

# Parnassus: Classical Journal

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## Parnassus Classical Journal (Volume 10, 2023)

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# PARNASSUS

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### Letter from the Editors

φίλτατοι ἀναγνώσται,

To our beloved readers, welcome to the tenth volume of *Parnassus*! When we put the last ten years into perspective, we can see how Classics has changed – hopefully for the better. Many of the students currently at Holy Cross may not have known what this discipline looked like ten years ago, but we hope that those who have joined our community are happy that they have done so. Although Classics is arguably an intimidating field to jump into with no prior experience, we are constantly improving the inclusivity of this community. In our time as Holy Cross Classics majors, we have seen these goals come to fruition. How we engage in Classics is not merely for the purpose of learning *about* ancient thinkers, writers, philosophers, or artists, but more importantly for learning *from* these people and cultures so that we can better engage with their world.

Inside and outside of our courses, we are continuously encouraged to participate in challenging and enriching dialogues regarding the classical world in the ancient Mediterranean. The inclusion of diverse themes, which were often disregarded or deemed unimportant for scholarship, are now central to our education in Classics. We are in the unique position to have many incredible professors at Holy Cross whose specialties and interests allow them to teach us such thought-provoking courses in Latin, Greek, and translation such as Race & Antiquity, Refugees in Ancient Myth and Today, Herodotus: Race and Ethnicity, Classics & Conflict in the U.S., and more.

We are delighted to present an excellent collection of student scholarship from a variety of courses, both from within and without the department. Submissions include essays about ancient Roman art, Homeric epic, the relationship between Classics and English literature, and much more. We are also happy to bring to publication many creative pieces, such as several translations from the *Odyssey* and even some translations of modern Greek songs. You can even catch a glimpse of students' travels off the Hill through photography and writing done in their study abroad programs.

This journal would not have been possible without the support of many. We would like to especially thank Professors Aaron Seider and Timothy Joseph who have served as dedicated advisors for the past ten volumes. We also would like to thank Karen Paquin, the Classics Department's Administrative Assistant, for helping us get the paperwork together to bring this to publication. Additionally, we are grateful to the Graphic Arts Department for printing this journal. Finally, we would like to thank all the students who have willingly submitted their work and those on the Editorial Board. We could not have published this edition without all of you!

We hope that you enjoy reading the tenth volume of *Parnassus* and we encourage you to engage with the Ancient World as we have done this year and will continue to do in the future.

Nunc Legendum Est!  
Stacey Kaliabakos '23 and Alexandra Berardelli '25  
*Parnassus* Co-Editors-in-Chief

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Taken on Film.**

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The Funeral of Patroclus  
Carl Quist '23

Bright Troy mourned Hector while the Greeks  
Were scattered to their ships.  
Each went to tend to his own work  
While grief flecked Troy's sad lips.

Achilles did not scatter them,  
His Myrmidons well-led.  
He turned to them his dearest friends;  
He spoke to them and said:

“My Myrmidons swift cavalry,  
Let's ride to honor him:  
Mourn Patroclus with grim parade,  
A worthy gift for him.

Let us now be consoled, I say,  
By hateful requiem,  
Then tie the horses, and our meal  
We'll take, and joy condemn.”

He said this, and they wept as one;  
Achilles led them all.  
They drove their chariots  
Around the bier's wide sprawl.

In them Queen Thetis stirred up grief.  
With tears their hearts were choked  
So much the sand was water-dry;  
But with salt-tears was soaked.

So much they mourned that fearsome man,  
Lord Patroclus, but yet  
Achilles of them all grieved most,  
To him he swore this debt:

“Goodbye, my Patroclus, goodbye!  
I swear to do you right:  
I’ll feed his flesh to hungry dogs;  
That Hector lost the fight.

And then twelve Trojan sons I’ll slay,  
Like oak trees cut them down  
Some Trojan sons to join your death,  
They will in Hades drown!”

At this he spat on Hector’s corpse.  
His Myrmidons then stripped  
Off Hector th’armor bronze that he  
from Patroclus equipped.

Dismounting then their horses strong,  
They sat at his ship’s side,  
Aiacides’, and made a feast  
Befitting funeralside.

They slew with bronze their off’ring beasts:  
The Cattle, boars, and sheep.  
They picked the choice fat-marbled ones  
And sent them to their sleep.

They stretched them out and roasted them  
Above Hephaistos’ coals.  
The sandy shore ran red with blood;  
The blood dyed black the shoals.

The Greeks then led their gore-clad king  
To Agamemnon’s place,  
Though he refused to go in peace  
Or wash his blood-bathed face.

They sat in Agamemnon’s tent  
To wash as was the norm,  
And called the clear-voiced heralds two

To stand a tripod warm.

But swift Achilles flat refused  
To wash the blood and gore  
That Hector's death upon him threw,  
And on this oath he swore:

"No, not for Zeus the highest god  
Nor for my mother queen  
Could this raw gore be washed from me  
Till pyre's bright light is seen;

Till off'ring's poured for Patroclus,  
And I have shorn my hair.  
For I endure this hateful feast,  
And won't wash off my care.

King Agamemnon, send out men  
To cut a firewood heap,  
For dead men wait on Hades' shore  
Until their ashes sleep."

Achilles swore and this they heard,  
And each prepared a meal.  
They ate their food and slept the night  
To rest from the ordeal,

Where seashore roared with tempest loud,  
Achilles stood in grief.  
The Myrmidons bewailed young death  
Where waves bashed sandy reef.

Then sleep embraced his care-worn mind.  
On restless heart she poured  
A gentle sleep for he was tired  
Because Troy's prince he gored.

Then came the soul of Patroclus

Just as he was in life:  
His eyes, his voice, his handsome form,  
Despite his afterlife,

The same his height and shining clothes  
That on his frame he wore.  
He stood above Achilles dear,  
and spoke in words too sore:

“You sleep but even now don’t care,  
Achilles, for poor me.  
In life for life you did care less  
And are for death carefree!

Please bury me so that at last  
I can pass Hades’ gate.  
The shades, the shadows of faint dead,  
Force me on shore to wait.

They don’t let me among them mix  
While sits my pyre unburned.  
I wander here on shoreline’s sand;  
By even shades I’m spurned.

For never – oh! – again can I  
Return from Hades’ gate  
Once you have burned my flaming pyre,  
And sent me to my fate.

Achilles give me quick your hand  
Let us remember when  
We would convene apart and plan  
Our lives’ together then.

The wide death’s hateful maw gapes ’round  
As dreadful fates have planned.  
Achilles your fate is to die  
In this the Trojan land.



I beg you one last thing to do:  
Let us share one still grave.  
To never separated be  
From you: it's this I crave.

For we were joined when we were kids:  
With mercy so undue  
Your father took me in when mine  
Sent me, a child, to you.

Menoitius fair exiled me;  
Amphidamas I slew.  
Because I was a little child,  
No laws back then I knew.

It was a game of knucklebones  
That cost that boy his life.  
Your father took me to his home  
To hide there safe from strife.

And there, Achilles, I met you:  
My life's breath in a prince,  
The one without which I am not.  
My honor now evince.

Thus you will bury our white bones  
As if we were one man.  
Together wrapped in golden urn,  
Our life's course runs one span."

Achilles gave him this reply:  
"Why do you come here now?  
And lay such tasks before my head?  
Before them I will bow.

I will do everything you ask,  
If you but stay with me.

When you're here I can shed my grief.  
O Patroclus, don't flee!"

