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Oedipus and the Stars

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Abstract: At OT 795 Oedipus’ recollection of measuring his fugitive course by the stars presents a double crux, concerning both the textual tradition’s dueling terms for that measurement and scholars’ related, opposed renderings of the phrase as literal or figurative. I argue Oedipus’ words can be taken literally to signify the techne of ancient celestial navigation, a metric of human knowhow versus the forces of fate and the divine.

Midway through Sophocles’ Oedipus Tyrannus one comes upon a textual crossroads — or, more precisely, upon the horns of a puzzling dilemma. At issue is Oedipus’ passing mention of the stars in recounting his anxious flight many years before from Delphi and its oracle’s prophecy of incest and parricide, driving him far from his homeland:

κἀγώ ’πακούσας ταῦτα τὴν Κορινθίαν
ἀστροῖς τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκμετρούμενος [corr. τεκμαρούμενος] χθόνα  795
ἔφευγον, ἐνθὰ μήποτ᾽ ὀνείδη τῶν ἐμῶν τελούμενα. (OT 794-97)\(^1\)

And from then on I attended to the whereabouts of Corinth,
By the stars thereafter measuring [judging] my course;
I fled to a place where I never would behold those evils
The reproachful oracle foretold.

As intimated by the above brackets, the initial predicament is to choose between alternative terms for Oedipus’ recollected use of the stars: between the codices’ extant but possibly corrupt ἐκμετρούμενος, “to measure distance [ἀστροῖς, by the stars],” and

\(^1\) Text from Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (LJ-W) 1990, Sophoclis Fabulae, supplemented by Jebb 1897 and Dawe 2006. Unless stated otherwise, translations are my own.
August Nauck’s anagram-like late emendation (ca. 1866), τεκμαρούμενος, “to judge [by the stars]” (LSJ). The latter verb, τεκμαίρω, denotes acts of judging and specifically those of conjecture, estimation, and calculation by signs or tokens (LSJ; cf. τέκμαρ, a “fixed mark” or “sure sign”). By contrast, ἐκμετρέω more narrowly designates a specific form of calculation: that of measuring spaces, contents, or distances; hence Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Nigel G. Wilson’s charge that the codices’ ἐκμετρούμενος is merely the “intrusive gloss” of its less restrictive twin.² Yet Nauck’s conjecture invites an obvious enough question: why is the extant term, and its specifying of (celestial) measurement, so problematic and potentially misbegotten?

On the side of Nauck’s correction certainly are parallel usages in ancient sources³ as well as in the play (OT 916, καίνα τοῖς πάλαι τεκμαίρεται, “judge [conjecture] new things by the old”),⁴ and, many centuries later, a proverbial iteration in Libanius (4th c. CE) Declam. 4.184, ἀστροὺς . . . τεκμαίρομενος, that is largely the basis for Nauck.⁵ On the side of ἐκμετρούμενος are other if fewer sources⁶ plus a plethora of mathematical, legal, philosophical, and other ancient uses of the root word, μέτρον (“measure,” “rule”) and its related forms, including several instances in Sophocles (e.g., OT 561, μετρηθεῖε, “to measure”; Aj. 5, μετρούμενον).⁷ In addition, despite Lloyd-Jones and Wilson’s deriding of the extant term as mis-transmitted “nonsense,” ἐκμετρούμενος holds its unwavering

² LJ-W 1997, 57. Given the words’ almost anagrammatic similarity, one wonders why LJ-W do not list scribal error rather than glossing alone as a suspected cause. It may go without saying.

³ Cf. Lucian Icaromen. 1, ἀστροὺς τεκμαίρεσθαι οὖν, “judge the way by the stars”; Arr. An. 2.2.4. In LSJ τεκμαίρομαι has numerous other usages for calculation and judgment, including especially conjecturing from the unknown to the known, as at Isoc. 4.141, γεγενημένοις τεκμαίρεσθαι, “conjecture the future”; Pind. O. 8, ἐμπύροις τεκμαίρεσθαι, “judging by burnt-offerings,” and N. 6, τεκμαίρει . . . ἰδεῖν, “give signs to see”; Hp. Prop. 24, τοῖς . . . περιεσομένους . . . τεκμαίρεσθαι τοῖς άστροις σημείοις, “judge by all the symptoms”; and even Eur. Phoen. 180-1, προσβάσεις τεκμαίρεται πύργων, “calculating how he might scale the towers.”

⁴ In support, LJ-W 1990, Sophoclea 98 judge the Libanius parallel “decisive.” But Bremer and van Erp Taalman Kip 1994, 23 object: “it is hardly relevant that ἄστροις τεκμαίρεσθαι was a proverbial expression some seven or eight centuries after Sophocles wrote his play.” LJ-W 1997, 56 counter, unconvincingly, “Libanius knew the ancient classics well, and in this matter carries more weight than many writers nearer in time to Sophocles.”

⁵ Cf. Kopff 1993, 159, and Finglass 2018, 414-15. Dawe 2006, 140 points to parallel but late figurative usages in Boissonade Anec. 2.238 and Eustathius, despite the fact that both employ not τεκμαίρεσθαι but σημαίνεσθαι, to “interpret” or “conclude from signs” (LSJ). Lucian Icaromen. 1 is more persuasive.

⁶ Besides the one usage in OT, LSJ cites no other sources for ἐκμετρέω that specifically concern celestial or astronomical measurement. But related uses in navigational-geographical measures appear in Strab. 4.2 passim, παραλίαν ἐκμετροῦν, “measure the seacoast”; cf. Philo Mat. 190, ἐκμετρούμενος δυστήμα, “measure space”; De. 21:1, ἐκμετρήσον ἐπί τὰς πάλεσ, “measure the distance to the surrounding cities.” Cf. also Eur. Frag. 382, τόρνοισιν ἐκμετρούμενος, “[a circle] measured with compasses,” IA 815-16, πόσον χρόνον ἐμ ἐκμετρήση, “measure out the days”; and Philm. 2.79.16, ἐκμετρητής, “measurer” or “surveyor.” LJ Soph. Frag. 324 enlists ἐκμετρέω’s antonym, ἔμετρον, “beyond measure”; cf. Xen. Anab. 3.2.16, ἐμετρήσατο, “without measure.” Dawe 2006, 140 also notes the less common meaning “of ‘traversing’ as at Hom. Od. 3.179 . . . or Xenophon of Ephesus 1.12.3.”

⁷ See also μέτρον, Soph. El. 236, Ich. 110; μετριός, “due measure,” El. 140, Phil. 179, OC 1212 (cf. Ellendt 1841).

⁸ LJ-W 1990, Sophoclea, 98. Against this scholarly “high-handedness,” Bremer and van Erp Taalman Kip 1994, 23 inquire, if Sophocles “wrote τεκμαρούμενος and if ἀστροὺς τεκμαρούμενος had become a proverbial expression in Libanius’ time, why and how would τεκμαρούμενος have been ousted from the text by a [presumably] nonsensical ἐκμετρούμενος?” Finglass 2018, 414 conjectures, “the reference to stars may have
place in the codices and commentaries, and for over two millennia has made sense enough to the play’s countless readers, actors, and scholars. Since Nauck, translators and other specialists have therefore been fairly divided between those who accept his emendation, largely given the word’s later proverbial usage, and those who adhere to the letter of the surviving text; the difference between “judging” and “measuring,” as between signs and measures, affording a narrow but not insignificant distinction—a point to which I’ll return.

This question of measurement versus judgment leads to a second and more obviously interpretive dilemma, which has long produced its own critical divide: whether Oedipus’ eying of the stars should be taken literally as a kind of techne (that of “measuring” distance and/or location) or as figurative and even proverbial, signifying not knowledge but ignorance, and so perhaps in accord with Nauck’s conjecture. If actual measurement, Oedipus would be recalling his use of naked-eye celestial observation to steer his fugitive course—eastward, southward, even northward—clear of those predicted evils to the southwest in Corinth. If figurative, his words would contrarily signify that in his flight into exile he simply avoided by all means his familial seaport city, all the while journeying with nothing but the (indecipherable) stars as a guide and hence with little or no guidance at all. Which path or horn, then, to choose? Which way lies textual sense and which way nonsense? Are we to envision the young Prince Oedipus navigating his direction via specific stars and constellations, “orienting himself solely by his power to interpret his environment and move within it accordingly,” or instead see him fleeing in the darkling manner of the proverb, without much sense even of which way he could be heading? And what difference might this starry distinction make for a play in which “to know where” may well prove to be “the fundamental riddle of life,” and where, too, human knowledge and knowhow are of such conspicuous significance?

Since at least the Scholia and tenth-century Suda lexicon, the few lines have elicited commentary, frequently affirming their figurative and proverbial character. It is all the more a testament to the complicated nature of this interpretive and philological dilemma, then, that the first English translator of the play, Lewis Theobald, so ambivalently navigated his way between the looming horns, on the one hand rendering Sophocles’ ἄστροις . . . ἐκμετρούμενος literally as techne but on the other hand uneasily noting, almost as an apology or self-correction, that the authoritative “old Scholiast” deemed the phrase “a Metaphor, borrowed from those that traverse the Seas, who by the Stars are taught the

irrationally encouraged the change” to the corrupt ἐκμετρούμενος—which would seem to acknowledge precisely the ancient association of the stars and measurement.

9 Kicey 2014, 43.
10 Goldhill 2012, 27. Cf. the wordplay of ὅπου, “where,” at OT 1256 (see Goldhill 27-29), first noted in Knox 1957, 184. One might also usefully consider the ample ironies concerning ἔνθα, “where” or “whence,” especially at OT 414, 796.
11 Suidas, Suda, from the section Ἀστρονομία, alpha, 4257.
12 Dryden and Lee 1678 excluded the astronomical reference from their very free, first English adaptation, Oedipus: A Tragedy.
Course of their Navigation” (1715, l. 309). Not surprisingly, subsequent translators and editors have felt more obliged to choose a literal or a figurative meaning for the phrase and its implications concerning Oedipus’ fateful journey.

Those treating the lines as figurative include George Adams (ca. 1729), Gottfried Hermann (1823), Peter Elmsley (1825), Sir George Young (1887), and Sir Richard Jebb (1897), the latter citing comparable albeit much later phrases in Claudius Aelianus (Hist. Anim. 7.48, τὸ λεγόμενον ἄστροις αὐτὰς ἐσημαίνετο, “knew their places by the stars”), Lucian (Icaromen. 1), and Hesychius of Alexandria, and concluding that such locutions were navigational metaphors “borrowed from voyages in which the sailor has no guides but the stars” (l. 794). Likewise, Gilbert Murray deciphered the passage in much the same privative sense, with “No landmark but the stars to light my [Oedipus’] way” (1911, p. 46), as has Philip Vellacott, whose Oedipus “resolved / Thenceforth to know that country only by the stars” (1971, ll. 831-32). James Hogan’s (1991) commentary follows suit, relating the phrase to navigational usage and thereby situating it as a rhetorical figure in Oedipus’ diegesis. R. D. Dawe’s revised edition (2006), now privileging Nauck’s emendation, understands the lines, after Jean François Boissonade, as “‘infer[ring] the location . . . by the stars’ (like a mariner).” Similarly, P. J. Finglass (2018, p. 414) reads the phrase as a metaphor from navigation “to express his [Oedipus’] alienation from what he believes to be his native city, using the stars to shun his homeland.” The most emphatic and hyperbolic of all such renderings must be that offered by Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff (2000, l. 795), whose terrified Oedipus “[t]ried to flee a universe away from Corinth.”

But the literalist side has its champions, too. Early in the history of the play’s translation, Thomas Francklin rendered the Greek as “by the stars / Guiding my hapless journey” (1758, p. 233), as similarly did Thomas Maurice (1779) and George Somers Clarke (1790). John Brasse’s early nineteenth-century version portrays Oedipus “Ever after measuring out [or ascertaining the position of] the Corinthian land by [observing] the stars” (1829, 54; original brackets), and in his extensive commentary Thomas Mitchell, noting that the several lines have long “furnished difficulty,” tacitly Side with those commentators who acknowledge the possibility that Oedipus used the stars to navigate his way. Mitchell ventures so far as to wonder if the exile “necessarily travel[ed] by night,” with the attendant enigma of his having encountered the Phocal crossroads and King Laius and company in the dark (1840, 113). David Grene’s widely read translation (1942) has Oedipus seeking to “measure from the stars / the whereabouts of Corinth,” as similarly does Bernard Knox’s version (1959, 45), while Stephen Berg and Diskin Clay interpret the

13 Nor does Theobald’s citation of a similar phrase by Virgil’s helmsman-navigator, Palinurus (A. 5.25), clarify matters literal and figurative, since Virgil’s usage is if anything more plainly literal.
14 See also the figuratively oriented translations by Banks 1956, Berkowitz and Brunner 1970, and Bagg 2004.
15 On the crossroads or rather “triple roads” in OT and their location, geography, culture, and symbolism, see Rustin 1996, 112: “The crossroads is the portal through which, among other things, prophecy becomes history, heir becomes king, son becomes father, father becomes corpse, and Sophocles becomes a classic.”
text as “measuring my progress by the stars” (1978, l. 1036). Lloyd-Jones’ Loeb edition, although accepting Nauck’s correction, still has the Prince (as did Theobald) “making out its [Corinth’s] position by the stars” (1994, p. 407), as, most recently, does Oliver Taplin (2015), whose Oedipus “used the stars / to steer well clear of that direction.”16

This history pinpoints the dilemma’s age-old horns but, excepting these literalist translations’ implicit claims, to judge by their literal terms, the critical tradition has yet to offer an explicit argument for any kind of technical reading of the hero’s recollected use of the night sky: to gauge whether Oedipus could in fact be credibly recalling his celestial measuring of his travels’ direction and/or of Corinth’s position, and many centuries before the invention of the astrolabe, not to mention of magnetic compasses. In short, would an overland traveler—some real-life referent for Sophocles’ savvy young prince—have used naked-eye star navigation both to guide his course and, in Grene’s wording, to “measure . . . the whereabouts of Corinth”? Granted, Libanius’ proverbial late usage of ἄστροις . . . τεκμαιρόμενος itself implies that sailors utilized the night sky to guide them, but what can we determine with any certainty about such maritime as well as terrestrial capabilities, given especially the unwelcome fact that, as James Beresford opines, “studies of ancient navigation suffer from a paucity of evidence”?17

For its part, rudimentary celestial navigation, and the identification of stars and constellations it requires to gauge direction, was at least as old as Homer’s Odyssey. There the goddess Calypso advises Odysseus to sail by night with the Great Bear, known also as the Wain, always on his left (5.270), and he notably also locates the Pleiades, Hyades, and Orion.18 More significantly, in the sixth century, Thales of Miletus had, if we trust Callimachus’ account, identified Arcas, the Little Bear (lamb. 1.55, τῆς ἁμάξης . . . τοὺς ἀστερίσκους, viz. “the little stars of the Wain”), as the constellation nearest the North Pole.19 Thales had likely acquired this knowledge from the seafaring Phoenicians, renowned for

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16 Similarly, Wertenbaker 1992, 24 has Oedipus “fi[x]” his “route by the stars,” Mulroy 2011 depicts him “us[ing] the stars to measure distances,” and in Ahrensford and Pangle 2014 Oedipus “measur[ed] the / Location of the land of Corinth by the stars.”

17 Beresford 2013, 173: “The literate elites of the ancient world generally paid scant attention to the arts being practiced by their contemporaries in the seafaring community.” As one noteworthy, arguable exception, Xen. Mem. 4.7.4 has Socrates bid his students to learn from ship pilots (as well as from nighttime hunters) those practical skills of astronomy that aid in time-keeping and the calendar, to “distinguish sure signs,” τεκμηρίοις χρῆσθαι, of the hours, months, and years—albeit not signs or marks of direction and navigation.

18 Like Arcas, the Great Bear or Wain is a northern circumpolar constellation, never dipping below the horizon into the sea, although in antiquity not as accurate a marker of true north. Cf. Graham 2013, 57; Theodossiou et al. 2011, 25-26; Rogers 1998, 79-82; and Dicks 1970, 30-33. Mark 2005, 143 notes that “Telemachus’ voyages to and from Pylos are also night trips” navigated via the stars.

19 Owing to celestial precession, our sky’s North Star, Polaris, at the Dipper handle’s end, would not have been the ancient Greeks’ nearest visible pole star. In the fifth century that would have been the brightest star in the Little Dipper’s (Ursa Minor’s) bowl (Graham 2013, 57; cf. Couprie 2011, 22-23). As for viewing that ancient night sky, modern computer star maps can adjust accurately for precession to form accurate mapping of different times of the year and over millennia.
their advanced skill in navigation, although, like Odysseus, most maritime Greeks of the time probably still relied, as Aratus states, on the Great Bear as a less true but conveniently brighter northern constellation. As a nobleman of Corinth, a twin-seaport society and indeed a city state recognized in the drama’s wartime era for its prowess in naval warfare (Thuc. 1.13.2-5), Oedipus might reasonably be expected by Sophocles’ audience to be familiar not just with sailor parlance, including its proverbs, but also with such rudiments of sailing. Maritime techne would include lore of winds and currents as well as the uses of the sun, moon, and stars for navigation: ναυβάταισιν ἄστρον ὥς, “as a star to sailors” (Eur. Phoen. 835). An informed Greek would understand as well the significant seasonal positions for such stars as Sirius and Arcturus and for the Pleiades, Hyades, and Orion, whose motions informed the agricultural calendar of plowing, sowing, and harvesting, and which, along with other stars, provided important indices for sea navigation.

