 150-1.

history of Greece than providing an accurate route through the country. By completing the journey himself and highlighting the connections between landmarks and the Greek past, Pausanias has created a work that conveys the experience of travelling through Greece as a pilgrim and historian. Through delivering this experience, he is rejecting the Roman occupation and instead presenting an idealised, unified Greek culture that is still accessible in his time. Even with the struggles I faced using his work as a travel guide, I was still able to connect with the history and culture of ancient Greece in a way that I believe Pausanias intended.

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