Achilles godlike spoke to him;  
He wished that he could stay.  
His grasping hand found nothing there  
But shadow and smoke gray.

His spirit went beneath the earth  
And gave a final wail.  
Achilles leapt from bed in shock  
And screamed in grief's depths pale:

"Oh strange is Hades' darkened house  
Where phantoms linger gray!  
Their minds are here but bodies aren't –  
Not here, where life holds sway!

My Patroclus stayed here the night.  
He rules my bitter tears.  
He made me swear to do these things  
To pacify his fears."

Achilles wondering he spoke  
And spurred them all to weep.  
Then Dawn on Patroclus shined bright  
Her pity for his sleep.

King Agamemnon sent out men  
With mules to gather wood.  
They went this way and that and up  
And down, far as they could.

The many-fountained Ida looms;  
The tallest trees grow there.  
The Greeks clear-cut them with great haste.  
There shone the bronze axe-glare.

The greatest trees fell crashing down.  
The Greeks broke these in two.  
They fastened these to their strong mules,  
And back to camp they flew.

Woodcutters tore the brush apart  
While raced they in their haste  
To lay the wood they cut with bronze  
Before Achilles' waist.

There a wide tomb for two he planned  
To lay when life was done.  
And when the men had laid the wood,  
They waited all as one.

Achilles ordered Myrmidons  
Their armor bronze to don.  
Each yoked his two-horsed chariot  
Then fell in line, swords drawn.

The chariots went first of all,  
Then cavalry made fuss.  
The whole Greek army followed next;  
They carried Patroclus.

The Greeks cut hair from each one's head  
And cast it on his bier.  
Achilles held his lover's head,  
And wept an ocean's tear

To send his comrade down away  
To death bereft of life.  
They came to that site he had planned  
Where they would rest from strife.

Their work Achilles swift he watched  
And cut his yellow hair  
While far away he stood from them,

His spirit rent full bare.

He scanned the wine-dark sea to find  
A sense for fatherland,  
And to the river Sperchius  
He prayed with open hand:

“In vain my father prayed to you  
To bring his dear son home,  
Lest on these foreign Trojan shores  
Forever I should roam.

He promised you a length of hair  
That on my head I grew.  
A sacrifice of thousand bulls  
With bronze to you I’d hew.

At your great shrine with incense smoked,  
My father asked of you.  
But this you failed as fate forbids  
My fatherland to view.

Instead the comrade dead I love  
Will hold my yellow hair  
When under dreary Hades’ gate  
He passes missing air.”

And then his yellow hair he gave  
To his beloved friend  
To carry to the underworld,  
Their mortal rift to mend.

With him mourned thousands of Greek men  
So long the sun would set  
If they had mourned their hearts’ desire.  
Achilles asked them yet:

“Atreides, you rule best the Greeks,

The rest have mourned enough.  
Let we who love the dead the most  
Complete this task so tough.”

King Agamemnon heard him speak,  
And sent the Greeks away  
while mourners stayed to build a pyre,  
a hundred feet of hay.

They placed the corpse atop the bier.  
With off’ring gifts they part,  
While swift great-heart’d Achilles weeps  
And wraps him with sad art.

He wraps from head to toe with care  
And piles grave gifts around.  
He gives two-handled jars of oil,  
Perfumes, and honey brown.

He slays strong-necked horses four  
And puts them on the pyre.  
He slays two dogs of Patroclus  
And puts them on the pyre.

Then twelve great-hearted Trojan sons  
He slays with bronze in ire  
While weeps he for his dearest friend  
And puts them on the pyre.

“Goodbye, my Patroclus, goodbye!  
I’m doing all I swore!  
I give these worthy gifts to you:  
Twelve sons of Trojan corps.

But Hector, that King Priam’s son,  
I won’t put on the pyre,  
For hungry dogs will eat his corpse  
While lays it in the mire.”

Achilles burned dear Patroclus  
While waits their tomb twice-wide.  
Achilles and dear Patroclus  
Will lay soon side-by-side.

## Life, Death, and Recycling in the Homeric Simile

Briana Oser '25

Homer does not hesitate to illustrate in vivid language the brutal killings of the Trojan War. In each battle scene in the *Iliad*, he briefly describes the warrior with epithets such as “κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ,” which translates to “Hector with glancing helm.” Then, Homer explains in graphic detail the method the warrior uses to kill his victim. This is a common Homeric formula that is only broken during significant moments such as in Homer’s similes, which he often utilizes to make comparisons between a warrior and their deaths through elaborate descriptions or backstories. In these similes, he introduces major themes by establishing connections and making reflections that point to a greater truth beyond what takes place during the battlefield scenes themselves. Two such similes appear in lines 473-490 of Book 4 and in lines 264-273 of Book 11. Despite the chronological separation of the scenes, they share several common messages about the recycling of life and death, displayed through their feminine, naturalistic imagery.

Homer’s simile describing Simoisius’ death brings him as close to birth as possible. Simoisius is a young man whom Homer introduces through a story about his mother and his namesake. Simoisius was killed by Ajax, the son of a king and an experienced warrior. Throughout the simile, Homer’s diction emphasizes Simoisius’ youth. Some of his language is more direct at certain points: for instance, he calls him “ἡῖθεον,” which translates to “unmarried youth.” Homer also describes Simoisius as “θαλερόν,” which means “sturdy,” or perhaps better yet, “buxom.” “Buxom” is an adjective which the Oxford English Dictionary defines in terms laden with connotations of femininity, such as “Full of health, vigour, and good temper; well-favoured, plump and comely, ‘jolly’, comfortable-looking (in person). (Chiefly of women.)” In another definition, which the Dictionary now considers to be out of date, the word means, “submissive, humble, meek.” Ajax kills Simoisius by

slashing his breast, “στῆθος,” which Fagles more intimately translates to “nipple.” Homer’s womanish imagery illustrates tenderness: infancy at its earliest point. This theme of birth is present in both similes.

In Book 11, Homer describes a battle scene where Agamemnon is badly wounded. Agamemnon is a much more experienced warrior than Simoisius; he is not only advanced in years, but he is also a more talented battle strategist and fighter. Despite this apparent wisdom and strength, Homer feminizes his pain, comparing it to labor birth-pangs. Fagles translates this comparison: “spear-sharp as the labor-pangs that pierce a woman, agonies brought on by the harsh, birthing spirits, Hera’s daughters who hold the stabbing power of birth – so sharp the throes that burst on Atrides’ strength.” Despite Agamemnon’s capabilities and power, he is still a man, and subject to harsh pain as mothers are at the peak action of their womanhood. Again in this simile, Homer connects life, birth, and death. Even the most experienced warrior cannot escape fate, a reality which Homer emphasizes with imagery of the divine, referring to the Greek goddess Εἰλειθυία (Eileithyia) who facilitates childbirth and protects the unborn. The symbol of the divine provides an even starker contrast: Agamemnon is depicted as a powerful, kingly commander, but in reality he is just a man.

Both similes allude to the fragility of the human body. This quality of weakness is more dominant in Simoisius than in Agamemnon, but both warriors are subject to the same fate in their mortality. Simoisius’ story is of a young man who is cut down by Ajax far before he can reach his potential. His death is a tragedy – he is killed before he can accomplish anything, sent into battle at an early point in his maturity to face an untimely end. Agamemnon is a fierce and skilled warrior, the king of Mycenae, but he himself remains at risk in battle due to his mortal nature and suffers the consequences of this nature. His valor is easily interrupted by his mortality: “But the king kept ranging,



battling ranks on ranks and thrusting his spear and sword and hurling heavy rocks so long as the blood came flowing warm from his wound. But soon as the gash dried and firm clots formed, sharp pain came bursting in on Atrides' strength—spear-sharp as the labor-pangs that pierce a woman.” He is on the same plane as a woman, bound by the same mortal existence as the weakest person. Despite Simoisius’ tender immaturity, and despite Agamemnon’s exceptional heroism, they must eventually undergo the same fate.