Such constellations were dazzlingly visible to any Greek traveler or seaman on a clear evening, including in the wartime year of 429, when Oedipus Tyrannus probably debuted, close to the post-winter opening of the oracle at Delphi. Seated in the theatre at the Festival of Dionysus, some at least of the spectators (and not just attending sailors or farmers) would note the protagonist’s reference to the stars and envision him or perhaps themselves walking in the twilight or dark. Along the zigzagging roads, the journeyer would, like Odysseus far at sea, look up at the bright constellation of Calisto the Great Bear to determine north or possibly (but again, less likely) trace a line to the truer but fainter stars in Arcas (Ursa Minor). Meanwhile, he would find Orion to the southwest, and still farther south the Dog Star (Sirius) would glimmer above the hills. Completing this compass-like cross, on the eastern horizon would shine the Hydra and Nemean Lion. Thus determining north, and marking as well these or other constellations’ seasonal positions to the west, south, and east, the roaming Oedipus could steer clear of Corinth’s whereabouts to the west while at the same time more securely tracking his changing course, ἄστροις τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκμεταρθείσας.

By this scenario, then, Oedipus could “measure” his direction, compass-like, “by the stars.” But in all probability what such a traveler could not do was measure either his location or Corinth’s position and distance. For the Greeks of the era, and navigators well into modern times, had no way to accurately determine longitude—not by the stars or other means—and mariners could only estimate their position by the approximations of dead reckoning. As for ascertaining latitude, although a simple-enough technique appears to have been known at least to some fifth-century navigators, it was years in the future for most.

20 See Beresford 2013, 205-7.
22 Evans 1998, 33, 100; cf. Beresford 2013, 208. One could measure latitude via the altitude of the pole star above the horizon, with as basic an instrument as a ship’s mast or one’s fanned-out hand.
Consequently, a journeyer probably could not accurately measure his or a given landmark’s position; not even in terms of basic latitude. Nor, for that matter, would that *techne* have been of much use to Oedipus anyway given Corinth’s and Thebes’ similar lines of latitude, unless his wanderings took him far to the north or south. Given that geographical fact, could not the exile then simply have guided himself *away* from the west by tracking the rising and setting sun, without recourse to measuring the stars above at all? Perhaps. But then of course the sun does not always set directly in the west, and locating the stars at twilight or in the dark would free a journeyer from restricting travel to clear days, relatively open ground (with a horizon line), and daylight hours, amid twisting and forking terrain, much as was the case for those Greek sailors far out at sea.

A traveler would look to the sun and stars, but would not a north star or northern constellation then be enough to ascertain his simple direction? Yet by creating a celestial compass of sorts, Oedipus could better situate himself *within* those stellar points and therefore better gauge his relative direction, including Corinth’s own alignment. Knowing how to find the fixed mark for north and build around it a kind of map—*ἄστροις τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκμετρούμενος*—would enable a traveler more assuredly to “measure” rather than merely guess at his direction away from one place and towards another, ἐνθα μήποτε ὀψοίμην κακῶν / χρησμῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τελούμενα. In this respect, travel on a clear night arguably afforded *more* direction and guidance than by day. And Oedipus therefore can quite literally mean what he recollects about using the stars: that he measured both his direction and Corinth’s relative directional whereabouts (but neither its distance nor precise location) via the night sky’s indices. Sophocles’ words for this Corinthian, renowned as much for his riddle-solving knowhow as Corinth was for seafaring, thus can be interpreted as many translations rightly have since Theobald’s own: in the technical sense understood especially by ancient navigators, who measured their seafaring course’s direction “by the stars.” It was, moreover, an activity not without its scientific and broader cultural significance in the Periclean Age.

For in doing so, such journeyers were participating in a quest to better understand the cosmos, including not just the movements but also the material natures of its stars, sun, and moon—a scientific pursuit then nearing its early zenith. Most notably, Anaximander sought to theorize the natural workings of celestial bodies, introduced the gnomon, and developed a map of the earth. Anaxagoras in turn speculated about the solidity of celestial objects, partially confirmed around the year 466 by a meteorite recovered near Aegospotami. Much if not all of this new science and its empirical measures would have been talked about in the free-thinking intellectual circles in Athens, whose numbers included Aeschylus, although the city’s eventual and very potent conservative backlash

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23 Bassu 2013, 358: “Le développement de l’usage du gnomon par Anaximandre montre . . . la mesure est au centre de la recherche philosophique” (“Anaximander’s development of the use of the gnomon shows . . . measure to be at the center of philosophical enquiry”).

obliged Anaxagoras, charged with blasphemy, to flee in or around the year 450, aided by
Pericles, and of course led fifty years later to the capital punishment of Socrates for impiety.
Indeed, some leading men of Athens had come to see “what an enormous revolution this
new world picture really meant. When all natural phenomena can be explained by natural
causes, there is no longer a place for the gods.”25

In this light, Thales’ dictum Μέτρωι χρῶ, “observe the measure,” was a guiding
principle and modus operandi for emergent Greek scientific and philosophical thought,26
including for Pythagoreans like Philolaus, who held that all that could be known had
number (DK 4).27 Sophocles’ Oedipus can likewise be affiliated with the growing and not
uncontroversial company of capable measurers, as more clearly still was the clever hero
Palamedes in the dramatist’s timely Nauplius: ἐφηῦρε δ’ ἀστρων μέτρα καὶ περιστροφάς
. . . σημαντήρια νεόν τε ποιμαντῆρσιν ἐνθαλασσίοις, “He discovered the measures and
revolutions of the stars . . . sure signs for those at sea” (Lloyd-Jones 2003, Fragment 432). As
Thomas E. Jenkins relates, this mythical measurer-astronomer configures “the semanteria
of the stars into a system that now he (and others) can understand: constellations. Moreover,
this celestial grouping allows him in turn to impart additional, layered, meaning to the
stars; they are now guides—indices—both to weather and to distance.”28 Like Sophocles’
ἐκμετρητής Palamedes, and like the skillful real-life Corinthian, Athenian, and other sailors
of the age, by pinpointing certain stars and gauging their “measures” (μέτρα) and rotations
(περιστροφάς), journeyers could determine their direction within a kind of Vitruvian Man’s
encompassing cosmos.

Still, one might nonetheless ask what difference it really makes, beyond quibbling,
were readers to stick to the Scholiast’s rhetorical reading of Oedipus’ starry phrase. Yet I
would argue there really is a difference and a significant one: between the characterization
of a young Oedipus who, having journeyed the distance to Delphi for oracular answers,
flees in blank ignorance or, contrarily, who uses his practical and rational skill to direct
his travels away from foretold homeland “evils” and ultimately, and ironically, to Thebes.
There his reasoning abilities will resolve the Sphinx’s numerical riddle of a four, two-,
and three-legged (footed) creature into an encompassing measure of Man,29 slaying the
chimera and saving himself and the city. By a literal reading, rather than relegating the
stars to figures of mystery, divine will, or mere ignorance, they signify (again, with no
little irony) the rational means for Sophocles’ human to govern his life, in keeping with the

26 Bassu 2013, 101: “Le métron devient une valeur à observer et à respecter en toute occasion”
(“The métron becomes a value to observe and respect on every occasion”).
27 Cf. Aristotle, Metaph. 986a3 and a21, 987b28.
28 Jenkins 2005, 40; original emphasis.
29 Granted, this temporal-developmental notion of “Man” is, like all concepts, in some sense
figurative (not least in a drama). But it is also justifiably a deductive product—and measurement.
Then again, Ferguson 1972, 182 wryly observes that, with but an altered accent, Oedipus’ name
can be read as “Oi-dipous ‘Ah! two-foot,’ the answer to the Sphinx’s riddle.”
intellectual “School of Hellas” then at Athens. Indeed, for Daniel Graham, philosophers like Anaxagoras, convinced “that the world was a series of natural events occurring in the natural world governed by natural laws” rather than by the pleasure and “displeasure of the gods” to be deciphered as divine signs (cf. τεκμαίρω), sought “to explain heavenly events on the basis of natural processes.”

For these new thinkers, the stars above provided important (quasi-) fixed points to navigate an increasingly knowable, mappable, predictable, and measurable world.

In Sophocles’ double-edged tragedy of discerning where and who one is, Oedipus’ very name (Οἰδίπους, chiefly “swollen foot”) of course plays upon the verb οἶδα, “I know,” and, as the drama emphasizes, upon old versus new ways of knowing and judgment, most prominently prophecy and fate versus human deduction and forms of techne. Measurement becomes a further metric for Oedipus’ humanist if at times wavering resistance to the forces of the divine, including to its seer Teiresias, over whom the King lords his famous victory over the Sphinx as having been achieved solely by practical knowledge alone, γνώμῃ κυρήσας (γνώμη, “means of knowing”), not mantic augury, ἀπ᾽οἰωνῶν μαθὼν (“untaught by birds,” OT 398)—and, by extension, all such signs from the gods.

One sees how the phrase ἄστροις . . . ἐκμετρούμενος, with its feet in mathematical measure (μέτρον) and its head in the night sky (τοῖς ἄστροις, Stob. 1.21.9), might especially serve, more than its twin, τεκμαρούμενος, as a modernist shibboleth: a telltale sign for human knowledge and its knowing-where in the wide cosmos, echoing the sophist Protagoras’ ambiguous (and, Plato deemed, relativistic) proclamation, πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, “Man is the measure of all things” (DK 80b1). It is along these lines that J. C. Kamerbeek so adamantly argues against Nauck’s emendation of ἄστροις τεκμαρούμενος, a phrase for incertitude tantamount to “‘at a venture’ . . . [, when] it is precisely in order to avoid ‘chance’ that he [Oedipus] does not return to Corinth.” In fact, the meaning of the phrase ἄστροις . . . ἐκμετρούμενος, and arguably our acceptance or rejection of Nauck, depends a great deal upon how we perceive the role of reason itself within Sophocles’ tragedy, including the place and legitimacy of technical and scientific knowledge vis-à-vis traditional, pious belief. For the Greeks, the μέτρον, as both a unit of measure and the capacity for measurement, underlay the very notion of an intelligible empirical world; the terminology of μέτρον and ἐκμετρέω pointing toward and indeed eventually undergirding the mathematics of Euclid and his successors. By contrast, the term τέκμαρ augurs toward μέτρον’s opposed figuration as the indeterminate and ἔκμετρον, “beyond measure,” and so back toward prophecy and its search for signs of divine favor and disfavor in oracles and omens (as at Hom. Od. 11.112). In this context, the conjectural

30 Graham 2013, 228.
31 Oedipus indeed sarcastically plays upon his name, “know-nothing Oedipus,” to Teiresias, OT 397. Note also the Corinthian Messenger’s odd Oedipus puns on “know-where,” μάθομι ὅποιον . . . κάτισθ’ ὁποιος, OT 924-26.
32 Kamerbeek 1967, 163-64.
τεκμαιρόμενος, the very sign of conjecture, leads as in Libanius toward a wider, figurative sense of calculation as guesswork and intuition, with the stars both broadened and reduced to signs without measure.\textsuperscript{33}

Nauck’s emendation may thereby be read as itself an interpretive gloss, one favoring the figurative (proverbial) over the literal and arguably misjudging the place of measurement, as of its golden ratio and mean, in Sophocles’ drama and world. Μέτρωι χρῶ. Yet to Thales’ axiom, Creon’s closing admonition, πάντα μὴ βούλου κρατεῖν, “Do not seek to be master over all things” (\textit{OT} 1522), obtrudes as a dialogical rejoinder. For technical knowledge, even about the stars above, may steer us, then as now, toward a wrong or fateful path and end. Moreover, as Simon Goldhill observes, “Where so much of the fifth-century enlightenment . . . [was] concerned with producing answers, Sophocles reminds his audience again and again that in the human world secure solutions are harder to find,”\textsuperscript{34} whether measured in the stars or at one’s feet. In fact, the very ποὺς in Οἰδίπους can signify a linear unit of measurement\textsuperscript{35} and hence, too, our human capacity (and anatomy) to measure the world. Sophocles’ ἐκμετρητής, know-foot protagonist aptly and pointedly measures the stars of the night sky to direct his terrestrial, pedestrian course. But he does so within a tragedy that also highlights the antipodal limits of human reason and control (\textit{OT} 397, ὁ μηδὲν εἰδὼς Οἰδίπους, “I, the know-nothing Know-foot/Swell-foot”; cf. 1334-35, 1484-85), setting those capabilities against older ways of knowing and the uncertain forces of fate, oracles, and the divine.

Indeed, a darkling, unsettling sense of indeterminacy,\textsuperscript{36} ἐκμετρος, looms over Oedipus’ knowhow and its reasoned calculations, including his savvy measuring by the stars and its tragic ends. In this sense, the tradition’s alternative, alternating terms ἐκμετρούμενος and τεκμαρούμενος might be said to inform and even to permeate each other, outside and inside Sophocles’ text. The conspicuous phrase ἀστροῖς . . . ἐκμετρούμενος, situated within the rhetorical confines of τεκμαίρεσθαι and the longstanding conjectures of scholarship and translation, serves all the more as an important piece in Sophocles’ uncanny puzzle of the determinate and indeterminate, the measurable and immeasurable, the known and unknown. It is a puzzle ever in need of piecing together.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{33} Cf. τεκμαίρομαι as a sign for uncertainty, \textit{AP} 12.177 (Strat.); and τέκμαρσις even the interpreting of dreams, \textit{D.C.} 47.46. Aristotle will utilize the related term τεκμήριον precisely to signify \textit{demonstrative proof} in logic versus σημεῖον as uncertain sign or argument (and also arguably vs. empirical measure, μέτρον), as in \textit{APr.} 70b2, \textit{Rh.} 1357b4, 1402b19 (\textit{LSJ}).
\textsuperscript{34} Goldhill 2014, 37; cf. Soph. \textit{OT} 130. Segal 2001, 10 similarly contends that Sophocles’ \textit{Oedipus Tyrannus} shares with Parmenides and other of the era’s philosophers the typifying concern “with finding truth in a world of appearances.” See also Fosso 2012, esp. 45-50.
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. Plato \textit{Men.} 82C ff.
\textsuperscript{36} Cf. Goldhill 2014, 36; and Sheehan 2012, 50.
\textsuperscript{37} My thanks to Mark Anspach, David Galaty, and Stephen Tufte for their stellar guidance, and to this essay’s numerous other, very generous readers.
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Propertius 3.3’s Summary of Ennius’s *Annales*

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Abstract: In 3.3, Propertius summarizes the third triad of Ennius’s *Annales* in such a way as to show that unconventional military tactics, such as deceptive strategies, result in success. Propertius uses this summary to strengthen the elegy–epic antithesis prevalent in the first five poems of Book 3, aligning unconventional military tactics with “a new path” (*nova . . . semita*) (3.3.26) toward poetic success in elegy, which Propertius also portrays with deceptive themes.

The first twelve lines of Propertius 3.3 have generated scholarly debate, specifically over line 8’s *Aemilia . . . rate*.

Visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,  
Bellerophontei qua fluit umor equi,  
reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum,  
tantum operis, nervis hiscere posse meis;  
parvaque iam magnis admoram fontibus ora  
unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit,  
et cecinit Curios fratres et Horatia pila,  
regiaque Aemilia vecta tropaea rate,  
victoriesque moras Fabii pugnamque sinistram  
Cannensem et versos ad pia vota deos,  
Hannibalemque Lares Romana sede fugantis,  
anseris et tutum voce fuisse Iovem.¹

Reclining in the soft shade of Mount Helicon,  
where water of the Bellerophontian horse flows,  
Alba, I seemed able to start to sing of your kings and the deeds of your kings,  
such an effort, with my strength;  
and I had already begun to move my lips to the great fountain,

¹ Skutsch (1985, p. 3) suggests that Ennius’s elegiac works come before his epic. If this is so, Propertius is attempting to follow the same poetic progression as Ennius.
where thirsty father Ennius drank,
and he sang of the Curiatii brothers and Horatian spears,
and royal trophies brought home on Aemilius’s ship,
and the victorious delays of Fabius and the ill-fated battle at
Cannae and gods turned toward devoted prayers,
and the Lares chasing Hannibal from Rome,
and Jupiter saved by the cackling of geese.

The general tenor of these lines is that Propertius wishes to drink from a stream
on Hippocrene, signaling his desire to compose epic. This move is further depicted as
Propertius taking the traditional path through the Muses’ grove (Castalia . . . arbore)
(3.3.13), indicating his intent to follow pater Ennius, so called for introducing heroici versus
to Latin (Porph. ad Hor. Epist. 1.19.7). Apollo stops Propertius, returing him to elegy and
entrusting him to Calliope (3.3.13–52). There are several historical events mentioned in
lines 7–12, but line 8’s reference to Aemilia has been problematic. Scholars have identified
this Aemilius in various ways, but none fits well. I identify him as L. Aemilius Paullus,
who in 219 BCE ambushed Demetrius of Pharos yet was killed at Cannae three years later.²
Propertius uses L. Aemilius Paullus to emphasize his own success in elegy rather than more
traditional route of epic.

There are three lines of thought on identifying line 8’s Aemilia. I will summarize the
first two and lay out my objections to them, before bringing forth new evidence in favor of
the third. The first line of thought is that Aemilia refers to L. Aemilius Regillus’s 190 BCE
naval victory over Antiochus III’s fleet in the Roman–Seleucid War and his subsequent
triumph.³ Both Lawrence Richardson, Jr. and James L. Butrica rightly dismiss this position
on the grounds that this victory does not compare in scale or importance with the other
battles mentioned in 3.3.7–12. Moreover, as Livy notes, the triumph displayed far less
money than one would expect for a victory over a king (pecunia nequaquam [tanta] pro
specie regii triumphi) (37.58.4). Additionally, it in no way impacted Rome’s Mediterranean
hegemony. Nor is there any evidence that Ennius mentioned it in the Annales.

The second view argues that 3.3.8 refers to Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus’s
triumph of 167 BCE.⁵ This argument rests on Livy’s describing the spoils being carried
up the Tiber on a conquered king’s ship (regia nave) (Liv. 45.35.3). Unlike Regillus’s

² This L. Aemilius Paullus will be referred to as Paullus throughout.
³ Though Barber and Butler (1933, p. 267) and Martina (1979, pp. 45–61) put forth the best arguments for this
position, they do not sufficiently consider L. Aemilus Paullus as an alternative. The following scholars also
argue that Aemilia represents L. Aemilius Regillus: Rothstein (1966, p. 21); Heyworth (1986, p. 201); Syndikus
(2010, p. 225 & n. 64); Flach (2011, p. 129); and Goldberg and Manuwald (2018, p. 43).
⁴ Richardson (1977, p. 326); Butrica (1983, p. 465). And as noted below, this battle would be in a different triad
of the Annales than the other related events; see n. 21 and accompanying text below.
⁶ See, e.g., Rothstein (1966, p. 21) and Maltby (1980, p. 83).
triumph, which was small compared to other ones of the same year, this one displayed immense wealth (45.35.6). This argument, however suffers from several faults. First, Macedonicus’s triumph in 167 happened two years after Ennius’s death. To get around this argument some scholars have rendered line 7’s cecinit as cecini, having Propertius continue Ennius’s Annales. Putting aside the fact that cecini is not attested in any manuscript, Propertius did not actually drink from the stream—signaling that he never tried epic—but as Eric Arthur Barber and Harold Edgeworth Butler note, “he merely stooped to do so and was checked in the act by Apollo.” Furthermore, the inclusion of an event in 167 BCE skews the chronological order of events, possibly necessitating a transposition of lines 8 and 12. But even with a transposition, the other three events of recent memory—Fabius’s strategy, Cannae, and Hannibal quitting Italy—occur over three decades before Macedonicus’s triumph.

I agree with the third stream of thought brought out by Wilhelm A. B. Hertzberg and John P. Postgate, but a stronger argument could be made based on the theme of unconventional battles. Throughout this poem, Propertius expands upon the elegy–epic antithesis by associating elegy with military deception and seduction and epic with traditional, large-scale military battles. As has been noted by other scholars, the first five poems of Book 3 form a cohesive unit. These poems explore elegy and epic’s interaction with warfare. With regard to just poem 3.3, Stephen J. Heyworth and James H.W. Morwood persuasively show that this poem proceeds through antithetical pairs, such as the mountain and spring in the first two lines. In his oeuvre, Propertius associates his relationship with Cynthia, and by connection elegy in general, with deceptive seduction, such as nighttime rendezvous—what he elsewhere calls deceptions (furta) (4.7.15)—and cuckolding husbands. Love as a type of warfare is a well-established, yet flexible, trope

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For this reason, Heyworth now seemingly supports reading Aemilia as Macedonicus, see Heyworth and Morwood (2011, p. 117); cf. n. 4 above. He makes no mention of Aemilia being L. Aemilius Paullus.


Barber and Butler (1933, p. 267) and Scioli (2011/2012, pp. 146–7).

Barber and Butler (1933, pp. 267–8).

Both Hertzberg (1845, pp. 257–8) and Postgate (1950, p. 153) summarily rest their argument for L. Aemilius Paullus on the fact that Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus’s triumph occurred after Ennius’s death and so the line must refer to 219 BCE; neither addresses L. Aemilius Regillus’s 190 BCE victory. Scioli (2011/2012, pp. 145–6) only notes that Propertius recounts Ennius’s Annales, thus excluding the possibility that Macedonicus is line 8’s Aemilia. But since Aemilia’s identity is not otherwise vital to her argument, she does not delve into the issue further.


Both Hubbard (1974, pp. 74–81) and Frost (1991, p. 254) argue that poems 3.4 and 3.5 present a contrast between war and peace. A more exact contrast would observe that even the life of peace—when one is away from war—still involves conflict: “hard battles with one’s mistress” (cum domina proelia dura mea) (3.5.2); see Heyworth and Morwood (2011, p. 134).

Heyworth and Morwood (2011, p. 115).

For deception in 4.7 in general, see Hubbard (1974, p. 151) and Maltby (1980, p. 99). For Propertius’s use of elegy as a genre to encourage others to deceive husbands, see, e.g., Heyworth and Morwood (2011, p. 125).
in elegy.\textsuperscript{16} By using themes prevalent in these other poems, Propertius is overlapping them in 3.3 when he applies the deception prominent in his love affairs to war. More specifically, he likens elegy with unconventional warfare, such as surprise attacks or delaying actions, and epic with traditional, large-scale battles.\textsuperscript{17} This dichotomy becomes clear in lines 7–12.

All the conflicts in lines 7–12 are unusual, and a certain few emphasize deception. Line 7’s \textit{Curios fratres et Horatia pil}a refers to the three-on-three battle of the Curiatii and the Horatii.\textsuperscript{18} But even more unusual is the Gauls’ near-sack of Rome referred to in line 12. On this point, Ennius observes “at the time for going to sleep, the Gauls furtively climb the citadel’s highest walls” (\textit{qua Galli furtim noctu summa arcis adorti / moenia concubia}) (\textit{Ann.} fr. 227).\textsuperscript{19} But more than this, lines 9–11 concern Rome’s battles with Hannibal at the end of the third century: Fabius’s delaying tactics (\textit{mora}) (line 9), the defeat at Cannae (line 10), and Hannibal’s eventual withdrawal from Italy (line 11). Ennius’s \textit{Annales} were thematically grouped in triads, and these three events all occur in the third triad, Books 7–9.\textsuperscript{20} In this way, lines 7 and 12, semi-mythical foundation stories, bracket a summary of Ennius’s third triad by focusing on unconventional battles that secured the growth of Rome’s power.

Reading \textit{Aemilia} as L. Aemilius Paullus completes this picture. In Book 7 of the \textit{Annales}, the first book of the third triad, Ennius mentions L. Aemilius Paullus’s defeat of Demetrius of Pharos (\textit{Ann.} fr. 231).\textsuperscript{21} Demetrius, an Illyrian king and former dependent of Rome, had turned to pillaging Roman shipping and allies.\textsuperscript{22} Rome dispatched L. Aemilius Paullus to subdue him, culminating in a battle on Pharos, an island in the Adriatic (App. \textit{Ill.} 8; Polyb. 3.16,18–19). Polybius recounts that Paullus followed an unconventional strategy. After using his fleet to land the majority of his forces in woods on Demetrius’s rear at night, Paullus led a smaller force at daybreak to a nearby harbor, enticing Demetrius to lead out his forces to attack (Polyb. 3.18–19). After Demetrius did, Paullus surrounded him, compelling a surrender. In the \textit{Annales}, Ennius emphasizes L. Aemilius Paullus’s ruse: “from there they were feigning to proceed cautiously to Pharos” (\textit{inde Parum <caute

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\textsuperscript{16} As Gale (1997, p. 80) notes, Propertius “displays some ingenuity in his exploration of various different ways in which the comparison between love and war can be applied.” See also Drinkwater (2013, pp. 194–202).

\textsuperscript{17} See, generally, Gale (1997, 78–85), who notes that elegy is opposed to conventional pursuits and ideas and that “the conventional evaluation [was] of epic as the highest genre” and thus the one most likely to garner poetic fame. This dichotomy, between large battles and smaller, unconventional ones, is also evident in Apollo’s rebuke of Propertius (3.3.15–24). Apollo calls Propertius’s poems a little book (\textit{libellus}), his wheels are little (\textit{parvis}), and his boat is a small skiff (\textit{cumba}), whereas epic subject matter is a very great commotion (\textit{maxima turba}). Calliope (3.3.39–46) likewise aligns epic with conventional warfare recalling only large-scale battles; see Heyworth and Morwood (2011, pp. 123–4).

\textsuperscript{18} See Skutsch (1985, pp. 275–6). A fragment of this battle remains at \textit{Ann.} fr. 123.

\textsuperscript{19} Skutsch (1968, p. 140) notes Ennius’s probable description of this battle.

\textsuperscript{20} See Skutsch (1985, pp. 5, 552) for the triadic nature of the \textit{Annales}. Regillus’s victory would be in Book 11 and therefore outside of this triad; see Goldberg and Manuwald (2018, pp. 286–7).

\textsuperscript{21} We have no fragments of the other two suggestions for \textit{Aemilia . . . rate}.

\textsuperscript{22} See Wilkes (1992, pp. 162–4) for Demetrius’s royal pedigree to rebut Barber and Butler’s (1933, p. 267) argument that \textit{regia} could not apply to the spoils taken from Demetrius.
procedere se similabant) (Ann. fr. 231). After the victory, Paullus celebrated a triumph at Rome (Polyb. 3.19.12). Nor was this an unimportant battle, as Barber and Butler as well as Butrica suggest. It solidified Roman control over the Adriatic and made Illyria a buffer that prevented Philip V of Macedon from capitalizing on Rome’s focus on Carthage.

The reference to L. Aemilius Paullus also provides greater coherence to Propertius’s use of the *Annales*’s third triad by emphasizing military success through unconventional strategies. After Hannibal had invaded Italy, Roman leaders were split on whether to force a direct battle with Hannibal in Italy or bleed his forces by delaying actions. Political pressure often forced generals into traditional, large-scale engagements, in which they were routed at Trebbia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae. As a result, Roman leadership reverted to unconventional tactics, most effectively used by Quintus Fabius, draining Hannibal’s army through indirect harassing attacks and “risking no direct confrontation.” Though L. Aemilius Paullus defeated Demetrius of Pharos, he was far better known to the Roman mind for his role in the defeat at Cannae. In the biography of L. Aemilius Paullus’s son, Plutarch only notes L. Aemilius Paullus to the extent that he was known for the disaster at Cannae (Plut. *Aem*. 2.2). Moreover, the Roman historians give far more space to his role at Cannae than his other actions, though, as Plutarch here and historians elsewhere have observed, Paullus exhorted his co-consul against open battle, preferring to continue Quintus Fabius’s strategy (Polyb. 3.108–12; Liv. 22.38, 44). Nevertheless, Paullus was drawn into supporting his co-consul in the large-scale battle. For these reasons, the *Aemilia* of line 8 is inexorably tied to line 10’s *Cannensem*: traditional avenues of attack are unavailable. The connection between these two ideas is further underscored by the fact they are both on dactylic pentameter lines.

In a reverse fashion, line 9 refers to Fabius’s victorious delays (*victrices moras Fabii*). After Fabius’s strategy was abandoned in favor of large-scale battles, leading to the disaster at Cannae, Roman generals resumed his strategy. The roving Roman forces required Hannibal to provide garrisons for his Italian allies, stretching his forces thinner; all the while he was unable to secure fresh manpower from home, a problem Rome did not have. As Ennius said of Fabius, “one man by delaying recovered the state for

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23 Goldberg and Manuwald (2018, p. 230). Skutsch (1985, p. 411) observes that the *p* was an aspirate in Ennius’s time, making *Parum* sound *Pharum*.

24 This was a battle on an island, and Polybius notes that Demetrius kept galleys stationed around it (3.19.8). Aemilius’s ship bearing royal trophies would then be either one of the ships he used in his sea-based attack or a captured galley.


29 See, e.g., Polyb. 3.108–16; Liv. 22.38–50. Paullus’s memorable death speech in Livy illustrates where the memory of Paullus lies.

30 Zimmermann (2011, pp. 288–9).
us / for he did not value his reputation above our safety” (*unus homo nobis cunctando restituit. / noenum rumores ponebat ante salutem*) (*Ann.* fr. 363–4). For Ennius, Fabius’s unconventional tactics and his willingness to deviate from the better-regarded approach forced Hannibal to abandon Italy. In this manner, we see that the two dactylic hexameter lines agree as well. As with lines 8 and 10, Fabius’s delays (line 9) resulted in Hannibal’s flight from Italy (line 11).

Lines 8–11 are a metaphor for taking an unusual path through the Muses’ meadow to poetic success. Though Ennius was the first to use the elegiac couplet in Latin (Isid. *Orig.* 1.39.14–15), he was far better known in antiquity, as he is now, for introducing epic verse to Latin and for his epic poem, the *Annales*. Ennius’s renown for the *Annales* is tied to epic’s lofty status in the poetic cannon, which provided the conventional path for poetic renown, a point Propertius makes elsewhere (see, e.g., Prop. 1.7). This explains Propertius’s urge to follow Ennius as a poet of both elegy and epic, until checked by Apollo, who tells Propertius that he is moving off his destined course (*praescriptos . . . gyros*) (3.3.21) by trying epic. Propertius must follow a new path (*nova . . . semita*) (3.3.26) across the Muses’ meadow. Trying to follow Ennius into epic contrary to Apollo’s dictate would be like L. Aemilius Pallus’s return to conventional tactics at Cannae.

The connection between unconventional battles and success is further underscored in Calliope’s speech at the poem’s end. She remarks that it is not for Propertius to write about how Rome destroyed Germanic forces (*Teutonicas Roma refringat opes*) (3.3.44). Even this battle, the battle of Aquae Sextiae, echoes L. Aemilius Paullus’s victory over Demetrius of Pharos: Marius deposited forces behind the numerically-superior enemy, baited them to attack, then closed the trap (Plut. *Mar.* 18.3–21.2). We can see the connection between unconventional battles and elegy even more strongly when Calliope instructs Propertius what he will write about:

quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes 47
nocturnaeque canes ebria signa morae,
ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,
qui volet austeros arte ferire viros. 50

You will sing of wreathed lovers at another’s doorway 47
and the drunken signs of nighttime tarrying,
so that, through you, he who wishes to trick austere husbands with skill
will know how to charm forth their inaccessible girls. 50

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31 Bessone (2013); Elliot (2013, pp. 163, 193); and Goldberg and Manuwald (2018, p. xxvi).
32 See also, generally, Frost (1991, pp. 251–9).
33 See Maltby (1980, p. 88) for connecting Propertius’s reference to the Battle of Aquae Sextiae. Not enough detail survives of the other battle Calliope mentions to understand the commander’s strategy; see Maltby (1980, p. 88), Caes. *BGall.* 1.52–53, and Dio 51.21.
Calliope associates Propertius’s elegiac path with deceitful methods, such as teaching lovers how to trick (ferire) husbands. Additionally, her instructions echo Propertius’s summary of the Annales through the use of mora. Just as Fabius’s morae were causes for victory, so here the lover’s morae too are victorious conquests of inaccessible girls.

In 3.3, Propertius combines military and amatory themes—such as morae above—prominent in the first five poems of Book 3. Understanding Aemilia as L. Aemilius Paullus is important to this undertaking since it allows the reader to see that Propertius recounts, in lines 8–11, the third triad of the Annales to emphasize that success often comes in unconventional ways. This summary is bracketed within other legendary battles that used unconventional tactics (lines 7, 12). By mentioning these battles, Propertius is connecting unconventional strategies to success in poetry and traditional ones to failure, a connection he makes explicit in the poem’s last lines. And in this connection, he is foreshadowing his own success in elegy—a path far less conventional than epic.

34 See Heyworth and Morwood (2011, p. 125) for such a meaning of ferire; see also Barber and Butler (1933, p. 269).

35 I would like to thank Shawn D. O’Bryhim and Claire E. Catenaccio for their helpful feedback during this work’s development, as well as NECJ’s editors.
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A Most Amazing Conversation:  
The Social Contexts of Wonder-Telling and the Development of Paradoxography

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Abstract: Wonder-telling thrived as an abiding element in Greek and Roman convivial gatherings. The burgeoning book culture of the Hellenistic period witnessed the emergence of paradoxographical works—compilations of reports on “marvels”—that offered another medium through which to experience wonder. This study surveys evidence that situates wonder-telling in the social sphere and suggests that the new genre adapted one of the joys of sympotic discourse in order to delight the solitary reader.

In his *Attic Nights*, Aulus Gellius describes his first encounter with compilations now commonly referred to by scholars as paradoxographies. At a port in Brundisium, he recalls, he happened across a bookseller peddling bundles of filthy texts in Greek which he discovered were “filled with marvelous tales, things unheard of, incredible” (*miraculorum fabularumque pleni, res inauditae, incredulae*), and whose authors were “ancient and of no mean authority” (*scriptores veteres non parvae auctoritatis*, 9.4.3).1 After purchasing the texts for a pittance, Gellius spent the next two nights perusing them and making notes of reports which drew his attention. Despite his initial interest, he claims that he was ultimately “seized by disgust for such pointless writings, which contribute nothing to the enrichment or profit of life” (*tenuit nos non idoneae scripturae taedium nihil ad ornandum iuvandumque usum vitae pertinentis*, 9.4.12). Gellius’s description of the intellectual indigestion he suffered has been often repeated by nineteenth and twentieth century scholars to support negative judgments of the value of paradoxographies both in terms of their form and content. A quintessentially bookish genre developed during the Hellenistic period, paradoxography is a compilatory form, connected to both the natural sciences

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1 Text and all translations of Gellius are provided by Rolfe (1927). All other translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Only two of the six authors Gellius goes on to name (Isigonus and Philostephanus, the likely reading for the manuscripts’ Polystephanos) wrote works that fall under the formal definition of paradoxography. The rest (e.g., Ctesias), as Delcroix (1996, p. 415) observed, nonetheless have interests or styles that can be understood under a broader definition of paradoxography. Scholars have noted that Gellius’s list of authorities replicates Pliny’s source acknowledgements in *HN* 7.9-26, though more names are included by the latter, on which see Delcroix (1996, pp. 419-424).
and Ionian historiography, that collects and arranges reports on “wonders” (παραδοξά, θαύματα, ἄπιστα, Latin mirabilia and admiranda) typically drawn from other texts. The strange phenomena they record include such marvels as waters with inexplicable effects, idiosyncratic animal behaviors, stones with curious properties, and the surprising customs of foreign peoples, all simply described in discrete episodes and typically with no attempt at explanation for the phenomenon’s existence. So, for example, these reports from Antigonus’s Ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή (Collection of Wonderful Tales) and the anonymous collection known as the Paradoxographus Florentinus:

[Aristotle says] that whenever a tortoise eats a snake, it eats oregano afterwards. Once, after someone had watched closely and then stripped off the plant’s leaves, the tortoise died since it did not have oregano to eat. (Antig. Mir. c. 34)

Theopompus records that there is a spring among the Chropsi in Thrace; those who bathe in it immediately perish. (Paradox. Flor. c. 15)

Scholars have likened paradoxographies to Ripley’s Believe it or Not and tabloid pabulum, yet these comparisons, especially the latter, overlook the genre’s reliance on the fruits of serious scientific scholarship and historical inquiry. Perhaps a more appropriate modern analogue are online trivia compilations that mix science (with linked citations), anecdotes, and entertainment, e.g., “5 Animals that Casually Play Tricks with the Laws of Physics” or “The Five Most Spectacular Places on Earth (That Murder You).” Some may justifiably consider lists like these a frivolous sensationalism of real scholarship; certainly ancient critics leveled similar charges against mirabilia and, by extension, paradoxographic

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2 On the nature and development of paradoxography see Ziegler (1949); Giannini (1963) and (1964); Gabba (1981); Jacob (1983); Sassi (1993); Hansen (1996); Schepens (1996); and Delcroix (1996). Pajón Leyra (2011) offers the most complete and updated overview and analysis of the genre. On terms for the marvelous, see Schepens (1996, pp. 380-382) and Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 41-50). Giannini (1965) is currently the standard edition of all paradoxographic compilations and fragments. However, new critical editions, translations, and commentaries have recently been published or are forthcoming in Brill’s Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker IV series (= FGrHist, ed. Stefan Schorn), which will be available both online and in print.