The two similes contrast kingship with brute strength. In examining these similes together, we find a contrast not only between Simoisius and Agamemnon, but also between Ajax and Agamemnon. Ajax, known as the “bulwark of the Achaeans,” was a Greek of incredible strength and power. In the scene with Simoisius he does not get much description, beyond the well-known epithet “Τελαμώνιος Αἴας,” referring to his father. He is there to kill Simoisius, which he does presumably with little effort. Taking the similes in this way, we see that Simoisius actually has more in common with Agamemnon than Ajax does: they are both subject to harm and react by dying or suffering a serious wound. Again, this reduces the difference between them by emphasizing their mortality.

Another notable theme in the scene with Simoisius is that of natural life. At the beginning of the simile, Homer delves into Simoisius’ pastoral origins: his birth along the bank of the Simois river as his mother is tending to a flock of sheep. In this scene, Ajax is described as “μεγάθυμος,” which literally means “great-hearted,” but which Fagles fittingly translates to “lionhearted.” Later, Homer compares the moment when he collapses at the hands of Ajax to the felling of a poplar tree. The natural imagery brings to mind growth and the cyclical nature of life. Rivers are the source of life for the creatures and plants around them. Trees provide oxygen, shelter and nutrition. Simoisius’ similarity to a black poplar tree, “αἴγιρος,” is especially significant – they are rapidly growing trees, tall and straight in shape, but

they are also thin and live short lives. Most men in some stage in their adolescence experience rapid growth spurts that sometimes outpace the rate at which they gain weight, which can leave them appearing rather emaciated until they reach puberty and their metabolism begins to slow down. At this point in his life, Simoisius has not reached full strength. As the poplar tree is cut down and shaped into a chariot for the purposes of battle, Simoisius' life is taken from the realm of men and his body returned to the earth.

Homer reinforces the shared fate of mankind with a comparison between human mortality and nature elsewhere in the *Iliad*. In Book 6, Hector meets Glaucus, a Lycian captain, in battle, and after Hector inquires about where he is from he tells the story of his family. Glaucus questions his interest. He compares leaves to men: as the seasons pass, so do the generations of leaves, and as the years pass, so do the generations of men. All life on earth is temporary, but it is also cyclical and continuous. He sees no purpose in exploring his lineage, because it is constantly being replaced, by generation after generation. Still, he explains it anyway, because it circles back to him; it is a relational cycle.

At the end of the simile, Homer abruptly switches from imagery of nature's thriving to imagery of man's domination of nature. Homer's descriptions of Simoisius' birth and death are borderline idyllic and romantic. This is already striking enough because of the scene's context, but then Homer contrasts it with sheer utility. Nature is no longer beautiful for its own sake. In a way, this is still consistent with the nature of living things – after all, it is constantly in competition with itself. The poplar tree is not left to rot peacefully. It is struck down to serve the purpose of the man who kills it. The final four lines of the simile with the “ἀρματοπηγός,” the chariot-maker, symbolize a recycling of purposes: from Fagles' translation, “A chariot-maker fells it with shining iron ax as timber to bend for handsome chariot wheels and there it lies, seasoning by the river.” As a poplar tree is felled for chariot making,

Simoisius' death also serves a purpose, to advance the victory of the Greeks, and to demolish the hope of the Trojans. Each death is a reminder of life's inevitable end. The chariot itself is also a symbol of that cycle: its movement is propelled forward by the circular motion of its wheels, advancing into battle and looking back to the context of the scene.

The themes of the natural and of femininity, or human nature, also point to beauty. In Simoisius' simile, the poplar tree is recycled into "περικαλλεῖ δίφρῳ," which literally translates to "very beautiful chariot board." Fagles appropriately translates this phrase to "handsome chariot," which draws us back to Simoisius and his boyhood. Imagery of the feminine does not only bring to mind fragility, but also beauty. In his simile, Agamemnon is made feminine, but this reality does not only call to mind Agamemnon's human weakness, but also reminds us that Agamemnon *has* a body: "αἷμ' ἀνήνοθε," translating to "the blood gushed forth," a very graphic and vivid reminder about the nature of possessing a body.

Homeric battle scenes are often quick and violent. When Homer expands on them, or produces imagery beyond a simple description, they introduce a deeper significance into the rest of the story. In this case, two of Homer's similes bring together a common theme of life, birth and death. Within these themes are important sub-themes and reflections on nature and beauty. The connection between the similes serves to underscore the fundamental connection that all living things share, whether you are a young man, a great king, or a little black poplar tree: the inescapable fact of our mortality.

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Josephus and the Law  
Stacey Kaliabakos '23

Flavius Josephus, born in 37 C.E., was a Jewish priest who lived during the time of the disastrous revolt of Jews against the Romans, which ultimately culminated in the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Josephus is famous for writing a firsthand account of the Jewish War in Greek, known as *Bellum Judaicum*. He was appointed to the rebel command in Galilee when he was 29, but was soon after captured by the Romans during their invasion of Jotapata and subsequently saved his own life by prophesying that Vespasian, a Roman general at the time, would become emperor. After his prophecy came true, Josephus earned his freedom but also became part of the Roman forces under Emperor Vespasian.<sup>1</sup> Although some people think of Josephus as a traitor to his people, his role in the Jewish War is much more nuanced. Josephus seeks to persuade the Jews to put down their arms and capitulate to the Romans, who he thinks God has sent as a punishment for the sins the Jews have committed.<sup>2</sup> By means of analyzing the Jewish War through the lens of Josephus, a modern audience can understand more about the significance of Jewish Biblical Laws during that time period in addition to the duality of people living in Jerusalem: the Zealots (whose sins were the cause of the war) and regular Jewish citizens, whom Josephus is trying to save. This analysis will give insight into the significance of religion in society and what the potential consequences of ignoring divine-given law could be according to a man who was not only a Jewish priest but also a survivor of the war.

For the Jews, the Hebrew Bible explains why the world is the way it is and why the Jewish people must endure suffering. It also serves as a sort of handbook to ensure that people live rightly by God, motivating the establishment of a society driven by justice.<sup>3</sup> The laws presented in the Hebrew Bible were (and are) extremely important to the Jews, as they were thought to have been

given to them by God Himself. Although the Hebrew Bible has many interpretations, the laws specifically listed throughout the Torah were not taken lightly, but rather influenced all aspects of Jewish life and culture. Jewish society was a theocracy—in other words, the rule of law was directly related to Biblical law. Breaking the laws given by God was viewed as not only sinful, but detrimental to Jewish society as a whole. Thus, throughout Jewish history, the subjugation of the Jews by other groups was often blamed on people not properly adhering to the law.

During the Roman invasion of Jerusalem and before the destruction of the Second Temple, Josephus saw sinful actions of the Jews (the Jewish Zealots in particular) as a possible cause of the war. Josephus' reflections on the war are complex, as he wrote from a very complicated position. For one, his place in Roman society as an imperial prisoner later in life must have caused confusion (internal but also external) as to where his loyalties belonged.<sup>4</sup> He was, after all, a Jewish priest, and never renounced his beliefs, but many of the Jews that lived during his time and even after his death felt animosity towards him. It seemed to them as if Josephus had betrayed his people, giving himself over to the Romans so that he might guarantee his survival. And this is, to a certain extent, true—Josephus was preoccupied with getting himself through this period of instability alive, as demonstrated in his cunning ability to narrowly escape both death by suicide<sup>5</sup> and by the Romans; however, he also wanted to save as many Jewish lives as he could given his situation.<sup>6</sup> His faith and culture were both important to him and he did not want Jewishness to be entirely lost to history. Therefore, Josephus spends much time in his writings attempting to explain why the atrocities in Jerusalem came to pass in order to justify the reasons why this could have happened to his people.

Josephus wanted the Jewish people to be united with one another—not against the Romans, but in their faith and commitment to God. Unity is, for him, a result of the Jewish community living in accordance with the

laws of Moses. Evoking Deuteronomy 28, Josephus writes,

And when Moses...foretold, as God had declared to him 'That if they transgressed that institution for the worship of God, they should experience the following miseries: Their land should be full of weapons of war from their enemies, and their cities should be overthrown, and their temple should be burnt that they should be sold for slaves, to such men as would have no pity on them in their afflictions.'<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, Josephus has in mind not just the tragedies in the history of Judah and Israel, but also the experiences of the Jews during his own lifetime. For those living in the modern era, it may seem outlandish to lay blame on those who do not exactly adhere to the rules of their religion. Most people today do not follow their religious doctrines perfectly and may skip obligations that were formerly considered essential without believing there will be severe consequences. However, for Josephus, such transgressions against the laws of God were enough to warrant the attacks of the Romans. Josephus, therefore, almost entirely alleviates the Romans from any blame, as they are fulfilling their role of God's punishment for the Jews who have sinned against him.<sup>8</sup> Although he acknowledges that the Romans are physically responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and for the subjugation of the Jewish people, the Jewish war-party (known as the Sicarii, but also as Zealots) were culpable for the war due to their sins. For example, Josephus discusses Ananus, a high priest of Judaea, who was murdered by violent Jewish rebels. He deems the murder of Ananus as the beginning of the end for Jerusalem, since a religious figure was slaughtered in the center of the city and his body ridiculed by his fellow Jews.<sup>9</sup> Josephus argues that this blasphemous act, along with others performed at the hands of the Zealots, were sufficient reasons for God to "condemn his polluted city to destruction."<sup>10</sup>

During the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the Romans launched a formidable attack against the Temple, where they were able to capture three of the four walls. At this point in time, Josephus had joined the Roman forces by imperial command, but did not wish the Romans to continue their violent siege. He was selected by Titus, Vespasian's son and general at the time, to act as a mediator between the Romans and the Jewish rebels.<sup>11</sup> Josephus delivered a famous address on top of the fourth wall of the Temple in an attempt to get the Jews to surrender. In his speech, which is recorded in *Bellum Judaicum* V. 362-419, Josephus implores the Jews to not succumb to self-destruction, arguing that they have never won against one of their enemies with arms and weapons.<sup>12</sup> In his opinion, there was no possible way to overcome the strength of the Roman forces. He tells the people listening, who were throwing projectiles from the parapets as he spoke, that God would not protect the Jews against the Romans since the Zealots had wronged him. He declares that they are unworthy of God's help, having stained his name and the Temple.

Although Josephus undoubtedly was using this speech to convince the Jews to stand down and try to survive, he was mostly unsuccessful. Josephus's words did not get through to the Zealots and other rebels, but they did convince a significant number of the remaining Jews to defect to Titus. These refugees were resettled without penalty.<sup>13</sup> The others were later subjected to torture, undergoing crucifixion, mutilation, and even death.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the Temple was destroyed, and the Romans took Jerusalem as their own province from the Jewish rebels. Ultimately, civil unrest would lead to another revolt in 132 C.E.

Josephus was neither a Jewish nor a Roman apologist, although historians have tried to place him in one of these categories in the millennia since his death. His role in Jewish history is more complex than either of those two categories allow: he acknowledged the difference between

Jewish Zealots, whom he believed were the ultimate cause of the war, and the Jews who were caught in the crossfire, trying to survive just like him. Josephus genuinely attempted to protect his people—all of them, no matter how sinful he believed them to be—and to explain why such devastation was falling upon the land of Israel. In all his writings, especially his speech to the Jews from the Temple wall, Josephus expressed himself as a religious man living in the midst of a war of divine origins who was unable to efficiently explain his point of view in the way he wanted. If the Zealots had also listened to him, it is unclear whether the Romans would have been more lenient in their attacks and if the Second Temple may have somehow been able to survive. Nevertheless, Josephus remains a unique historian with a perspective that has allowed us, nearly 2,000 years later, to ruminate on the effects of breaking religious laws and the causes and consequences of imperialism.

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The Flora Farnese in the National Archaeological Museum,  
Naples.  
Mary Whitney '23

Cassandra: The Greek Mythological Prophet  
Mary Whitney '23

Cassandra,  
*the Greek mythological prophet.*  
a Trojan priestess

- [The Boy Who Cried Wolf](#)

a rhetorical device  
whose accurate prophecies, generally of impending  
disaster, are not believed.

she becomes a quasi-messenger  
admired by the god Apollo,  
**dishevelled hair** denoting the insanity  
ascribed to her by the Trojans<sup>[1]</sup>

4.2 [Cassandra and the Fall of Troy](#)

where snakes licked (or whispered into) her ears  
God of all ways, but only Death's to me,  
Thou hast destroyed me, thou, my love of old!  
...Ever since that fault I could persuade no one of  
anything.<sup>[15]</sup>

Her cursed gift from Apollo became an endless pain and  
frustration to her.

seen as a liar and a madwoman  
Priam, had locked her away in a chamber  
and guarded her

Cassandra, angry with Helen's arrival, furiously  
snatched away

Helen's golden veil and tore at her hair.<sup>[18]</sup>  
intent on destroying the Greeks herself, the  
physical torment of other characters  
the first to see the body of her brother Hector being  
brought back

She has been onstage, silent and ignored.  
She speaks, disconnectedly and  
transcendent, in the grip of her psychic possession  
by Apollo,<sup>[28]:ln. 1140</sup>

*Brother, bulwark of Trojans, terrorizer of Greeks, I do not see your beauty of old or  
hands warmed by burnt ships, But your*

*lacerated limbs and those famous shoulders savaged By  
heavy chains. I follow you...*<sup>[13]</sup>

“She evokes the same awe, horror and pity as do  
schizophrenics”<sup>[29]p. 12</sup>

The frightened and respectful chorus are  
unable to comprehend her.

#### 4.2.3 *The aftermath of Troy and Cassandra’s death*

Attempting to prove herself right,  
time is suspended  
deep, true insight with utter helplessness,  
*see Cassandra (disambiguation).*

“I see and I am there and I enjoy it, no false vision deceives my eyes: let’s watch”  
(*video et intersum et fruor, / imago visus dubia non*

*fallit meos: / spectemus.*<sup>[14]</sup>”

Her eyes flashed. She knew the future.”<sup>[10]</sup>

Wikipedia poetry is a recent form of found poetry that appears to have grown out of Tumblr as early as 2020. Wikipedia poems arrange combinations of words, phrases, quotations, and sometimes even datasets from one or multiple Wikipedia articles to create a literary collage that imparts new artistic meaning to what is traditionally considered informational writing. The textual fragments of my Wikipedia poem come entirely from the article dedicated to Cassandra, daughter of Priam and sister of Hector. In utilizing this particular medium of found poetry, I intended to consider how this form of poetry enhances or challenges how we see Cassandra’s character. What is the effect of composing a narrative from quotes taken out of context? How do quotations from other texts featuring Cassandra impact how we understand her? In this explanatory analysis of my poem, I will not only explain which pieces of Cassandra’s Wikipedia article I used but also my intention and vision for the poem as a whole.