3 For the typical topoi of paradoxographies, see the index in Giannini’s 1965 edition.

4 Explanations could even be counterproductive, since rational explanation may destroy wonder, as noted by Schepens (1996, pp. 391-392).

5 The date of Antigonus’s compilation, as well as the identity of the author ( = Antigonus of Carystus?), has been at issue since the 1970s, with Musso (1976; 1977, pp. 15-17) followed by Dorandi (1999, pp. xiv-xvi; xxiv) arguing for a Byzantine rather than Hellenistic date. Significant doubt has been cast upon this theory by the recent discovery of an as-yet unpublished second century CE papyrus that contains part of Antigonus’ compilation. Cf. Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 93-95, 110-113) on the collection and Antigonus’ identity.

6 This report is part of Antigonus’s long section of excerpts from Aristotle’s Historia Animalium.


8 http://www.cracked.com/article_20961_5-animals-that-casually-play-tricks-with-laws-physics.html; http://www.cracked.com/article_19705_the-5-most-spectacular-landscapes-earth-that-murder-you.html. A significant difference between such online collections and paradoxographic compilations is the humorous tone adopted by the former in contrast to the typically bland, descriptive tone of the latter.
Indeed, until the late twentieth century, paradoxography was regularly condemned by modern scholars as a degenerate subgenre of historiography that subsisted by pilfering historical and scientific source texts like those of Aristotle and Theopompus. To some modern devotees of more ‘serious’ specimens of ancient historiography, paradoxographies seemed to speak to a less discerning readership who delighted in such novelties. In the 1980s and 1990s, the studies of Emilio Gabba, Christian Jacob, William Hansen, and the paired articles of Guido Schepens and Kris Delacroix did much to ignite scholarly interest in paradoxographies, and now one can find a number of studies of paradoxa and paradoxography, especially as they relate to more mainstream works like those of the Augustan poets and the ancient novel.

While scholarly appreciation for the place of paradoxographies in Greek and Roman culture and literature has grown, Gellius’s claim against their utility is not entirely out of line, for the sort of knowledge they impart may well seem to convey nothing of substance beyond the simple fact that such wonders are claimed to exist. Can we truly say our lives or minds are improved by knowing that serpent-eating tortoises allegedly require an oregano dessert to survive? Yet despite his condemnation, the two nights Gellius spent devouring the compilations nonetheless bear silent testimony to their attraction as collections designed to fascinate. Indeed, just after his denunciation, Gellius confesses that “nevertheless, the fancy took me to add to this collection of marvels” (libitum tamen est in loco hoc miraculorum notare id etiam 9.4.13), and he goes on to describe Pliny’s accounts of spontaneous sex changes. In this case, the fact that paradoxographies provide private entertainment for the solitary reader and can inspire him to engage with the text by responding with his own contribution seems the very point of these “pointless writings” (9.4.12). Gellius’s decision to describe a marvel found in Pliny also reflects paradoxographers’ dependence upon other texts and the process of excerption and addition that characterizes the genre. Paradoxography was born from and depended upon Hellenistic book culture,
as production of compilations required the availability of multiple texts from which the paradoxographer might cull his material. In this sense, these ‘Odysseuses of the Library,’ to borrow a phrase from Richard Hunter,\(^\text{15}\) engage in a natural history of the strange through the exploration of texts rather than travel and personal autopsy.\(^\text{16}\) Consequently, paradoxography is typically comprehended from the perspective of its relationships with other genres in terms of material, form, and methodology. Yet wonder-telling was itself a vibrant part of social intercourse during the same eras that witnessed the rise and continued production of paradoxographies. Although most now consider paradoxography a literature for popular consumption and entertainment,\(^\text{17}\) little has been said of how it relates to modes of and fora for popular discourse. In this study, I look to Hellenistic and later Roman-era representations of symposia and dinner parties that depict such social gatherings as the locus for wonder-telling, and I suggest in turn that the popular appeal of paradoxographies lay in their associations—deliberate or not—with symposia as environments culturally understood to be conducive to both entertainment and intellectual stimulation.

From its very beginnings, Greek literature locates wonder-telling within the semi-public social sphere as the wayward Odysseus spins his fantastic yarn for the Phaeacians. Later literature reinforces this early association with depictions of wonder-telling as a constituent element in sympotic contexts. In her recent monograph on paradoxography, Irena Pajón Leyra observes that Plutarch’s representation of symposia in his \textit{Questiones Conviviales (Table Talk)}, as well as Trimalchio’s indulgent soirée in the \textit{Satyricon}, dramatize the incorporation of wonder-telling and paradoxographic material in sympotic discourse.\(^\text{18}\) The conversation at one dinner related by Plutarch, for example, begins with popular theories regarding thunder’s role in the generation of truffles, a phenomenon also recorded in both paradoxographies and scientific treatises: \(^\text{19}\)

\begin{quote}
At a dinner in Elis, Agemachus served some giant truffles. Everyone present expressed their wonder (θαυμαζόντων δὲ τῶν παρόντων), and one of the guests said with a smile, “They certainly are worthy of the thunder that we’ve had lately,” obviously laughing at those who say that truffles are produced by thunder.

Several of the company held that the ground splits open when struck by thunder,\(^\text{19}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{15}\) Hunter (2008, pp. 730) remarks on Callimachus as being an “Odysseus without leaving the Library.”
\(^{16}\) Schepens (1996, p. 388): “…the guided tour around the wonders of the world offered to the reader of a paradoxographical work was essentially a tour effectuated within the walls of a great library, be it at Alexandria, Athens, or Pergamon.”
\(^{18}\) Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 56-82), to whom my readings of Plutarch are much indebted.
\(^{19}\) Apollon. \textit{Mir.} 47 ( = Theophrastus F 400B FHS&G); Theophr. \textit{HP} 1.6.5; Plin. \textit{HN} 19.36-37; Ath. 2.62b. On the versions of the phenomenon described in these reports see Sharples (1995, pp. 147-149); Fortenbaugh (2011, p. 14, n. 15). Cf. Teodorsson (1990, pp. 47-49) and Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 71-72) who focus principally on Plutarch’s relationship with the tradition.
the air serving as a spike, and that afterward the truffle-gatherers are guided by the cracks in the earth. This is the source, they continued, of the popular notion (δόξαν…τοῖς πολλοῖς) that thunder actually produces truffles, instead of merely bringing them to light…Agemachus, however, upheld the popular theory and advised us not to regard the miraculous (τὸ θαυμάστον) as unworthy of belief (ἅπιστον). “For indeed, many other marvelous effects (θαυμάσια ἔργα) are,” he said, “produced by thunder, lightning, and other meteoric phenomena, though the causes of these effects are difficult and completely impossible to discover…In general, it is simple minded to be surprised at such things when we observe directly the most incredible part of it all (καὶ ὅλως εὐθές ἐστιν ταῦτα θαυμάζειν τὸ πάντων ἠπιστώτατον ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι τούτοις καθορόντας), namely flashes of fire coming from moisture and rough, loud crashes from soft clouds. But I’m chattering on only as an invitation to search for a theory that will explain these things (ἀδολεσχῶ παρακαλῶν ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν ζήτησιν τῆς αἰτίας). I don’t mean to be bitter and exact a contribution from each man to pay for the truffles (664b-d).”

The discussion that follows is peppered with nods to scientific sources as well as cultural and anecdotal references. A few elements in the passage especially stand out. The presence of the prodigious truffles provides the occasion for a quip whose humor presupposes the other banqueters’ knowledge of the theory regarding their ‘marvelous’ origins. Although the marvel is initially met with some derision, Agemachus’s defense of popular theories about paradoxa—which incorporates the language of wonder in general and paradoxography in particular—encourages the banqueters to use the strange tale as the stimulus for a conversation both intellectual and entertaining that combines wonder, popular wisdom, and modern science. Indeed, throughout Table Talk Plutarch represents symposia as the natural meeting ground for various intellectual pursuits and types of cultural knowledge, as the symposiasts’ banter weaves together scientific theories, literary exegesis, antiquarian nugae, wonder-telling, and so on. The same holds true in other sympotic miscellanies. The learned repartee in Athenaeus’s Deipnosophists and Macrobius’s Saturnalia paint such sympotic gatherings as fora for the synthesis of a wide range of intellectual fields and

20 Text and translation are those of Clement and Hoffleit (1969), with some modifications.
21 Compare the dialogue in Table Talk about the evil eye (680c-683b), wherein the host channels Aristotle (e.g., Mete. 982b11-15) when he upholds that the sort of wonders which occupy popular imagination can serve as the starting point for philosophy. On paradoxography and this passage, see Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 73-74). See Meeusen (2016, pp. 187-218) for remarks on the ways that Plutarch’s sympotic conversations balance convivial lightheartedness with intellectual discussion so that the banter not become too technical and thus endanger the spirit of the gathering. Cf. Klotz and Oikonomopoulou (2011, pp. 20-21), who note that “what the Table Talk especially underscores is the way that such knowledge can naturally spring up in the relaxed context of learned conversation, blending in with folk wisdom, oscillating between seriousness and play…”
22 On Plutarch’s representations of symposia see König (2012, pp. 60-89) and Klotz and Oikonomopoulou’s introduction to their 2011 edition of essays on Table Talk, as well as many of the essays in that volume.
popular knowledge that often begin with or incorporate wonders.\textsuperscript{23}

The question of these textual symposia’s relationship with reality persists, however, and it remains unclear if the conversations they stage reflect actual practices. Jason König observes that authors of sympotic miscellanies may use the format of the symposium as a structuring strategy that facilitates the forging of links with other material under the guise of interlocutors, and ultimately renders their compilations more engaging for readers who themselves become drawn into the debates.\textsuperscript{24} The use of the symposia as a literary framework, however, does not preclude a basis in reality, even if the historicity of the symposia depicted is dubious. The sympotic dialogues in \textit{Table Talk} likely present idealized intellectual conversations that flow through topics and disciplines with an unrealistic elegance and erudition, but their idealization is not evidence of the literary fabrication of the symposium as the ideal milieu for such conversations.

We find some support for the symposium as the typical locus for wonder-telling in earlier literature. A passage in Xenophon’s \textit{Symposium} in which Socrates eschews discussion of wonders at sympotic gatherings offers an interesting counterpoint to Plutarch. At one point the philosopher criticizes the current entertainment, a dancing girl performing an audacious acrobatic feat involving knives, as something that hardly affords pleasure appropriate for the setting (ὅ συμποσίῳ οὐδὲν προσήκει, 7.3). Socrates appends his remarks with thoughts on the similar inability of conversation about wonders to align with the goal of the symposium:

“For it is, of course, hardly uncommon to encounter marvels, if that is what one’s mind desires (καὶ γὰρ δὴ οὐδὲ πάνυ τι σπάνιον τό γε θαυμασίοις ἐντυχεῖν, εἰ τις τούτου δεῖται). A person may be amazed (ἐξεστιν…θαυμάζειν) at what he finds immediately at hand: why the lamp gives light owing to its having a bright flame, for example, while a bronze mirror, just as bright, does not produce light but instead reflects other things that appear on it… However, these questions fail to promote the same goal as wine does (ἄλλα γὰρ καὶ ταύτα μὲν οὐκ εἰς ταύτον τῷ οἴνῳ ἐπισπεύδει). But if the young people were to have flute accompaniment and dance figures depicting the Graces, the Horae, and the Nymphs, I believe that they would be far less wearied themselves and that the charms of the banquet would be greatly enhanced (\textit{Symp.} 7.4-5).”\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Cf., for example, part of a long conversation in \textit{Deipnosophists} about wine and water-drinkers that centers on waters with strange effects (41e-45a) and incorporates Peripatetic science, paradoxography, poetry, and historical anecdotes; a discussion in the \textit{Saturnalia} about the Sicilian cult of the Palikoi (\textit{Sat.} 5.19.17-29) likewise combines science, paradoxography, citations of Aeschylus, and local historical information.

\textsuperscript{24} König (2012, especially pp. 32-39).

\textsuperscript{25} Translation based on that of Todd (1923), with some modifications.
The philosopher’s rejection of everyday wonders as possible sympotic entertainment is striking for two reasons. First, he casts discussion of such marvels as the conversational equivalent of acrobatic spectacle, neither of which contributes to his vision of sympotic hēdonē (pleasure). As a counterpart to showy ‘wonders’ like the girl’s daring performance, he implies that indulging in such a topic is likewise unbefitting a gathering of educated elites. On the other hand, Socrates’s choice to use discussion of wonders as the analogue to acrobatic spectacle also indicates that wonder-telling, just like such performances, was an ordinary feature of symposia. His response constitutes a rejection of both not as alien to the convivial table, but simply as undesirable forms of sympotic entertainment.

Between Socrates’ criticism of discussion of wonders and Plutarch’s incorporation of it into literary sympotic discourse, Hellenistic poetry reflects the burgeoning popular interest in paradoxa both in the symposium and beyond. The growing taste for wonders can be attributed in part to the encouragement of the Ptolemies, whose court offered a premiere social context for the presentation of mirabilia as entertainment. We know from Antigonus that the poet Archelaus, who also seems to have written a prose paradoxography, composed and presumably performed paradoxographic ‘epigrams interpreting wonders for Ptolemy’ (either Euergetes I or Philadelphus). While Archelaus’ epigrams serve as an example of the non-sympotic but still social performance of wonders at the highest level of Ptolemiac society, other poets, and especially other poets cum paradoxographers, represent wonder-telling as a sympotic delight enjoyed by the learned Hellenistic elite.

The evidence from Callimachus is especially valuable. Scholars have long considered him either the inventor of paradoxography or at least an early practitioner based upon Antigonus’s long excerption from his work. Although his compilation does not survive outside of Antigonus’s citations, the Aetia, Callimachus’s poem on the origins of distinctive cult practices, noteworthy city foundations, and other miscellanea of a similarly antiquarian bent, mirrors paradoxography as a collection of cultural rather than natural mirabilia.

One of the poem’s fragments stages a scene that portrays the casual social exchange of these types of wonders and consequently tells us something of how one of the first

26 Antig. Mir. c. 19.4: τις Ἀρχέλαος Αἰγύπτιος τῶν ἐν ἐπιγράμμασιν ἐξηγούμενων τὰ παράδοξα τῷ Πτολεμαίῳ; cf. Antig. Mir. c. 89, and Varro RR 3.16.4 (= SH 125-129). If Archelaus did, as seems likely, produce a written collection of these epigrams, it would form a bridge between the social enjoyment and display of wonders and paradoxographic compilations. See Schepens (1996, pp. 404-405) for discussion on which Ptolemy was the recipient of the collection. On Archelaus’ epigrams and his prose compilation of reports regarding, it seems, strange births, see Fraser (1972, vol. 1, pp. 778-80; vol. 2, pp. 1086-1090) with Ath. 409c; D. L. 2.17; Schol. Nic. Ther. 823. Cf. Schepens (1996, pp. 405-407), who suggests that performances of such poems constitute the literary counterpart to the courtly display of exotic animals as described by Agatharchides, whose report is preserved by Diodorus (3.36.3-4; 3.37.7). Compare Bing (2005, passim) for further remarks on the Ptolemies’ accumulation and display of ‘wonders’ and foreign exotica as symbolic statements of their political power.


paradoxographers envisioned the role of his material beyond the confines of the library. In fr. 178, the Callimachean narrator recounts a discussion that took place during a likely fictional banquet in Alexandria about the bewildering origins of a cult practice on the island Icus. After discovering that another guest, the Ician Theogenes, likewise prefers to delight in conversation rather than excessive drinking, the Callimachean narrator queries his new acquaintance about his homeland’s unexpected worship of Peleus:

“The word is very true indeed, that wine needs not only a share of water, but also of conversation (ἀλλ’ ἔτι καὶ λέσχης οἶνος ἔχειν ἑθέλει). Let us throw this into the difficult drink as an antidote—because it is not served round in ladles and you will not ask for it, looking at the unbending eyebrows of the cup-bearers, at a time when the free fawn on slaves—and, Theogenes, as much as my heart longs to hear from you, (ὅσσα δ’ ἐμεῖο σέθεν πάρα θυμός ἀκούσαι ἵχαίνει) you must tell me in answer to my questions: why do you have [on Icus] the tradition of worshipping Peleus, the king of the Myrmidons; how are Thessalian matters connected with Icus? …pricking up my ears for one wanting to tell a story (Aet. 178.15-25, 30).”