The poem's title takes the title of the Wikipedia page and combines it with the article's subject. This immediately gives a specific, but still rather impersonal understanding of who Cassandra is. This blends well with Cassandra's other "titles" in the first stanza as "Trojan priestess" "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" and "rhetorical device," each of which considers different facets of Cassandra's reception. Whereas "Trojan priestess" purely considers her Homeric context, being a "rhetorical device" and "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" reveals how the nature of her character has grown beyond her function within Greek mythology. Cassandra's gift of prophecy and Apollo's curse that no one will believe her become an idiom and language strategy that profits from her pain but entirely erase her as an individual with a past.

The second stanza weaves together accounts of Cassandra's involvement with Apollo while taking care to consider both internal and external perspectives on the mythology. Being described as a "quasi-messenger" insinuates that she professes her prophetic nature but is not one in actuality, enhancing the fragment of the image description of Evelyn De Morgan's *Cassandra* that perpetuates the Trojan's claim of her insanity. The snakes, which were believed to deliver her the prophecies in some tellings of her myth, instead whisper to her quotations that she speaks in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. I intended to create a level of ambiguity that could lead to two valid interpretations: If reading from Cassandra's internal perspective, did Apollo plant these feelings of guilt in her mind for not submitting to his sexual advances? Or, if reading from an external perspective of the Trojans, does Cassandra speak to herself in a fit of insanity, calling out to a god that will not respond to her? Cassandra's suffering at the hands of Apollo is ultimately a private affair, and it is a suffering that is enhanced by the way other Homeric characters interact with her in stanza three.

I chose to create muddled links between Apollo's curse and the behaviors and comments of both Cassandra and other characters. This stanza characterizes Cassandra as

“a liar and a madwoman” from the outset, referencing both Priam’s treatment of his daughter, Cassandra’s reception of Helen when Paris brings her to Troy, and her determination to destroy the Trojan horse. Others see her as a “torment” because they do not believe her prophecies, but her words and actions ultimately stem from her ardent desire to protect her family and the Trojan people, despite how they scorned and dismissed her. The stanza continues with the return of Hector’s body and transitions to a use of language that reflects her role as a tragic character. Being “onstage” with the “chorus” of Trojans presents Cassandra both as an actor and as an individual aware of her powerlessness. Whereas Cassandra’s words, quoted from Seneca the Younger’s *Agamemnon*, are an outpouring of her grief for her brother Hector, the “chorus” of Trojans responds with a comment from scholar Seth Schein on the Cassandra scene in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, trivializing her mourning.

Stanza four seeks to “disambiguate” Cassandra by associating the certainty of her character with the fall of Troy and her death. As a mythological character, Cassandra is perpetually trapped in a time and place associated with a limited series of outcomes (depending on the liberties that authors take with the mythology). Cassandra is ultimately a tragic character due to the nature of Apollo’s curse; it is because of this curse that she cannot prevent Paris from bringing Helen to Troy, the Trojans from accepting the Trojan horse, or, ultimately, Hector from being killed by Achilles. “Disambiguated,” she is a woman marked by suffering that she could have prevented if only others believed her.

The poem concludes with another quote from Seneca’s *Agamemnon* (spoken by Cassandra just before she revels in the vivid, immediate future of Agamemnon’s death at the hands of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus) and a quote from Dares of Phrygia’s *History of the Fall of Troy*. Just as Cassandra invites the audience to imagine the scene of Agamemnon’s death that cannot be portrayed on stage, Cassandra invites the reader of the poem to witness her

narrative. Whether Cassandra “enjoys” her fate is a matter of the reader’s discernment—is this enjoyment genuine or a product of her supposed madness? No matter the reader’s interpretation, the “future” Cassandra sees is paradoxically both ambiguous and certain; Troy will fall and Cassandra will die, but Homer, Aeschylus, Seneca, and any other authors crafted (and will continue to write) parallel narratives that led to the same tragic conclusion.

I chose Cassandra as the subject of my poem from countless other characters in the *Iliad* because I believe she does not receive as much attention compared to some of the main actors in the epic. Due to her curse, she is confined by the disastrous outcome of the Trojan War, and yet she utilizes her gift of prophecy until her death, to the detriment of herself and others. Whether lucid or insane, Cassandra is defined by her prophetic gift and her inability to influence the future. I hope that this poem conveys that I not only see Cassandra as burdened with many sufferings, but that she deserves to be seen as a powerful woman nonetheless (power, in this instance, not being immediately associated with being good, but with choosing to act even when she knows the consequences). I hope Cassandra invites you to see her and watch her story unravel the way she did for me.

The *Kalevala* Melody for an English *Odyssey*  
Stephen Pittman '23

I chose to translate lines 469 to 498 of Book 8 of the *Odyssey* into English verse. The meter I use in the translation is trochaic tetrameter, the meter used in the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*. I was inspired mainly to use that meter because of the beauty it adopts when performed in the Finnish language to a famous, traditional melody for it. I have only known this melody as “the *Kalevala* Melody,” and it can be found under that name easily on the internet, with some performances of the epic poem in that melody available on video.<sup>1</sup> I became also inspired to use this meter because of precedents for it in English poetry, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha*, which was itself inspired by the *Kalevala*.

Most importantly, though, for my reasoning to choose this way of translating, was my desire to evoke the same sort of sound and emotion that the immersive poetic recitations that ancient bards of the Homeric epics produced. Of course, they used a completely different kind of meter, with different musical elements, among many other things; therefore, the color of those ancient poetic recitations could not have possibly been reproduced in what I have done, for, after all, I have made a translation, in a completely different language with its own poetic tendencies and limitations. Nonetheless, the immersive, trance-like singing of Finnish oral poetry is possibly similar to the experience ancient listeners had when they heard the oral performances of Homeric epic. Thus, I hopefully can reproduce a bit of what that might have felt like in performing my English translation according to that Finnish melody.

In keeping with my attempt to evoke this sense of a traditional poetic oral performance, I specifically chose the scene from the *Odyssey* Book 8 in which Demodocus begins his own poetic oral performance for the third time in that



book. Such a topic is not only directly pertinent to the experiences I am trying to replicate by having Odysseus' praise for poets and the actual act of performing referenced, but I wanted to translate a scene in which a bard is being encouraged to perform. This kind of encouragement would probably be a common experience for bards across cultures with similar poetic traditions. The *Kalevala* itself begins with exhortations to a brother to begin singing together with the singer.

The translation, due to these highly limiting stylistic choices, is incredibly free, and in no way literal, and, in some cases, barely faithful to the Greek lines themselves. It is faithful throughout in meaning and in events and order, but much detail is omitted and some material added in order to fit the meter and keep the rhyming scheme, both of which are not perfect themselves. I would thus consider the translation as "paraphrasing," at best. This is very different from translations I normally produce or seek out to read, so it felt rather uncomfortable being so liberal with the original meanings of the words and even more so in adding parts that cannot be gathered at all really from the original text in a literal sense.

My choice to write in rhyming couplets was mainly due to the fact that my chosen meter limited the length of my lines, so I aimed to spread each line of the original poem across two. Thus each couplet roughly corresponds with one line in the original poem, although not at all perfectly.

Translation:

By the throne of Alkinoös,  
Sat the clever Odysseus.

There was food and wine abounding,  
Ere the poet's lyre was sounding.

Then a herald did come nearer,  
Leading in that trusted singer.

Honored poet, Demodocus,  
Sat in a great place of focus.

Then Odysseus was cutting,  
Tender pieces of pork, shining.

Told he to the herald, serving,  
“Give the poet this deserving.

Even though I’m full of sorrow,  
I embrace this poet fellow.

For of all the classes of men,  
Poets are placed high amongst them.

By the Muse they are beloved.  
Skill in singing on them she shed.”

So the herald fed the singer,  
And all ate their fill of dinner.

Then Odysseus the clever,  
Spoke all these words to the singer:

“O Demodocus, I will say,  
You all mortals greatly outweigh.

By the Muse or by Apollo,  
Surely you learned how the tales go.

For you tell the stories so well,  
Of what fate upon the Greeks fell.  
How at Troy they suffered and won,  
You tell like you saw it happen.

So now sing me of the wood horse,  
Which passed into Troy without force.

By Odysseus it was planned,  
That the horse by armed men be manned.

Thus the Greeks did sack the city,  
By deceiving Troy so slyly.

If you could recount this story,  
Just as they achieved this glory,

I will speak to all, declaring,  
That the gods inspire your singing.”

#### Endnotes

1. Here is a link to a video of a full performance of the first rune of the *Kalevala*, sung in Finnish to the *Kalevala* Melody and accompanied with kantele playing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRdCsEVFd4I>.

## The Philosophic Way of Life in Plato's *Republic*

Kevin Akalski '23

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes the activity of philosophers. However, his portrayal of philosophers often contrasts with his own philosophic and political activity. More specifically, Socrates' account of philosophers differs from his own activity with respect to how philosophers are led to philosophize, how they regard engaging in social and political life after philosophizing, and the importance that they place on human life. Further, these differences between what Socrates says about philosophy and what he does shed light on Plato's intended teaching in the *Republic* as they illustrate that Plato warns against the lack of diversity that is engendered by the utopian spirit of the ideal city, Kallipolis, that Socrates describes and that Plato regards the best education is one that is directed at the particular needs of the one whom one is educating.

Although Socrates, in the allegory of the cave, describes future philosophers as needing to be compelled to begin to seek the truth, Socrates himself philosophizes out of a desire to do so. In the allegory of the cave, Socrates asks Glaucon to imagine prisoners in a cave who, from birth, have only seen the shadows on a wall that have been cast by things that are being carried across a road by other human beings (514a-515a [p. 193]). Since the men in the cave have only seen the shadows and not the things that they are shadows of, they think that the shadows of the things are the real things (515a-515c [pp. 193-4]). However, Socrates then tells Glaucon to consider what would happen if one of the men, "is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw before" (515c-d [p. 194]). This movement of the prisoner from perceiving merely shadows of things to perceiving the things

themselves represents the beginning of the quest to pursue wisdom that is the essence of philosophy. Nevertheless, Socrates' description of the man who has been released from his chains as being "compelled" to pursue knowledge and "in pain" in the act of doing so differs radically from Socrates' own philosophic activity. Socrates does not have to be compelled to philosophize. Instead, he philosophizes out of a desire to pursue wisdom. In other words, he is motivated by an *eros* for philosophy. This contrast between Socrates and the man who has broken out of his chains and is on the quest of philosophy is furthered when Socrates speaks of the man as needing to be, "compelled... to look at the light itself" (515e [p. 194]), and, when he does so, his "eyes [would] hurt and...he [would] flee, turning away to those things that he is able to make out and hold them to be really clearer than what is being shown" (515d [p. 194]). This description of the former prisoners contrasts with Socrates' behavior because, as Socrates attempts to gain wisdom, he does not flee from the task and merely content himself to believe the dominant opinions of his society. Indeed, at the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates refutes the definition of justice proposed by Cephalus, who is the spokesman for the conventional opinion of justice during Socrates' time. After refuting this definition of justice, Socrates continued to try to discover the essence of justice by discussing the topic with Polemarchus and Thrasymachus. Never in the dialogue does Socrates return to the conventional understanding of justice; however, this is exactly what one would expect Socrates to do if one were to accept Socrates' portrayal of the former prisoner in the allegory of the cave as a true depiction of the journey of philosophy. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between how Socrates says that the prisoner is led to philosophize and how Socrates is led to philosophize. The fact that Socrates says that philosophers need to be compelled to begin philosophizing even though Socrates philosophizes out of *eros* sheds light on Plato's intended teaching in the

*Republic* by warning against the utopian spirit of Kallipolis. Since philosophy, as revealed by Socrates' actions, is motivated by *eros*, it cannot be practiced in the ideal city that Socrates describes. This is because the utopia must be entirely self-sufficient, yet *eros* points to our desiring to have something beyond ourselves. Because of the fact that philosophy cannot be practiced in the ideal city, it follows that Kallipolis is not desirable for Plato. Further, a utopia is also not desirable because, in it, all would hold the same intellectual positions so that the city may be completely unified. This would destroy diversity of thought, which Socrates' entire enterprise is based on. Indeed, Socrates spends his time talking to ambitious young men of different types in Plato's dialogues in an effort to moderate their inclinations, and, if all diversity of thought were eliminated, Socrates would lose much of the impetus behind his project. There is also a difference between how Socrates socially engages with other human beings and how he describes philosophers as socially engaging with other human beings. Socrates argues that the sun in the allegory of the cave represents "the *idea* of the good" (517c [p. 196]). This "*idea* of the good," Socrates says, "is in fact the cause of all that is right and fair in everything—in the visible it gave birth to light and its sovereign; in the intelligible, itself sovereign, it provided truth and intelligence" (517c [p. 196]). Socrates argues that those who reach the stage at which they can comprehend "the *idea* of the good", "aren't willing to mind the business of human beings, but rather... their souls are always eager to spend their time above" (517c-d [p. 196]). Further, Socrates states that the philosophers who have perceived "the *idea* of the good" will have to be "compelled in courts or elsewhere to contest about the shadows of the just or the representations of which they are the shadows, and to dispute about the way these things are understood by men who have never seen justice itself" (517d-e [p. 196]). Socrates also argues that, for the philosopher-kings, who he says would be the best fit to

rule the beautiful city that he describes in speech, “human life” will not “seem anything great” (486a [p. 165]).