This scene has been of interest to scholars for a number of reasons, but for my purposes the Callimachean narrator’s conversation stands out as a literary enactment of the sympotic application of the mirabilia that the poet gathers from his source texts and collects in the poem. Simple intellectual curiosity (“my heart longs to hear”) impels the narrator to embark on discussion of a fascinating but relatively insignificant nugget of trivia with his couchmate, and he casts their conversation as the ideal complement to the sympotic setting. Indeed, while most of the remaining fragments of the Aetia betray no connections to symposia, in the first two books Callimachus’s adaptation of the Hesiodic conceit of the poet’s meeting with the Muses into an exchange driven at times by the poetic narrator’s “wonder” at cultural curiosità nonetheless underscores the social and especially conversational aspect of wonder-telling.

29 All translations of the Aetia are by Harder (2012, vol. 1), with minor modifications. I use the enumeration of Harder for all references to the Aetia.
30 Scholars highlight its metapoetic dimensions, representation of cross-cultural interactions, and links to the Odyssean banquet of Alcinous. On these aspects, see the commentary of Harder (2012, vol. 2) ad loc with bibliography.
31 At fr. 43.12-17, the Callimachean narrator remarks that the only lasting pleasure he took from a symposium is the knowledge he gained there. It is unclear how the rest of fr. 43 (his catalogue of Sicilian city foundations) relates to a sympotic context, though many argue that the unplaced fr. 178 should be placed before fr. 43, on which see Harder (2012, vol. 2, pp. 956-957).
32 The poetic narrator’s wonder is used to transition between episodes at least one other time. After Cleo concludes a story about Zancle, the narrator remarks that “I also wanted to learn this—for my wonder grew (ἡ γάρ μοι θάμβος ὑπετρέφ[ετ]ο)—why the Cadmean city Haliartus celebrates the Theodaesia…” (fr. 43.84-87). Cf. fr. 31b, where the narrator’s θυμός urges him to ask another question.
Other examples further link poetry, *paradoxa*, and the symposium. Most of Posidippus’s epigrams about stones (‘*lithika*’, A-B 1-20) are set within the context of symposia, as they describe noteworthy stones worn by women (presumably hetaerae) or sympotic accoutrements, often in terms characteristic of both wonder-telling in general and paradoxography in particular. The majority of these focus on the stones as examples of amazing craftsmanship, itself a *topos* at home in paradoxographical compilations. So, for example, one epigram remarks on a carved ruby (A-B 3):

This shining [ruby], in which [the engraver carved] a wine bowl (φιάλην),
draws at once the eye’s swimming glance
towards [the golden flowers] with their triple tendril. And you, [lover of novelty = καίν’ ἀγαπῶσα]
graciously receive it] in the banquet (δαίτῃ), lady.

Here the symposium itself is involved in the wonder, with the image graven on the stone reflecting the occasion of its display. Other epigrams in the collection describe stones that are marvels because of their natural properties, such as A-B 17 on a stone with inexplicable magnetic effects:

Consider the nature of this stone uprooted by Mysian Olympus:
its double power makes it a marvel (θαυμάσιον).
On the one hand it easily attracts iron that stands in the way,
just like a magnet. On the other hand it drives it afar,
causing, with its side, an opposite effect. It’s quite a prodigy (τέρας), how on its own
it can imitate two stones in their forward projections.

Included alongside overtly sympotic epigrams and with a conversational second-person address, this poem reads like a snapshot of a party’s banter, as if the stone in question were actually present and might be used as the stimulus for an impromptu discussion in much the same way as Plutarch’s giant truffles. Given that the Hellenistic elite actively engaged in the collection and exhibitions of ‘wonders,’ the pretense is not so unrealistic, and we may

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33 E.g., θαῦμ’ ἀπάης (“a deceptive wonder”), A-B 13.2; θαῦμα…μέγα (“a great wonder”), A-B 15.7. Krevans (2005, pp. 88-92) notes the paradoxographical vocabulary and highlights that Posidippus and paradoxographers share the same “aesthetic of wonder” that seeks to amaze but not explain. Cf. Bing (2005, pp. 119-139) on the geo-political dimensions of Posidippus’ presentation of the stones as wonders; Guichard (2006, pp. 121-133) for paradoxographic elements throughout Posidippus’ collection; and Priestley (2014, pp. 99-104) on the epigrams’ connections to Herodotus and Herodotean wonder.

34 Cf. Giannini’s 1965 index for ‘wonders of artifice.’

35 Text and all translations of Posidippus by Austin and Bastianini (2002) = A-B.


well imagine that the display of objects like the graven ruby or magnet was part of their social gatherings just as art displayed in dining rooms, particularly in the Roman period, could serve as conversation pieces.\textsuperscript{38}

Hellenistic poets also capitalized on the potential of \textit{mirabilia} for the sort of play associated with symposia. Antigonus includes a report (\textit{Mir.} 8) on the soundlessness of some deer bones that quotes a couplet of Philitas of Cos:

Something no less marvelous than this, but more familiar (οὐχ ἦττον δὲ τούτου θαυμαστόν, καθωμιλημένον δὲ μᾶλλον), is a fact concerning a thorn in Sicily called a κάκτος (='cardoon'): whenever a deer treads on it and is injured, its bones are soundless and useless as \textit{auloi} (flutes), which Philitas also has interpreted when he says:

‘The fawn will sing on its departure from life if it has guarded itself from the prick of the sharp cardoon.’

The couplet plays on the image of the dead fawn’s voice continuing after its death, and it becomes intelligible only for those who have knowledge of the Sicilian plant. Reitzensten first identified the epigram as a riddle (γρῖφος) and in light of this suggested that the couplet belongs to Philitas’s \textit{Paignia}, a collection of playful or ‘lighter’ poems which included the sort of epigrammatic riddles and perhaps erotic pieces that were regular features of sympotic entertainment.\textsuperscript{39} Although some subsequent scholars have argued that the lines belong to the poet’s \textit{Demeter}, their readings nonetheless situate the couplet within sympotic discourse, whether through an allusion to the sympotic exchange of riddles\textsuperscript{40} or as a verse example of sympotic paraenesis.\textsuperscript{41} Regardless of its provenance, the couplet demonstrates the union of erudition and literary finesse characteristic of Hellenistic poetry while also translating an apparently popular \textit{paradoxon} (as emphasized by Antigonus’s καθωμιλημένον δὲ μᾶλλον) into a moment of interactive sympotic entertainment.

Other poetic \textit{paradoxa} similarly rely on this combination of learnedness and playfulness, even if they are not anchored in an explicitly sympotic context. Philostephanus, a poet and paradoxographer much like his senior colleague and possible mentor Callimachus, adapted into verse a Sicilian marvel that was likely also included in his own prose compilation on marvelous waters (\textit{Περὶ παραδόξων ποταμῶν}):\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{38} Compare Hedylus’ epigram on a marvelous rhyton in the form of the Egyptian god Bes (4 G-P). In its sympotic context, the rhyton serves not only as a functional necessity for the party but also as a wonder of artifice to be displayed and discussed; cf. Netz (1996, pp. 291-293).
\textsuperscript{39} Reitzenstein (1893, pp. 178-179).
\textsuperscript{40} On which see Spanoudakis (2002, pp. 209-213).
\textsuperscript{41} Sbardella (2000, p. 147).
\textsuperscript{42} On Philostephanus as a paradoxographer and his compilation, see Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 105-106), with bibliography.
And in the Trinacrian land of Sicily there is a water most terrible, even though it is a small lake, it is strong with its whirlpools, which, if you foolishly shake your foot in it even a little, drives you back to dry land. (SH 691)

The Sicilian lake that ejects all those who attempt to enter it is a fairly popular aquatic paradoxon which appears in other paradoxographies. The appeal of this fragment lies both in its subject matter as well as the possible acrostic γ-α-ι-η, which apes the lake’s effect by literally returning the audience back onto the γαίη with which the description began. Although nothing in the piece speaks to a sympotic context, the second person address again casts the verses as part of a conversational exchange. Acrostics, clever puns, and other types of associated wordplay, moreover, were standard fare in sympotic entertainment and literature, and thus Philostephanus’s verses could easily find a place in a convivial setting.

We may draw a few conclusions from these examples of Hellenistic poetry’s treatment of wonder-telling. First, the activity of describing marvels is regularly figured as a social one that takes place in casual conversation in general or sympotic conversation in particular. Socrates’ objection apparently has been overruled, as wonders enjoy a place as part of sympotic hedone, be they subjects for discussion or opportunities for clever poetic play. Moreover, the pleasure of Hellenistic wonder-telling is rooted in the erudition for which the period is famous. The well-read Callimachean narrator has knowledge of an obscure cult, while Philitas’ riddle depends upon knowledge of a particular Sicilian plant, and Philostephanus adapts a local legend into a moment of poetic fun. Paradoxographies, with their obvious dependence upon a variety of source texts from different genres, reflect a similar erudition. Some reports even engage in a union of disparate types of knowledge akin to what we find in the wide-ranging conversations of the learned dramatis personae of sympotic miscellanies. For example, in his report (Mir. c. 115) on hippomania, the term for a mare’s heat, Antigonus follows his source Aristotle (HA 572a9-13) in connecting

43 On issues with this term, see Page (1982, p. 21).
44 Tz. H. 8.144.670-675 (= SH 691), with the emendations made by Hermann for Westermann’s edition of paradoxographic compilations (1839) that were accepted by Page (1982, p. 21); Lloyd-Jones and Parsons rejected the emendations, as does Capel Badino (2010, pp. 192-194).
45 Ps. Arist. Mir. c. 112 with the forthcoming commentary of Pajón Leyra (FGrHist 1658); Paradox. Flor. c. 30 (FGrHist 1680) with the commentary of Greene (2018).
46 The δε in the first line indicates that this is part of a longer epigram or elegy; cf. Page (1982, p. 21).
47 The beginnings of the final two lines are contested; see Capel Badino (2010, pp. 192-194) for arguments against the readings that allow for the acrostic.
48 On which see the essays in Kwapisz, Petrain, and Syzmanski (2013).
the zoological phenomenon with modern slang insults for promiscuous women. He then independently continues to use these connections to advance an interpretation of related lines in Aeschylus’ *Toxotides*, thus uniting science, popular idiom, and literary exegesis.\(^49\)

Although some ancient and modern critics have painted *paradoxa* and paradoxography as a crasser form of entertainment that catered to the tastes of the hoi polloi, these examples attest that *mirabilia* were circulated, enjoyed, and adapted by the intelligentsia. Pajón Leyra stresses the similarly learned quality of sympotic wonder-telling in Plutarch, and she makes the attractive suggestion that paradoxographies served as a crutch that helped hosts and guests prepare interesting fodder to chew on during banquets and symposia.\(^50\) She notes that such aids in stimulating conversation would be of great value to members of the Hellenistic elite who boasted the standing to be invited to the dinner parties of the upper echelons but who might have lacked the erudition to independently generate and respond to such fascinating topics of conversation.\(^51\)

While I suspect that enterprising symposiasts made use of paradoxographies in the way Pajón Leyra describes, the evidence recommends that the genre’s development was also linked with the symposium in a less direct but more fundamental way. As we have seen, prior to and during the development of paradoxography the discussion of marvels like those found in paradoxographic compilations was already firmly situated in the realm of sympotic entertainment. This is the basis that informs Pajón Leyra’s theory: symposiasts might look to paradoxographies for inspiration because wonder-telling was already a regular feature in symposia. Consequently, the pleasure of indulging in tales of the marvelous is one which an ancient audience could naturally associate with sympotic *hedone*. In fact, two of the earliest paradoxographers, Callimachus and Philostephanus, both highlight the conversational aspect of wonder-telling in their poetry and either stress that it brings the sort of pleasure appropriate to the symposium (Callimachus) or present it in such a way as to delight even as it fascinates (Philostephanus). Their poetry, in other words, stages the application of the material they collect in their compilations and affirms that they were fully cognizant of the entertainment value of *mirabilia* in casual social intercourse. Paradoxography thus offers an example of the adaptation of social and especially sympotic discourse into a textual form that affords solitary readers like Aulus Gellius the opportunity to indulge privately in a pleasure once principally enjoyed in the social sphere. The pleasant conversational fodder of the banquet becomes pleasures that

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\(^49\) Other prime examples of paradoxographers merging different genres and types of knowledge in their descriptions include Ps. Aristotle’s reports on the phenomena located in the area of the Electridae Islands (c. 81) and places associated with the voyage of Jason (c. 105), on which see the forthcoming commentary of Pajón Leyra (*FGrHist* 1658).

\(^50\) Pajón Leyra (2011, pp. 77-80), who further considers representations of paradoxography in later prose representations of convivial scenes. Cf. Schepens (1996, pp. 403-404), who instead proposed that paradoxographies, particularly Callimachus’, may have originally served as reference texts.

\(^51\) Compare the proposal of Goldhill (2009, p. 109) that the discrete episodes in *Table Talk* “seem to have been designed for use in a symposium of one’s own.”
one may enjoy in his or her own solitary leisure time. This is not meant to imply that Callimachus and other early paradoxographers consciously considered their compilations prose catalogues of the delights of the convivial table. On the contrary, there is no evidence of this sort of intentionality. Instead, in creating a new kind of entertainment literature, early paradoxographers took their cues from one of the traditional social fora for casual entertainment. The result is a new type of literature that combines the fruits of serious scholarship and the Hellenistic devotion to compiling information with fare associated with social gatherings to satisfy the popular appetite for wonders, an appetite shared by the masses and the intelligentsia alike.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{52}\) I would like to thank the *NECJ* editors and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful suggestions. Many thanks also to the attendees of the Classical Association of New England’s 2017 meeting, where I presented an early form of this paper. Their helpful comments and suggestions were very much appreciated.
Works Cited


Teaching Piccolomini’s *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in Intermediate Latin

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Abstract: This article is a report on using Piccolomini’s 15th-century novella *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in an intermediate-level college Latin class. We consider the text itself, background students will need before reading it, editing the text for students, and class activities and assessments.

Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, wrote a short novel in Latin called *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in 1444. It became one of the most popular books of the 15th and 16th centuries, widely read and translated into many vernacular languages. It’s an amusing story of love, both marital and illicit; it’s also partly narrated through the characters’ letters to each other, making it an ancestor of the epistolary novels, in English, French, and other vernaculars, that become popular in the 18th century. At about 14,000 words, it’s short enough to be read in one semester, but long enough to be substantial.

I’ve used this text with third-semester Latin students. In this article I’ll explain how I presented it and what supplements I needed to create to make it accessible, as a case study or experience report. The third semester of the college Latin sequence is challenging because, at least in our program, most of the students in the class are first-years, coming from a variety of different high-school programs. They have all learned roughly the same things, but from different points of view and with different emphases — and, in particular, aside from the most common words of Latin, their vocabularies may be quite different from each other. Hence it’s useful to give them a text that isn’t in any of the regular textbook series, one that’s equally unfamiliar to all of them, but one that will hold their interest. Such a text, though, may not exist in a convenient student edition with notes and vocabulary: there is no such edition for the *Historia* for example. In that case, the teacher may need to fill in background for the students, and here is an example of one way to do so.

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1 The class was in Fall 2013. There were six students in the class, five first-years and a sophomore, two men and four women. Most of them took more Latin, even though this class completed the minimum foreign language requirement for graduation, three went on to major in classics, and two are now in graduate programs.
The *Historia* is about a woman named Lucretia and her husband Menelaus who live in Siena. One day the Prince and his army come to town. One of the Prince’s officers is a noble young man called Eurialus. He and Lucretia fall in love at first sight, before they’ve even spoken to each other. The novel tells how he courts her, how they keep their affair secret from Menelaus, and what happens in the end.

You will have noticed that the name of the cuckolded husband is Menelaus — like the most famous cuckolded husband in classical literature, Helen’s husband. As soon as we hear his name, we expect his wife to be unfaithful.

But the wife’s name is Lucretia, like one of the most loyal and faithful wives in ancient history, the wife of Collatinus in Livy book 1. And her lover is Eurialus, like the young man in *Aeneid* book 9 who is an example of loyal and faithful friendship between men. To a clued-in reader, the names set up opposite expectations — will this Menelaus be like the Trojan War Menelaus, or will this Lucretia be like Livy’s Lucretia?

Part of teaching this text, then, is to clue in the students to the implications of the characters’ names. So I began the semester with simplified versions of the Nisus and Euryalus story from Vergil (*Aeneid* 9, via Vicipaedia Latina) and of the Trojan War story (from Dares, *De Excidio Troiae*). I also gave them the story of Lucretia in the versions by Eutropius (1.8–9, Valerius Maximus (6.1.1), and then Livy (1.57–60). And after these preliminaries, I also had them read the short articles in Vicipaedia Latina on Piccolomini and on the novel.²

I got to the *Historia* itself about half-way through the semester. Students loved the emotional letters; the scene where Lucretia ostentatiously tears up a letter from Eurialus in front of the messenger who delivers it, but then, as soon as she’s alone, frantically pieces it back together; and the farcical scene in which Menelaus almost catches Eurialus in Lucretia’s bedroom, but she tosses a box of papers out the window and Menelaus runs downstairs to retrieve them. Admittedly, they were disappointed by the ending, in which Piccolomini seems to realize suddenly that he shouldn’t be glorifying adultery. But aside from that, the novella worked well in class.

The vocabulary is entirely classical, not surprising for a Renaissance text; almost every word is in the Lewis and Short lexicon,³ though some of them are pretty obscure and won’t be in a smaller dictionary. Aside from the names of the characters and the city where the story is set, Siena, which is Sena in Latin, there aren’t many important proper nouns.

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² In preparation for asking the students to read these articles, I tweaked them a bit myself, fixing a couple of typos and adding an illustration. For more about Vicipaedia Latina and its utility in the classroom, see Mahoney (2015).

³ Since I was using a version of the Perseus tools, I had Lewis and Short conveniently available; the point is just that Piccolomini rarely uses un-classical vocabulary.
though students will have to be told that in this period “Caesar” refers to the Holy Roman Emperor. There are several words referring to parts of a house, like *fenestra*, *thalamus*, *paries*, *ostium* and *cellarium*, or to jewelry, like *monile* and *balteus*, and there are other words that aren’t rare but that students at this level probably haven’t run into yet, like *lena*. But the vocabulary is distinctly smaller than in the *Golden Ass* or the *Satyricon*, two other texts that members of my department have used in Latin 3 (sometimes in simplified versions). Apuleius’s text is just over 56,000 words long, or about four times as long as the *Historia*, and it has about 10,600 different words. Petronius’s is longer than the *Historia* and shorter than the *Golden Ass*, about 32,000 words, and it uses about 7,100 different words.

The syntax is also classical, rather than medieval. That is, Piccolomini uses noun cases in the classical way, rather than prepositional phrases; he uses accusative and infinitive rather than *quod* for indirect speech; he distinguishes temporal and circumstantial *cum* clauses, and uses other subjunctive clauses as you would expect; and his word order follows classical conventions. While medieval syntax may be easier for Anglophone students, a classicizing text is closer to what the students have seen in prior Latin classes. It’s also better preparation for most of what students will read in later classes.

Piccolomini not only uses classical words, but frequently takes whole phrases from classical texts, particularly Terence’s plays. He is not always alluding to the earlier text, just borrowing idioms: it’s not necessary to know Terence to understand what the novel is talking about. Sometimes, though, an allusion clearly is intended. For example when Lucretia first sees Eurialus and falls in love, we have *Saucia ergo gravi cura Lucretia et igne capta caeco, iam se maritam obliviscitur*; picking up *Aeneid* 4.1 where Dido, too, is *gravi cura saucia*. Later, as Lucretia is trying to resist the affair, she compares herself to Dido, also to Medea and Ariadne, as all three women fell in love with strangers, men coming from elsewhere, and all three were betrayed by them. All of these allusions tie the *Historia* to other texts the students will eventually read, or may have already read in English, and when time permits it can be fun to point them out.

Overall, the Latin is straightforward, not particularly ornate or convoluted in style. The dedicatory letters at the start are the most difficult part, as they’re in the florid style often used for dedications. But in fact it’s fairly common for the introduction or the beginning of a Latin work to be the hardest part: think, for example, of the elaborate sentences at the start of Cicero’s *Pro Caelio* or *Pro Archia*. A useful piece of general advice that I give to students is: skip two pages and pick up from there. If it gets easier, you know you can handle the text.
Here is an excerpt from the text, to give you the flavor, and some examples of the sorts of things I needed to explain, and observations one might make depending on the interests and background of the class. This passage is the first letter and its delivery, a vivid scene. Eurialus asks a friend to find him a messenger: it’s amusing that the friend’s name is Nisus. The letter itself is somewhere between fulsome and soppy. The messenger is a madam, a *lena*, and Lucretia knows who she is. She reacts indignantly: “how dare you show up at the house of a respectable woman like me?” She rips the letter into small pieces, drops them to the ground, and kicks them into the fire, threatening to do the same to the *lena* herself. The *lena* isn’t fooled: she acts submissive, but she’s thinking “I can tell you really want this guy, because you’re trying not to show it.” She reports back to Eurialus that Lucretia loves him, leaving out the part about tearing up the letter. Instead she says Lucretia has showered kisses on the letter. And in fact, that’s exactly what does happen: as soon as Lucretia is alone, she grabs the shredded bits of paper, reads the letter, and does indeed kiss it thousands of times. She replies, and the love affair is off and running.

**Haec ubi firmata sunt, lenam quaeuit cui ceras ad nuptam ferendas committat. Nisus huic fidus comes erat, harum rerum calidus magister. Hic provinciam suscipit mulierculamque conductit cui litterae committuntur in hanc sententiam scriptae:**

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Salutarem te, Lucretia, meis scriptis, si qua mihi salutis copia foret. Sed omnis tum salus, tum vitae spes meae, ex te pendet. Ego te magis quam me amo, nec te puto latere meum ardorem. Laesi pectoris iudex tibi esse potuit vultus meus, saepe lacrimis madidus, et quae te vidente emisi suspiria. Fer benigne, te precor, qui me tibi aperio. Cepit me decus tuum vinctumque tenet eximia, qua omnibus praestas, venustatis gratia. Quid esset amor antehac nescivi, tu me cupidinis imperio subiecisti. Pugnavi diu, fateor, violentum ut effugerem dominium, sed vicit meos conatus splendor tuus, vicerunt oculorum radii quibus es sole potentior. Captivus sum tuus, nec iam mei amplius compos sum, tu mihi et somni et cibi usum abstulisti. Te dies noctesque amo, te desidero, te voco, te exspecto, de te cogito, te spero, de te me oblecto, tuus est animus, tecum sum totus, tu me sola servare potes solaque perdere. Elige horum alterum et quid mentis habeas
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rescribe. Nec durior erga me verbis esto quam fueras oculis quibus me colligasti. Non peto rem grandem: ut alloquendi te copiam habeam, postulo.


Has ubi gemma signatas accepit lena, festino gradu Lucretiam poscit, eaque sola inventa: “Hanc” inquit “epistulam tibi tota caesarea nobilior et potentior curia mittit amator utque sui te misereat magnis precibus rogat.”

Erat lenocinio notata mulier, nec id Lucretiam latebat permolesteque tulit infamem feminam ad se mitti atque in eam versa: “Quae te” ait “scelestas in hanc domum audacia duxit? Quae te dementia meam adire presentiam suasit? Tu nobilium aedes ingredi, tu matronas temptare potentes et violare audes legitimas faces? Vix me contineo quin capillos involem tuos. Tu mihi des litteras? Tu me alloquaris? Tu me respicias? Nisi plus quod me decet attenderem, quam quod tibi convenit, efficerem hodie ne posthac umquam tabellas amatorias ferres. I ocius venefica tuasque litteras tecum defer, immo da ut lacerem potius ignique dedam.”

Accipiensque papirum in partes diversas scidit et calcatam saepe pedibus atque consputam in cinerem coniecit. “At sic de te” ait “sumi supplicium lena deberet, igne quam vivo dignior. Sed abi ocius, ne te vir inveniat meus, et, quas tibi remisi, de te poscat poenas cavetoque admodum ne ante conspectum redeas meum.”

Timuisset alia mulier, sed haec matronarum noverat mores et intra se inquit: “Nunc vis maxime quia te nolle ostendis.”

Moxque ad illam: “Parce,” ait, “domina, putavi me benefacere tibique complacitum iri. Si secus est, da veniam imprudentiae meae. Si non vis ut redeam, parebo: tu quem despicias amatorem videris.”

Lucretia vero, postquam anus evasit, fragmenta perquirens epistulæ, particulæ quasque suo loco reposuit et lacera verba contexuit iamque legibile chirographum fecerat, quod, postquam millies legit, millies quoque deosculata est tandemque involutum sindone, inter pretiosa iocalia collocavit. Et nunc hoc repetens, nunc illud verbum, maiorem horatim bibebat amorem Eurialoque rescribere statuit.

This passage gives a fair idea of the style and the grammar of the piece. The first sentence includes both a relative clause of purpose and a gerundive, though the most difficult thing here is probably the use of *cera* to mean not literally “wax,” nor even “writing tablet made with wax,” but “writing” in general — the letter with its wax seal. The diminutive *muliercula* is contemptuous, referring to the *lena*; this isn’t unusual for diminutives, of course, but may be a new idea for some students.

The letter itself uses all the best clichés of love poetry. Eurialus says his life is in Lucretia’s hands; he never knew what love was until he saw her; for him, she shines like the sun; and so on. The last line, *ego me tibi et tuae commendo fidei*, calls to mind the poems where Catullus talks about love with terms like *fides* and *foedus* — these are in particular poems 76, 87, 109 — though in fact Piccolomini’s line is taken not from Catullus but from Terence’s play *Eunuch*. Piccolomini uses *tum ... tum* where Cicero might have preferred *cum ... tum*, not just in this letter but frequently. The sentence *fer benigne, te precor, qui me tibi aperio* is a bit odd; this is *fer* in the sense of “put up with,” and the relative clause is its direct object.² We might paraphrase *concede ut me tibi aperiam*. The many instances of *tu, te, tuus* in the letter are emphatic, and meant to grab Lucretia’s attention.

The scene between Lucretia and the *lena* at the start of this passage is full of lively dialogue. Lucretia’s first speech uses anaphora effectively, starting two questions with *quae me* and three more with *tu me* or *tu mihi*. The short clauses show her indignation. The *lena* hasn’t named Eurialus, but Lucretia seems to know the letter is from him, given how eager she is to read it once she’s alone. On the other hand, she seems genuinely insulted that he would send such a person as this to carry the message for him. She tells the *lena* to get

² Hersant prints *quod* rather than *qui*, which is easier.
lost, not once but twice: *i octus* followed by *abi ocius*. Piccolomini tells us what the *lena* is thinking: she’s a little bit afraid of Lucretia’s anger, but she’s seen this sort of behavior before. When she then politely apologizes to Lucretia, we know she’s not as submissive as she sounds. She confidently tells Eurialus that Lucretia loves him — though she also stays out of his way after this, since she has lied about some of the details. Piccolomini’s *ne, pro verbis, referret verbera* is clever word-play, hard to duplicate in English — maybe “lest she be flogged for the fibs” would do.

As soon as the *lena* is gone, Lucretia does reassemble and read the letter. The word *chirographum*, “handwriting,” is a Greek loanword that Cicero uses, and *sindon*, also from Greek, is a delicate cloth, suitable for wrapping up something valuable; we find this word in Martial. Although *horatim* is not attested until the middle ages, it is a regularly formed derivative with the fairly common -*tim* suffix, like *paulatim* or *nominatim*.

You can see from this passage that the novel is fun to read.

In order to teach the *Historia*, I needed an edition I could give to students. At the time, there was no suitable print edition, and to my knowledge there still isn’t; the edition by Isabelle Hersant has a good introduction and some notes (and a translation), but it’s in French, which most of my students would not be able to read. The text is readily available online, though, most conveniently from Biblioteca Italiana, an Italian website with the works of most of the important Italian authors in TEI form, a standard markup scheme that can be converted into other forms without much trouble.⁵ TEI is an XML language similar to HTML, the language of web pages; it is documented in the *TEI Guidelines*. It is widely used in digital humanities projects, and in particular the tools of the Perseus Digital Library work with TEI files.⁶

Because Piccolomini lived at the very beginning of the Renaissance, his spelling follows medieval conventions rather than classical. This is much too difficult for low-intermediate students, so I modernized the text, writing a small computer program that could draw on the Perseus morphology tools.⁷ I also adjusted the punctuation to modern American conventions, by hand. For ease of reading, I broke the text into 28 chapters for which

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⁵ Biblioteca Italiana is at [http://bibliotecaitaliana.it](http://bibliotecaitaliana.it). Its files are available under Creative Commons licenses, suitable for classroom use but not commercial use. The edition of the *Historia* they supply is taken from Doglio and Firpo (1973).

⁶ The Bibliotheca Augustana, [https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/augustana.html](https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/augustana.html), has a plain HTML version which may be more convenient if you want to use a word processor or other non-structured tool.

⁷ This is similar to the work described by Rydberg-Cox (in Terras and Crane, 2010, 135–150), though not as elaborate. In particular, I had the luxury of starting from an already-digitized text, with abbreviations expanded. The original Perseus morphology analyzer is described in Crane 1991, though the version distributed with the downloadable Perseus source code is rather different; see [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/opensource/download](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/opensource/download).
I supplied titles (in Latin of course). Finally, I added a couple of dozen footnotes glossing classical allusions and the most unusual vocabulary: *efflagitasti, spurius frater, screatus, cumulus, sagum, faenum, poenosus*. I should also have noted *pitissavit*, especially as most dictionaries list the verb as *pytissare* with “y.” I could have added much more commentary if I’d had more time. I then formatted the text as a PDF, 48 pages long, and let the students download it from our learning management system.

I exploited the TEI form at two points in this process. First, I loaded the text into a Perseus installation on my own computer so that I could use the vocabulary and morphology tools. Second, I used a standard stylesheet tool to convert the text from TEI to PDF form. The program that converted medieval spelling to classical norms did not exploit the markup of the text, and everything else — punctuation, chapter headings, footnotes — was done by hand. In other words, it’s not necessary to learn TEI before trying to work with neo-Latin texts. Nonetheless, it is often convenient to have structured markup; I now describe how I worked with this text.

This is a sample of what the TEI text looks like. It is exactly as I downloaded it from Biblioteca Italiana, except for the addition of the chapter heading.

```
<div2 type=chapter n=5>
<head>Lucretia, lena, epistula prima</head>
<p>Haec ubi firmata sunt, lenam quaerit cui ceras ad nuptam ferendas committat. Nisus huic fidus comes erat, harum rerum calidus magister. Hic provinciam suscipit mulierculamque conducit cui litterae committuntur in hanc sententiam scriptae:
<quote type=letter>
Salutarem te, Lucretia, meis scriptis, si qua mihi salutis copia foret. Sed omnis tum salus, tum vitae spes meae, ex te pendet. Ego te magis quam me amo, nec te puto latere meum ardorem.
…
</quote>
<p>Has ubi gemma signatas accepit lena, …
```

The markup gives the structure of the text, not the layout: the chapter heading is labelled as a header, with the `<head>` element, and the letter is marked as a quotation of a particular type, `<quote type=letter>`. Here is a bit more marked text:
Nam niger a viridi turtur amatur ave et variis albae iunguntur saepe columbae, si verborum memini quae ad Phaonem Siculum scribit Sappho.<note>Sappho poeta fertur Phaonem iuvenem pulchrum amare; inter Epistulas Heroium</note> Ovidii est epistula Sapphonis ad Phaonem.</note>

This section shows one of the footnotes I added, marked <note>, and the title of another text, labelled as a <title>. Any structural feature can be marked up; the TEI language is designed by humanists and includes the kinds of features we care about when we edit texts. Separating structure from appearance is a powerful technique that allows great flexibility: from a single TEI file, it is straightforward to create versions in HTML, PDF, or even Microsoft’s RTF. There are several standard sets of tools that can be customized for this sort of transformation, such as stylesheets written in XSL, the extensible stylesheet language, or the old but highly flexible CoST, the Copenhagen SGML tool.8

To convert the spelling to classical norms, I wrote a program using the Perseus morphology analyzer. It works as follows. I went through the text a word at a time, ignoring TEI tags and punctuation. For each word, I checked the form against the morphology database. If it’s there, then it is a correctly spelled Latin word. If it’s not there, I checked it against a list of known corrections, such as *mihi* for *michi* or *cum* for *quam*. Otherwise, I tried changing *e* to *ae*, then to *oe*; medieval and early Renaissance authors regularly level those diphthongs, so that *Caesar* appears as *Cesar*, or *foedus* as *fedus*. Of course, this can produce false matches: for example, *equus* could be “horse,” in which case the word in the text should be left alone, or it could be “equal” (which must be changed *aequus*). The results need to be proofread.

Digital humanities tools make this kind of work easier, though they are not actually required. Given patience, one could simply edit the text by hand, and use a word-processor rather than structured markup. Writing a program to verify the spelling, though, means that every word can be checked; if it’s not known to the Perseus tools, and if it can’t easily be converted, the program can flag it for manual attention. And separating structure from appearance makes it much easier to produce different versions for different purposes.

8 For more detail about TEI, see the website of the TEI Consortium, http://www.tei-c.org, which contains the TEI Guidelines, introductions and tutorials, and descriptions of various projects using this markup language. The chapters of Burnard, O’Keefe, and Unsworth (2006) also give examples of how TEI can be used; see in particular Robinson (74–92) on medieval texts.
During class, I tried as much as possible to work through the text in Latin; I would ask them questions about what they’d read, and as necessary explain, paraphrase, or act out bits they didn’t understand. Their written homeworks generally came directly from the reading. For example, their nightly verb synopses started with particularly common verbs like *ago*, *venio*, or *gero*, but later in the term I would have them choose their own verbs from those they’d had to look up. Early in the semester I gave them exercises on derivation within Latin, for example identifying that *captor* is the agent noun that goes with *capio*, or that *utilitas* is “the quality of being *utilis*.” Later on, I could call their attention to derivatives and compounds in the *Historia*. A favorite exercise is to assign one section of the text to each student and ask them to write comprehension questions for their sections. They hand in the questions and answers to me, and give just the questions to their classmates; the next night’s assignment is to answer everyone else’s questions. The better students phrase their questions in decent Latin, though the questions themselves may be fairly superficial. I also assigned sentences adapted from the *Historia* to be manipulated in various ways: re-write an ablative absolute phrase as a clause with a finite verb, change between active and passive, or between direct and indirect quotation, and so on.