The idea, which Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates, that philosophers do not want to socially engage with human beings, are compelled to testify to the truth to them because they would rather spend their time contemplating the truth, and do not consider the lives of human beings to be important is contradicted by Socrates’ behavior. In the *Republic*, Socrates spends the most time talking directly to Glaucon and Adeimantus. Both of them are ambitious young men who nonetheless have certain inclinations that Socrates seeks to moderate. Glaucon, for example, has tyrannical inclinations. He asked Socrates to prove that it is better to be just and suffer than unjust and not suffer because he wants to know whether he should practice justice or reap the rewards of injustice (357a-b [p. 35]). Adeimantus, on the other hand, has anti-democratic prejudices. Socrates, however, tries to moderate their inclinations by trying to win them over to philosophy by convincing them that the philosophic way of life is the best kind of life. One way Socrates tries to do this is by suggesting to Glaucon and Adeimantus that the highest pleasure belongs to the philosopher (582d-583a [p. 264]). If he did not regard human life as great, Socrates would not spend his time trying to shape the souls of these young men. Further, Socrates’ interest in non-philosophers, specifically Glaucon, is illustrated at the beginning of the dialogue when Socrates says, “I went down to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon, son of Ariston, to pray to the goddess; and, at the same time, I wanted to observe how they would put on the festival, since they were now holding it for the first time” (327a [p. 3]). This quotation is in contrast to how Socrates describes the philosopher in the allegory of the cave because, here, Socrates freely goes down into the cave, where Glaucon is, and travels with him to the Piraeus. Socrates did not have to be compelled to speak with Glaucon at the beginning of the dialogue, and, since he takes the time to speak with Glaucon and moderate his inclinations, then he must view human life

as great enough to warrant engaging in the task. The fact that Socrates acts contrary to the way he describes philosophers as acting with respect to non-philosophers reveals that Plato wants his readers to understand that a true education is one where a teacher bases his teaching on the needs of his pupils, just as Socrates taught Glaucon and Adeimantus based on their particular needs. Instead of giving one education for all, Plato advocates an education where a teacher, like Socrates, can try to shape the souls of his students based on their particular natures.

Socrates' behavior also differs from the way that he portrays philosophers because, although Socrates says that philosophers are complete in their knowledge, Socrates practices philosophy as defined by the quest for wisdom. According to Socrates, philosophers should be kings because, "philosophers are those who are able to grasp what is always the same in all respects" (484b [p. 163]). Based on this quotation, a philosopher has perfect knowledge because he knows that which is always the case. However, Socrates never claims to know the truth. Philosophy, as Socrates practices it, is rather the quest for wisdom. This does not assume that the philosopher has perfect knowledge or that he ever will achieve perfect knowledge. Indeed, Socrates says that the prisoners in the cave who only see the shadows of things are, "like us" (515a [p. 193]). Socrates' use of the word "us" shows that he includes himself in the cave and does not regard himself as possessing the truth that the philosophers that he describes possess. Therefore, philosophy, as practiced by Socrates, is in tension with philosophy as he describes it.

In the *Republic*, there is a tension between how Socrates portrays philosophy and how he actually practices it. Socrates misrepresents the activity of the philosopher by saying that he needs to be compelled to begin philosophizing, by saying that, once he has gained knowledge, he must be compelled to associate with non-philosophers, and by saying that philosophers have perfect knowledge. These tensions between Socrates' portrayal of



philosophy and his own activity shed light on Plato's teachings that warn against the utopian spirit of Kallipolis and that promote an education where a teacher purposefully directs his teaching toward the needs of each of his pupils.

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## A Literature Review of the *Odyssey* Landscapes

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The *Odyssey* Landscapes are a series of frescoes found at Via Graziosa near the Esquiline hill in Rome. They were painted in the first century BCE and were accidentally discovered in 1848 near present-day Via Cavour. The *domus* of which the paintings were part was built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and reconstructed and lavishly decorated in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.<sup>1</sup> Scholars date them to either c. 50-45 BCE or 45-40 BCE. The paintings were in the second style, which was characterized by *trompe l'oeil*, architectural vistas, and open vistas (though paintings of open vistas were usually reserved for the most important rooms in the house).<sup>2</sup> The frescoes depict scenes from Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic about the Greek hero Odysseus' journey home after the end of the Trojan War. Though there are 24 books in the *Odyssey*, the frescoes only depict Odysseus' tale to the Phaeacians in Books 10-12.<sup>3</sup> There are 11 sections to the fresco, each broken up by painted columns, and each depicting a different scene from the *Odyssey*. The first section has been badly damaged and several of the others were restored heavily in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Only seven and a half are on view at the Vatican because of the damage.<sup>5</sup>

Each panel is 1.16 meters tall and has an approximate width of 1.5 meters, but each width is slightly different. The bottom of each painting was placed four meters up from the bottom of the wall, making it a true frieze.<sup>6</sup> As its title suggests, this painting is first and foremost a landscape. Though there are figures in each panel, it is still considered a landscape painting. It is credited as being the first known realistic landscape painting because of its intricate details.

In this essay I review the literature on the *Odyssey* landscapes, discussing the sources chronologically and thematically. I analyze a variety of international scholarly sources coming from Germany, Italy, Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their articles and

books span from 1963 until 2009. These scholars are particularly concerned with the frieze's original placement on the wall, the viewer's perspective, and its status as either an original work or a copy.

Early scholarship assumed that there was a lost Greek original for the *Odyssey Landscapes*, that it was not an original painting. In 1963, Peter von Blanckenhagen produced a detailed analysis of the *Odyssey Frieze*. He begins by giving the history of the *Landscapes'* discovery, condition, restorations, and a short description of each panel. Later, he discusses the authenticity of the *Landscapes* as an original. In 1963, scholars commonly held the view that most Roman paintings were copies of Greek paintings that have since been lost. He continues this line of thinking and spends pages analyzing each section to determine whether or not it can be original. As I mention later in this paper, modern scholarship has disproven that (most) Roman paintings are copies, including the *Odyssey Landscapes*.

However, for a long time, scholars held the view that this painting is not an original work. For example, Roger Ling, having published a book on Roman painting in 1991, also argued the *Odyssey Frieze* was copied. His argument was very similar to von Blanckenhagen's. He used Vitruvius' writing and the inscriptions as evidence of copying. Because Vitruvius said this myth was popular at the time, he argues that it must have been part of emblem books for multiple artists to copy from. Furthermore, he says the fact that the inscriptions were in Greek demonstrated that this painting likely has Greek origins. And because architectural elements were popular during the Second Style, he agrees with Von Blanckenhagen that the copyist added the pillars to the *Laistrygonian* section.

They are also both concerned with perspective and background. Unlike von Blanckenhagen, Ling provides a visual analysis of the background of the panels. But like von Blanckenhagen, he is interested in perspective – the fact that the horizon makes it look like the viewer is at a high vantage point and that the perspectives do not match up from panel to

panel.<sup>7</sup> Von Blanckenhagen similarly also discusses the perspective and horizon lines. Ling also acknowledges that this is a very realistic landscape, which has not been known to have been done before in Roman art.<sup>8</sup> The conversation on perspective does not pick back up until 2004 with Stelios Lydakis, who thinks because of the composition and perspective, a hypothetical original painting would have been placed closer to the ground.<sup>9</sup>

Ling does not comment, however, on von Blanckenhagen's assertion that panels 1-5 are a direct copy of a Greek painting and that sections 6-11 are modified from the original. Through analyzing this painting, Blanckenhagen attempts to describe what the Greek painting would have looked like. Roger Ling's section on the *Odyssey* Landscapes closely matches Von Blanckenhagen's; thus, it seems from the 1960s to the 1990s, the scholarship on this painting has not advanced much.