For assessment in lower-level language classes like this one, I use 10-minute reading quizzes, unannounced. Typically I manage to do about 10 of these in the semester, which comes to the same amount of time as two full-period midterm exams. The advantage of the quizzes is that they give both me and the students frequent checks on their progress, and they don’t encourage students to spend days cramming and getting stressed. A quiz consists of a passage the class hasn’t seen before, with some grammar questions and some comprehension questions. The comprehension questions are generally phrased in Latin, though I might write more complicated ones in English. Students can answer in either language, though I tell them just copying a Latin phrase from the text will receive no credit. In this semester, the average scores were about 15 or 16 out of 20 points, or 75 to 80 percent, which is not bad given that most of them had not been asked to read at sight before this term.

Here is an example of a quiz, from mid-semester, right around the time the class began reading the *Historia*. The range of scores was from 14 to 20 out of 20 points.

Olim erat leo qui speluncam in montibus habitabat. Noctu cum dormiebat, mus quidem adveniebat et capillos iubae leonis rodebat. Leo e somno experrectus, iratus, murem *capere* conabatur, sed mus in cavum iam abiverat.


Leo, qui nunc murem nec audivit nec vidit, felem non iam laudavit nec etiam feli cibum dedit. Re vera, felis oblitus est. Feles sine cibo mox moritus est.

Grammar questions: Choose two of three. Parse the underlined words.

Content questions: Choose three of five; answer in English or in Latin.

1. Quid faciebat mus, quod leoni non placebat?
2. Quare voluit leo felem habere?
3. Quid fecit feles? Num leoni placuit?
4. In extrema fabula, quid accidit muri? Quid accidit feli?
5. In the Sanskrit story collection from which this fable is adapted, the moral of the story is “Servants should never let their masters become independent; if their masters no longer need them, the servants will fare like the lion’s cat.” What does that mean and how does it relate to this text?

During the semester, students had trouble with the idea of reading rather than translating, but that is of course normal for the first course in which they’re asked to do that. They were not comfortable with Latin pronunciation, but that’s normal too. They were also still learning how to manage time, also normal: after all, they’d only just started college.

I chose the Historia because I thought it would be fun for the class. Other neo-Latin texts would also be suitable at this level, depending on the instructor’s interests and the students’ needs. Because Renaissance Latin writers return to classical norms, the Latin is similar to that of Cicero, Livy, or Tacitus, rather than to medieval Latin (and verse texts use the classical quantitative forms, like elegiac couplets, rather than accent and rhyme). Thus reading a neo-Latin text will not give students a distorted view of the language, or train them in un-idiomatic Latin: students will have no problem going on to classical texts.
Neo-Latin also has advantages in its contents and subjects. The early modern world is somewhat less foreign than the classical Roman world; readers of neo-Latin texts don’t need to know about aediles and consuls, centurions and tribunes, or provinces and governors. In the broader history of European literature, some neo-Latin texts are only slightly less canonical than classical Latin. Some have been influential and remain well known, for example Thomas More’s *Utopia* or Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly*. Others, like the *Historia* itself, were widely read in their time even if they are less popular now. Many authors well known for their vernacular writings also wrote significant works in Latin, for example Petrarch, Milton, and Pascoli, and others (such as Byron and Baudelaire) wrote at least a little. Students are often curious about the Latin writings of authors they know from other contexts. Several handbooks of neo-Latin give overviews of the field, and it’s increasingly easy to find texts online.\(^9\)

To sum up, then, the *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* has everything you’d want in an intermediate-level Latin text, except for strictly controlled vocabulary. The story is interesting, the text is well known (as much as any neo-Latin text is), and the Latin is classical and not terribly difficult. My students enjoyed the challenge.


The occasion of this book’s publication, as the short Preface and Introduction indicate, is the completion of the Homer Multitext project’s digital edition of the Venetus A manuscript of the *Iliad* (http://www.homermultitext.org/). The Homer Multitext project is an ongoing enterprise launched in 2000 under the auspices of Casey Dué and Mary Ebbott as main editors, and Douglas Frame, Leonard Muellner and Gregory Nagy as co-editors. The project’s goal, as Dué explains, is not to produce another critical edition of the text of the *Iliad*. In fact, a good many pages of the book under review are devoted to highlighting the problems of critical editions and their *apparatus criticus*, and in particular the methodological inadequacies of classic textual criticism when applied to an orally composed text. Critical editions seek to recreate as much as possible the author’s “original.” Now, if we accept fully Milman Parry and Albert Lord’s conclusions regarding Homer’s *Iliad* as an orally composed, performed and transmitted poem, maintains Dué, then there can be no “original” to reconstruct, since the poem will be the same and yet different in any and all of its performances. The “authorial approach,” on the other hand, “excludes an abundance of alternative instantiations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*” (81). These alternatives transmitted to us by various means are thus to be interpreted not as “variant readings,” as traditional textual criticism would have it, but truly as “multiforms” (Dué’s term), that is, as testimonies of as many different performances. Proceeding this way, the result will not be one single, printable, edition, but rather a “multitext.” The final goal of the Homer Multitext project is to make all these multiforms available to readers, to produce “an accurate picture of the transmission in all its complexity” (53).

Dué devotes her first chapter (“‘Winged Words’: How We Came to Have our *Iliad?’”) to describing “how a performance tradition that was already well underway in Mycenaean Greece eventually crystallized into what we know as the *Iliad*” (17). This is already a contentious statement: many scholars place the origin of the Iliadic tradition much later, in the post-Mycenaean world at the earliest, and some even later. Although most scholars, as Dué affirms (18), would agree that there is an oral tradition behind the poem we have, not all would subscribe to the evolution that Dué defends and that has been developed by Nagy in different publications, especially in the last ten years (43). Dué explores in this rich chapter the evidence provided not only by the traditionality of Homeric language and the descriptions of poetic performances in the poems, but also the testimony of the plastic arts (especially Mycenaean and Minoan frescoes and archaic and classical pottery). These testimonies present alternative versions of the story of the *Iliad,*
sometimes truly incompatible and in competition with each other. Dué appropriately deals here with complex concepts such as authorship, “poetic authority,” or “truth”: is there a more authoritative version among the multiplicity? Which version can be considered to represent the “truth”? Put in another way: could the *Iliad* be told differently? Once again Dué follows Nagy when she writes that “Archaic Greek poetry refers to Panhellenic myth and poetry as ‘truth,’ while local versions of stories…are *pseudea* or ‘lies.’” (21-22).

Furthermore, the *Iliad* subtly alludes to other versions, thereby asserting its own primacy. There are, though, some limits to this multiformity. If Achilles had chosen to leave the war and go home, there would be no *Iliad*. Achilles is “fated” to die in Troy and never conquer the city. “What is fated is the traditional and hence authoritative version of the story” (20). Dué continues to follow Nagy’s evolutionary model when she asserts that, even if written texts of the *Iliad* existed at least from the mid-sixth century B.C. on, the oral tradition would not have ceased all at once, but rather would have continued to coexist with the new, written form for centuries. This period of coexistence of oral and written versions would be active until the mid-second century B.C. The editorial work of Aristarchus and other Alexandrian scholars on the Homeric text at this time initiated the “relatively most rigid period, with texts as scripture” (43), and seems to have put an end to the great disparities exhibited in the earliest testimonies of Homer’s text: the first, so called “wild,” papyri and the citations of Homer by other ancient authors (Aeschylus, Aeschines, and Plato, to name a few). When our manuscript tradition begins in the tenth century A.D. with the Venetus A, it presents an impressive regularity in the text. Some of the oldest manuscripts are also rich in *scholia* that transmit to us the divergent readings attributed to Aristarchus and others, and that Dué understands to be not conjectures in the style of modern editors but rather “observations of multiformity culled from the wide array of texts available to them” (47). All these Homeric “multiforms” can be traced, then, in the quotations of Homer by other authors of antiquity, in papyri, scholia, and the medieval manuscripts, which Dué studies successively in detail in chapters 2 (“*Sunt Aliquid Manes*: Ancient Quotations of Homer”), 3 (“And then the Amazon Came: Homeric Papyri”), and 4 (“The Lost Verses of the *Iliad*: Medieval Manuscripts and the Poetics of a Multiform Epic Tradition”). A final Chapter 5 (“Conclusion: ‘In Appearance Like a God:’ Textual Criticism and the Quest for the One True Homer”) closes the book, followed by ample bibliography and indexes.

It is clear that such a project only could take shape when internet became available, and in fact the project was first thought of in the nineties when the new technology appeared. That so far, despite the dedication and enthusiasm of the editors, only the Venetus A has been digitized and made available to readers signals both the ambitious scope of the project and its difficulties. Casey Dué has achieved her goal of explaining carefully the understanding of the Homeric poems’ origin, composition and transmission that animates this enterprise and that she calls a true paradigm shift in Homeric studies (163). Dué writes very clearly,
her book is a pleasure to read, and many of the examples she chooses to make her case will cause the reader pause and reflect. There is a lot to be learned from the book even if not all of it will be persuasive, depending on the image that each reader has of “Homer” and the Homeric tradition. Dué’s views obviously clash frontally with the work of the late M.L. West, the most recent editor of both Ἰλιάδ and Ὀδυσσεία. Dué does not avoid discussing the differences between these approaches, which she does with respect and professionalism.

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This book was inspired by a 2016 conference, “Maternities and Childhood: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives,” in Granada, Spain. It is the seventh volume in the Childhood in the Past monograph series published by Oxbow Books. The twenty-one essays cover a wide chronological range, with discussion of representations of women and children from the Bronze Age to the modern day. Geographically, the essays focus on evidence from Mesopotamia, Spain, Italy, and Greece and address an array of issues, including constructions of maternity and childhood, legal perspectives on motherhood and on mother-child relationships, funerary commemoration of children, and current pedagogical approaches. In what follows, I offer an overview of several chapters to provide prospective readers with a sense of the variety of the contributions.

In Chapter 1, “Motherhood and infancies: archaeological and historical approaches,” Margarita Sánchez Romero and Rosa Cid López cite recent debates in archaeology and social history that have inspired the volume and have underscored the need for further work that challenges naturalized views of motherhood and childhood. Taking this as a point of departure, they state that their aims in the project are “to discover in greater detail the true social, economic, and technical dimension of maternal practices and to reflect on childhood from a gender perspective” and “to investigate the emergence of mother-daughter ties and their development” (p.7). This introduction to the volume provides a useful overview of scholarship on women and children, and it includes an admirably up-to-date set of references to current research.

In “Beyond biology: the constructed nature of motherhood(s) in ancient Near Eastern sources and studies” (Chapter 4), Agnes Garcia-Ventura sets out to demonstrate how the concept of motherhood was established in the ancient Near East, focusing on a set of
documentary cuneiform texts from the beginning of the second millennium BCE. These administrative and legal texts in Akkadian mention a set of women in Babylon known as nadîtu who committed their lives to the service of the god Marduk. Garcia-Ventura outlines the rules and expectations governing their lives, which she notes were unusual even compared other nadîtu mentioned in Akkadian texts. Most notably, while most women of this type were not allowed to marry or bear children, the nadîtu of Marduk were expected to marry, probably in order to facilitate ties between prominent families. Once married, they were allowed to rear children, but only those whom a surrogate had borne for them, as they were not allowed to become pregnant (45). This community of women, often overlooked by scholars, are of interest as a group who participated socially but not biologically in the experience of motherhood.

Taking up the topic of constructions of motherhood in the world of law, Laura Pepe offers an analysis of classical Athenian sources in “The (ir)relevance of being a mother: A legal perspective on the relationship between mothers and children in ancient Greece” (Chapter 11). Comparing the evidence of family law that survives from two poleis, Athens and Cretan Gortyn, she argues that the Gortyn code provided women with more freedom to decide whether they wished to rear their infants. In Athens, there is evidence that “the destiny of babies born from iustae nuptiae was placed exclusively in the hands of fathers” (155) or in the hands of the archon if the woman was a widow. Athenian evidence says nothing about women who gave birth after their husbands left or divorced them, but the Gortyn code seems to indicate that in such scenarios, some consideration was given to the woman’s point of view on whether to bring up the infant (156). Pepe notes that even with the scarcity of evidence for classical Greek literary and legal perspectives on mother-child relationships, the divergence between Athens and Gortyn serves as a reminder that there might have been significant variation in such perspectives across Greece.

With a focus on representations of childhood, and especially on how the death of children affected families, Rosa Maria Cid López analyzes a small set of twenty inscribed funerary poems in “Mors immatura, childhood and maternal-filial relationships in the carmina epigraphica: case studies from the Iberian Peninsula” (Chapter 13). Cid López sets out to elucidate what these stylized funerary inscriptions for this group of children -- who range in age from seven months to fifteen years -- might reveal about “the way childhood was conceived in Hispanic provinces and others of the Roman Empire” (177) and points to elements of the poems that may reveal something about socialization. For example, she notes that while parents are portrayed as grieving for the loss of their children, they are also keen to emphasize masculine and feminine virtues in the epitaphs, with deceased boys praised for physical strength and speaking abilities and girls honored for their beauty (180).

Infants who were too young for eulogies of their strength, beauty, or education could be praised for their potential -- or they could be commemorated in a different way altogether, as Mireia López-Bertran discusses in “Creating beings: relations between children and
animals in the Iron Age Western Mediterranean” (Chapter 7). Focusing on osteological and archaeological evidence for social responses to the untimely death of newborns and stillborn fetuses, she interprets the pairing of animals and children in two sets of evidence: child cremations in Phoenician and Punic tophets (8th-2nd centuries BCE) and burials of children in Iberia (5th-3rd centuries BCE). For example, at Tharros, in Sardinia, newborn and stillborn human remains in urns are combined with the remains of ewes or newborn lambs. López-Bertran argues that the mixing of these remains suggests “a specific way of understanding and defining one type of human corporality” (96), with newborn infants and stillborns considered more similar to animals than to humans.

The volume concludes with two essays by Silvia Medina Quintana (Chapter 20) and Antonia García Luque (Chapter 21) that move into modern-day curricular concerns especially in pre-college education. Medina Quintana asserts the need for history textbooks in primary and secondary schools to present a narrative that makes clear to young students that women’s lives consisted of more than simply their domestic activities; García Luque offers specific strategies for changes to teacher training that would make this possible. These essays highlight that even as researchers seek new directions in the study of women in the ancient Mediterranean, they should be alert to current debates in educational studies and to pedagogical strategies for conveying information to a variety of audiences.

In sum, the authors of the essays in Motherhood and Infancies offer numerous individual insights into cultural responses to motherhood, mother-child relations, and childhood in the ancient Mediterranean. Photographs, tables, and maps are useful supplements to the text, and each essay ends with a list of bibliographical references. It might have been desirable for authors to cross-reference their discussions, to make it easier for the reader to draw connections between the themes and evidence treated in the essays. However, the volume certainly succeeds in providing a combination of thought-provoking case studies and surveys of the available evidence, following lines of inquiry from previous scholarship and paving the way for more research in these areas.

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When landowners in central Italy began unearthing black- and red-figure ceramics in the eighteenth century, they famously judged these pots “Etruscan”; however, within a few decades, the case of mistaken identity had been cleared up. Since then, discussions of these
Athenian pots, now dispersed in collections worldwide, have remained hellenocentric; attribution studies populated the Kerameikos with a lively guild of potters and painters, and vase images have been mined for information about Greek myth and society. Meanwhile, the Etruscan chapter in these pots’ life stories—and, in turn, the Etruscan consumers—have been largely forgotten. Bundrick’s complex and thought-provoking new book offers an important corrective with valuable insights into the sixth- and fifth-century BCE Athenian pottery industry, which simultaneously targeted the Etruscan market and was shaped by Etruscan consumers. Using meager published reports and archival data from early campaigns as well as more recent, scientifically documented excavations, Bundrick reconstructs archaeological assemblages (mainly from tombs) in order to evaluate the role of imported Athenian pots in different Etruscan communities. Her readings of vase images within the context of Etruscan myth, ritual, and iconography suggest that these foreign motifs assumed local significance particularly in the liminal space of the tomb, where pots may have served as visual expressions of Etruscan beliefs regarding the afterlife.

The book is structured as a series of vignettes based on individual pots, the histories of which Bundrick describes in painstaking detail while analyzing their form and iconography with an art historian’s eye. Her narrative strategy reflects one of the investigation’s guiding principles—object biography, a “method and metaphor” (to use Susan Langdon’s memorable phrase [“Beyond the Grave: Biographies from Early Greece” *A.J.A.* 105 (2001) 581]), which recognizes that objects, like people, have complex lives that we can access by looking at archaeological contexts, inscriptions, and signs of use or repair, among other variables. *Contra* Bundrick (10), object biography has been employed extensively by classical archaeologists in scattered articles, paragraphs in excavation reports, and conference papers that explore the past lives of artifacts as well as objects described in ancient texts. A second theoretical basis for this investigation is a new wave of consumption studies that focus not only on the acquisition of commodities but on their use and appropriation. Through this paradigm, Bundrick seeks to rehabilitate the agency of Etruscan consumers, who have been portrayed historically as undiscerning, ravenous consumers of Athenian pots.

Chapter 2 offers a lucid, up-to-date summary of our current understanding of the Athenian vase trade which would make an excellent stand-alone reading for archaeology and art history classes. Bundrick musters diverse lines of evidence (vase inscriptions in which potters playfully refer to their peers, price and batch inscriptions, merchant trademarks, data from the excavation of workshop debris in the Kerameikos, and shipwreck finds) to paint a portrait of a competitive sixth- and fifth-century BCE Kerameikos, where potters vied with one another and collaborated with traders to produce wares that would give them an edge in foreign markets like Etruria.
The following chapters examine the reception of Athenian pots in Etruria and in the process undermine traditional, Athenocentric interpretations of many canonical vase types and images. Drawing upon Etruscan iconography in diverse media (tomb paintings, architectural sculpture, bronze mirrors, local figured ceramics), Bundrick proposes that themes of journeys, struggles, and apotheosis in different scenes (e.g., warrior departures, Peleus and Thetis wrestling, erotic pursuits, Odysseus and the ram, Herakles and Nereus) gained new relevance in the Etruscan tomb, where the deceased underwent transformations as he or she passed into the afterworld. She makes a strong case that eye-cups, the majority of which can be traced to Italy, functioned as apotropaic devices for the protection of the dead rather than as masks for drinkers (an interpretation rooted in the assumption that eye-cups were produced for the Greek symposium). Hydriai with fountainhouse scenes, so often accepted as snapshots of the Athenian city center, are found frequently within the graves of Vulci, where they may have been selected for the popularity of the cults surrounding water. Athenian pottery was further naturalized through its use as cineraria at some Etruscan settlements. Although the practice of interring the ashes of the deceased in vessels had Iron Age roots on the Italic peninsula, the images on Athenian pots may have been seen as auspicious for the deceased’s journey or reflective of his or her identity, which sometimes can be discerned through osteological data or grave goods. These intriguing, though unprovable, hypotheses are well illustrated with ample black-and-white photographs of vases and a few reconstructions of tomb groups. Readers familiar with Bundrick’s scholarship will recognize several case studies from her articles and chapters which make many of the same arguments though sometimes in a more direct way.

While this ambitious project points out moments where we see Etruscan agency at play, the Etruscans themselves remain rather shadowy figures, in part because the evidence derives primarily from tombs, and in part because the author focuses her analyses somewhat narrowly on the symbolism of vase images in the mortuary sphere. The role of these pots and their images in the realm of the living receives less consideration, and ancient repairs and possible heirloom status are mentioned only briefly, although these factors provide important clues about the pots’ biographies. Were the vessels personal possessions of the deceased or the family? Were repairs indicative of a particular affection for a pot? These are questions for another volume. Bundrick herself acknowledges that *Athens, Etruria, and the Many Lives of Greek Figured Pottery* is not the last word on Athenian pots in Etruria, but it is an important contribution that paves the way for scholars to tell a fuller story of Athenian pots among the living in Etruria as well as in other Mediterranean communities.

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The publication of a facsimile of William Sanders Scarborough’s textbook *First Lessons in Greek* stands as a major event in the field of Classics. Scarborough, who was born in slavery in 1852 and learned to read and write in secret, went on to become the United States’ first professional philologist of African descent, a widely published scholar, and, from 1908 to 1920, the president of Wilberforce University. His career thus stood, as Scarborough himself understood it, as a response to the infamous remark attributed to John C. Calhoun that “if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe the Negro was a human being and should be treated as a man.”

A crowning achievement of Scarborough’s career was the publication in 1881 of *First Lessons in Greek*. However, as Michele Valerie Ronnick explains in her excellent introduction to the text, the book is extremely rare, with copies available at only a handful of libraries around the United States. The publication of this facsimile has truly, as Ronnick puts it, “saved from oblivion” (25) this invaluable text.

The arrival of this text comes on the heels of two other important restorations of work by Scarborough, both edited by Ronnick: *The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey from Slavery to Scholarship* (Detroit, 2005) and *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader* (Oxford, 2006). Thanks to Ronnick’s efforts, we now have access to a significant amount of the work of this important figure in the history of Classical studies and in American intellectual history.

The text begins with a brief contextualizing foreword by Ward Briggs, and then Ronnick’s Introduction (1–25), which offers a biography of Scarborough, along with overviews of the trends in nineteenth-century Greek and Latin textbook publishing and African-American book culture. This introduction prepares the reader well to appreciate the endeavor that Scarborough undertook, at the very beginning of his career, in authoring *First Lessons in Greek*.

Scarborough explains in his Preface (29–31) that the book is to be used alongside a Greek grammar that contains all morphology. The grammars that he references throughout are those by Goodwin (Boston, 1879) and Hadley (New York, 1860). What follows over most of the book (39–130), then, are 75 lessons on the fundamental elements of Greek morphology and syntax. Each lesson includes a healthy number of exercises for parsing and translation, from Greek to English and vice versa. Scarborough helpfully includes Greek-English and English-Greek glossaries at the back of the book. Following the lessons are selections from Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (from Book 1, chapters 1 and 6) and his
Memorabilia (from Book 2, chapter 1, the “The Choice of Hercules,” on Hercules as an exemplar of virtue), with notes appended to the selections (133–145).

Scarborough’s notes, both on the lessons and on the selections from Xenophon, are explanatory but also peppered with questions for the student. For example, amid exercises on the first declension, he asks, “When is α retained throughout the singular?” (41, n. 1); and of ἠσθένει in Anabasis 1.1 he asks, “ἠσθένει has what kind of augment? where made? what does the imperfect denote?” (141). The effect of this conversational style is that the reader – now nearly 140 years after the book was penned – can have the experience of being taught by William Sanders Scarborough. In his Autobiography Scarborough wrote that he set out to write his own Greek textbook as part of his efforts to make “the ancient tongues living languages” for his students (Autobiography, p. 75). This is a goal shared by all teachers of Classical languages, and a particular delight of Scarborough’s lively, engaging text is that it gives readers the opportunity to transcend the difference in time and embark with him on that other time-traveling journey of learning Ancient Greek.

This text, then, would make for an excellent addition to an introductory or intermediate Greek course, at the high school or collegiate level. Instructors would need to use the text alongside a textbook that provides all forms, just as Scarborough imagined. The 75 lessons of exercises are perfect for those drilling and refining their Greek; and the selections from Xenophon, though brief, are well chosen and make for a fitting “target text” at the end of a sequence of study. Moreover, the inclusion of this text in an introductory or intermediate Greek curriculum could expand the course in productive ways, providing students with the opportunity to think about the history of the study of the Classics in the United States. With the help of Ronnick’s Introduction, students can be led to ask important questions such as: What broader conclusions can we draw from the remarkable story of Scarborough’s life and career? Who, over time, has been included and excluded from the study of the Classics? What societal consequences follow from that inclusion and exclusion? What in higher education has and has not changed from Scarborough’s time to our own?

Michele Ronnick, the volume’s editor Donald E. Sprague, and Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers are to be thanked for making available once again Scarborough’s First Lessons in Greek. This re-publication is an important event, and the text will prove to be helpful and healthy – in a great variety of ways – in Ancient Greek classrooms.

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Bloomsbury Classical Languages, the series under review here, includes the following books:


Bloomsbury Academic has distinguished itself in recent years as a first rate press for the publication of student-friendly texts and commentaries on a wide range of Latin (especially) and Greek authors and works. An impressive array of new commentaries continues to appear at a rapid rate of speed. One subset of the Bloomsbury bibliography is the new set of intermediate level texts and commentaries aimed at the college and advanced secondary school market. This series is entitled “Bloomsbury Classical Languages,” and is accompanied by a free website of supplemental materials.

Bloomsbury commentaries come in two general categories: integral works (for example, a book of Tacitus’ *Annals* or of Virgil’s *Aeneid*), and works that reflect the current realities of British academic syllabuses (“OCR” and so forth), with coverage of specific lines or passages from a given work. Occasionally there are two volumes in print, one with only the syllabus selections, the other with the complete work. Many of the editions in the series were authored by active teachers in the British secondary school system (often with introductions by university professors). No edition presumes the use of any particular elementary text. Students ordering these commentaries online may need to be reassured that there is little difference in whether or not they purchase the “OCR” endorsed, British editions of the volumes of the series; the content is the same. Bloomsbury has in fact done well in responding to the particular needs of examination syllabuses in the United Kingdom alongside more global curricular desires. That said, those users who do not wish to be constrained by the “OCR”-required selection of particular passages from a work will want to purchase the integral text from the Bloomsbury catalogue where available.
If one adjective comes to mind first in reviewing Bloomsbury’s “intermediate” series of editions, it is “realistic.” The second descriptor would be “practical.” These are truly editions that accomplish what they purport to offer, namely to provide all the assistance a neophyte reader will require in approaching a continuous text for the first time. The notes are elementary (but not condescending); the vocabulary and glossary aids are extensive; the commentary references to secondary scholarship are kept to a bare minimum. The result is on the one hand a set of volumes that is modest in terms of size and scholarly ambition; on the other hand, students who progress through the available titles will hone their skills in reading Latin prose and poetry with pleasure and, one may hope, appreciable success. It is difficult to imagine that any student user of these Bloomsbury intermediate editions will be overwhelmed by the content (if anything, some students may well be motivated to seek out more expansive commentaries, which in itself is a measure of the success of so-called schoolboy editions). Ambitious students at the end of a year of college Latin could easily take up one of these texts; intermediate classes should have no trouble in utilizing them. It is highly unlikely that an intermediate student would feel daunted by the volumes in this series. Robert West’s edition of selections from Cicero’s Pro Milone offers a good example of what might even call the friendliness of this collection. Challenging Ciceronian periods are explicated with clarity and gentle rigor.

In addition to the volumes of the series, there are also the aforementioned (more or less extensive) online ancillary aids that are also available to accompany the printed commentaries. The Oxford Latin Dictionary is regularly cited in the various volumes; so also such works as Bennett’s New Latin Grammar (a perhaps surprising choice). Poetry students interested in metrical analysis will be satisfied with the very generous help afforded with scansion; those drawn to textual criticism will be less satisfied, though one imagines that there are few Leos left to chasten classical neophytes who dare to read texts devoid of apparatuses (still, if there were any area of improvement I would suggest in the series, it would be to devote more attention to giving students an introduction to critical editions and textual variants). Some material here and there is borrowed from the school editions that were most recently published by the Bristol Classical Press, whose catalogue Bloomsbury now manages. References and citations heavily prejudice Anglophone scholarship, which is to be expected given the anticipated audience of the volumes. I have my doubts that student users of any commentary that includes a glossary will ever be particularly motivated to hunt for more lexical information in standard dictionaries, but the battle to keep vocabularies out of student editions is one battle the present reviewer abandoned many moons ago, and there is an undeniable advantage to having a word list in the back of every book (especially in an age of ever weaker elementary language preparation). Users of these commentaries who lack basic familiarity with grammatical terms and concepts will need supplemental help on occasion, but even here the authors are regularly compassionate in the degree of assistance they provide.
One consistently praiseworthy feature of this set of commentaries is to be found in the volume introductions. Roland Mayer’s contribution to Katharine Radice’s edition of Tacitus’ *Annals* is of particularly high quality, and could well be assigned in a wide range of classes on Tacitus and imperial Roman historiography. Tacitus has not been generously well served by student-friendly editions; Gravell and O’Gorman’s volume of selections from Book 1 of the *Histories* is especially welcome. Keith MacLennan’s work on Virgil is of a similarly laudable high standard of quality, and he has distinguished himself in student commentaries on selections from the *Aeneid* as the “Gould and Whiteley” of the present day. John Godwin has a long and admirable record of student editions for such series as the Aris & Phillips Classical Texts; his contributions to Bloomsbury on Horace’s *Odes* and *Satires* constitute other highlights of the collection; the author’s introductory essays on both Horace’s patron Maecenas and on the genre of satire are particularly noteworthy.

A special word of praise may be given to Anita Nikkanen for her work in producing one of the most intrinsically useful volumes of the series: an exemplary student edition of selected elegies of Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid. The sensitive readings of these poets on display in the introduction and in the commentary notes, coupled with the author’s impeccable grasp of the philological and metrical puzzles posed by these challenging poets, combine to create a truly marvelous student edition. Anyone offering an undergraduate class on Roman elegy will want to consider adopting this volume.

This Bloomsbury intermediate series has few rivals on the market. Bolchazy & Carducci offer an admirable series of readers devoted to various classical authors, with a generous range of selections in one convenient volume per writer. Bloomsbury commentaries provide more commentary than the Bryn Mawr series of student guides; they also have the aforementioned glossaries. The British editions published by Open Book Publishers regularly offer far more treatment of secondary scholarship (perhaps to a degree that would overwhelm many first-time readers of Latin literature, though with admirable results for those motivated to explore literary criticism in more depth). Bloomsbury’s catalogue will be of interest to those who want relatively inexpensive, convenient editions of particular works that provide reliable help in explicating the original text. Both the press and the various authors and editors are to be congratulated for the quality work on display here that offers significant help in the sometimes difficult transition from first to second year college Latin. There are many options on the market for teachers of intermediate Latin. The Bloomsbury catalogue deserves to be the first choice for consistently helpful commentaries.

Lee Fratantuono
Ohio Wesleyan University
Salvete Soldales! XAIPETE!

I am writing as President of CANE with greetings and wishes for a productive (and dare I say happy?) new school year. I am honored to take on the presidency of our association. CANE has been a constant and vital presence in my professional life over many years and remains so still.

I am always struck by how much CANE does, and how effectively, from the Annual Meeting to the Summer Institute, the scholarships for study in the classical lands, student activities and prizes, help for classroom materials and other things. NECJ has grown incredibly quickly from a pretty good newsletter to a sophisticated academic journal in my own academic career, and continues to grow and change, now being completely electronic.

All the things CANE does are not enough, though. Of course, we provide support for teachers in the classroom, and reach out when we can to administrators in schools at all levels. There is more to do. We as a profession have to get more involved in letting the world at large know about the good things that we have to offer to everyone, not just the students in our current classrooms. CANE is going to be very active this year in developing a program of outreach. I want to keep you informed about what we are planning to do, as well as to encourage you to get involved. For one thing, we have helped sponsor an outreach effort teaching Latin to incarcerated persons in CT: the Yale Prison Education Initiative. According to the organizer it was a great success and the students are clamoring for more Latin. This is one of the under-served constituencies we should be reaching out to. Other initiatives that may be coming include a proposal to bring real Classics into our communities: public libraries, community organizations and clubs, community colleges, and other venues. This last is a developing project, and you will be hearing more about it.

These issues are going to be a major focus this year, including at the Annual Meeting, which will be held at Trinity College in Hartford CT, on March 13-14, 2020. Please consider submitting a paper or workshop session. There have been so many paper and workshop proposals in recent years, and the sessions have proven so valuable for us as teachers and scholars that we are planning a full day of workshops and papers on Saturday as well as Friday—this has been creeping up and it is time to make the change. So, things will end on Saturday at 5 with, we hope, a reception to follow. A special new initiative will be the inclusion of a poster session for the first time, so if you have something to share in a form like that—a classroom project or new approach to old material, an account of an archaeological project, an electronically based research project, or anything that would be more valuable for people to see in this format, please consider offering a poster.
Lastly, I want to have you consider getting funding from CANE for your classroom and for your own intellectual benefit. CANE has money available for its members—that is to say, for you. There are three major scholarships available in 2020: the Coulter for study at the American Academy in Rome, the Endowment for study somewhere else (often but not necessarily the American School of Classical Studies in Athens), and the Poggioli for early-career teachers and scholars. Plan now to apply for one of these scholarships. In my experience, the experience was transformative: I came back from Greece and Italy a very different teacher than when I went.

There are more funds available for teachers at all levels. The Educational Grants combine the Discretionary Grants and the Educational Programs grants we have offered for some years and are now available on a rolling basis, so you can obtain the funds you need right away. These grants can be used for many types of projects in the classroom or for research, or for activities outside of the classroom such as museum visits. Find the link on www.caneweb.org and apply.

I hope you have a good start to the school year—and plan on Hartford in March!

John Higgins, CANE President
Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics and History
Trinity College
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Announcements

Please join us for the 37th
Classical Association of New England Summer Institute
On the theme “The Empire and the Individual”
July 13-18, 2020 / Brown University, Providence, RI
graduate credit available

The organizers of the CANE Summer Institute invite you to join us for a weeklong examination of peoples and cultures that comprised the Classical Greek and Roman worlds. We will consider what it meant to be (but) an individual amid the greater whole of an empire and what that can tell us about living in today’s world.

Whether you are a high school or college teacher of Latin and/or Greek, History, English, the Arts, or other related disciplines, an undergraduate or graduate student, or a devoted lifelong learner, you will enjoy a thoughtful and enriching experience that includes a wide variety of mini-courses, lectures, workshops, reading groups, and special events while also offering many opportunities for conversation and collegial interaction among participants.

This summer’s 5-day mini-courses include:

He Longed for the Desert: Turning Your Back on Rome  John Higgins, Smith College
Romans and Italians: Empire-Making before the Social War  Sailakshmi Ramgopal, Columbia University
Milton’s Lycidas and Pastoral Elegy  Willam Morse, College of the Holy Cross
Vote Cataline!  Joanna Kenty, Radboud University
Affect and Matter in the Roman Empire  Sasha-Mae Eccleston, Brown University
Pindar’s Victory Odes: Songs and Contexts  Hanne Eisenfeld, Boston College
Tragedy’s Empire: Individual Agency in Antiquity and Beyond  Aaron Seider, College of the Holy Cross
Problems in Roman Slavery: Texts and Contexts  Roberta Stewart, Dartmouth College
What Happens When A Ruler is Replaced? The Problem of Succession in Antiquity  Peter Machinist, Harvard University

This summer’s lecture line-up will feature a series of three lectures by Elizabeth Vandiver of Whitman College as well as lectures by Kathleen Coleman (Harvard University), Kurt Raaflaub (Brown University), Deborah Boedecker (Brown University), Dan-el Padilla Peralta (Princeton University), Sasha-Mae Eccleston (Brown University), Sailakshmi Ramgopal (Columbia University), and Aaron Seider (College of the Holy Cross).

The CANE Summer Institute is grateful to the Classical Association of New England, the Department of Classics at Brown University, and the Onassis Foundation USA for their support.

For more information and registration details, go to www.caneweb.org
Please direct questions to the CSI director Amanda Loud at summerinst@caneweb.org
Books Received

List of books received, August 2019

Publishers are invited to send new books for this list to Prof. Jennifer Clarke Kosak, NECJ Book Review Editor, Department of Classics, Bowdoin College, 7600 College Station, Brunswick, ME 04011; jkosak@bowdoin.edu