In an article published in 1995, Stephen Lowenstam discusses the painting's potential sources. He first discusses its faithfulness to Homer's *Odyssey* by comparing the composition of each panel to the text. Ling was interested in labels too, but just as proofs for an earlier Greek painting. Lowenstam, however, argues that labels indicate that the painter used the *Odyssey* as a source for his composition. He argues that inscriptions of personifications of nature best prove his point because some of them use Homer's language exactly: for example, calling a personified rock AKTAI, a word found in *Odyssey* 10.87-90 and the personified spring labeled KPHNH from *Odyssey* 10.107-8. He also argues that because the painter avoided using inscriptions on unnamed entities in the *Odyssey*, he was also following it. However, he points out that there is an exception in the "Attack of the Laistrygonians" panel, where two named figures are nameless in the *Odyssey* – Antilochos and Anchialos. Lowenstam cites a twelfth-century Byzantine scholar Joannes Tzetzes as mentioning these two names in his text and suggests that there must have been some tradition of which they were a part. Thus, he argues that the painter of

the *Odyssey* Landscapes was also aware of this Homeric tradition, but that the joining of the Danaids with the water-carriers myth was a Roman idea.

Like scholars before him, Lowenstam is also concerned with the originality of the *Odyssey* Frieze. He summarizes the positions of 15 scholars on the origins of the painting – that either they think it is an original or a copy. He himself argues that the painting is “a synthesis of Greek and Roman elements, the Roman of a Greek tradition,” but ultimately calls it Roman.<sup>10</sup> This position deviates from both von Blanckenhagen and Ling’s analyses. This article marks a shift in scholarship on the originality of the painting.

Recent scholarship has also been interested in finding the sources of the *Odyssey* Landscapes. While Lowenstam’s argument centers around the Landscape’s relationship to the *Odyssey*, he also acknowledges that the compositions sometimes do not completely copy it due to traditions of painting. The main example he cites is the presence of the Danaids in the “Punishment in Hades” panel and how the image joins two separate mythological traditions – the murder of their husbands and carrying broken water vessels in the Underworld. The Danaids are not in the *Odyssey* at all. Lowenstam cites other artworks and literature that depict water carriers and analyzes their potential for depicting the Danaids. He acknowledges that the Pythagorean cult made a comeback in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, which may have influenced the creation of this painting. Lowenstam further suggests that the painter was aware of Polygnotus’s *Nekuia*, which was still extant at the time, because of the similarities in the composition of women uninitiated in the marriage rites.<sup>11</sup> However, Lydakis argues that the scene with the Danaids is a copy of ancient Greek artist Nikias’ *Nekuia* painting instead.

Finally, the last source Lowenstam suggests the painter used was the allegorical *Odyssey* commentary of a twelfth-century Homeric scholar from Byzantium, Joannes Tzetzes. Thus, with all these separate influences, Lowenstam argues that the “Punishment in Hades” fresco was not a copy

but was influenced by painterly tradition. This statement contradicts both von Blanckenhagen's and Ling's arguments about the originality of the *Odyssey* Landscapes and allows a more nuanced view of them.

Another recent interest in scholars is the physical context of the painting. Filippo Coarelli's 1998 article "The *Odyssey* Frescoes of the Via Graziosa: A Proposed Context" marks a turn in the scholarly discussion of the origin of the *Odyssey* Landscapes. Though Lowenstam's article from three years earlier indicates that likely this was an original piece influenced by several sources, Coarelli maintains that the *Odyssey* Landscapes are a copy. In 2009, Marques and Cavicchioli disagree with him because scans of the fresco reveal the pillars were painted first, making them a deliberate part of the composition design. Thus, they cannot be merely copies.

There is still debate on the number of panels in the painting. Where Blanckenhagen said there were 11 extant, Coarelli suggests that there are 10. He further argues that they were part of a larger depiction of the *Odyssey* that could have included up to 100 images. Marques and Cavicchioli, however, say that there are 12 panels, but only eight plus a fragment are still extant today.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, there is still no scholarly consensus on how many panels there were originally or how many remain extant today.

Coarelli agrees with previous scholars on the sources of the Landscapes. He asserts that because of the detail of the paintings and the fact that there were likely many more, the artist could not have relied on the *Odyssey* alone as a source text. He agrees with Stephen Lowenstam on this point for the same reasons – that the captions lead scholars to believe the tradition of the Alexandrian school was another source.

Coarelli picks up the conversation on dating from Von Blanckenhagen's 1963 article. He more precisely dates the frescoes than other scholars. Coarelli analyzes a calendar found with the Landscapes which has not been addressed before. This artifact could influence the fresco's dating; its

dates do not line up with the Augustan calendar, so Coarelli interprets it as a pre-Julian artifact. Since the Roman calendar changed in 46 BCE, Coarelli thinks that the painting must be dated a few years before that. Similarly, Marques and Cavicchioli lay out the different dates the fresco could have been painted, acknowledging that it is normally dated around 50 BCE but that some think that it was closer to the Augustan period.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars also became very interested in analyzing the physical context of the painting. In terms of topographical contextualization, Coarelli argues that because of the proposed length of the portico, where the frescoes were painted, there was room for 100 paintings. It was a large private *domus*. He also briefly attempts to identify the owner of the house and concludes the house could have been the Domus Papiria and was related to the cult of Mefitis.<sup>13</sup> Timothy O'Sullivan in 2007 disagrees with Coarelli's assertion that the house was connected to the Mefitis cult or that it was the *domus* Papiria because the house reportedly has a different axis than the house that held the Odyssey Landscapes.<sup>14</sup>

O'Sullivan's article discusses contextualization but from more of a human perspective. Like Coarelli, he is concerned with the contextualization of the painting, but rather than in a purely architectural way, he ponders how the Romans would have interacted with it. There were many ambulatories in the city with porticoes and artworks, so O'Sullivan argues that this frieze is meant to remind viewers of that experience and that the portico frame "serves not only a narrative function but also an interpretive one."<sup>15</sup> Marques and Cavicchioli build off of O'Sullivan's work to create a hypothetical reconstruction of what the panels would have looked like *in situ*. They put forth several hypotheses about where in the house they would have been. They settle on the peristyle as the most likely place.<sup>16</sup> Marques and Cavicchioli also spend a section discussing O'Sullivan's argument against continuous narration. They discuss the contradictions in O'Sullivan's argument about the hypothetical *ambulatio*

and solve it by thinking about the paintings in the asymmetrical perspective of the Second Style. They assert that some of the perspectives may have been shaped for the viewer's position as he or she walked, for example, mosaics placed on the floor to indicate where the viewer should stand.<sup>17</sup> They then create a hypothetical reconstruction of the panels, hypothesizing the location of the fragment in relation to the panels and the potential location in the house, mostly focusing on its possible location in a peristyle because of the paintings' compositions and connection to each other. The placement of shade also influences the proper perspective.

Recent scholarship has been concerned about wall placement. O'Sullivan disagrees with the previously established idea that the friezes were 4 meters up on the 5.5-meter wall because it is unclear whether that measurement pertained to the height of the room or just the depth of the excavation during the dig. Two years later, Marques and Cavicchioli concur with O'Sullivan about the height of the frescoes.<sup>18</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Since their discovery in 1848, the *Odyssey* Landscapes are a popular topic in classical archaeology because of their status as the first true landscape painting and the interesting nature of their composition. Scholars have disagreed over their dating, origins, and status as a continuous narration or episodic work. Through this literature review, I hope to have delineated the scholarly debate from 1963 to present. Some scholars, such as Von Blanckenhagen, O'Sullivan, and Marques, et al. have clearly well-researched their pieces and present well-argued ideas, though some scholars have since disproven them. Other scholars, such as Ling and Coarelli, and Lydakakis provide useful information, but some of their claims need more citations and evidence to go with them. This literature review has been helpful as an art historian to question my reliability on sources, and I plan to use this as a starting point for Chapter 3 of my thesis.



## Appendix



Figure 1. Odyssey Landscapes, 4 panels. 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.  
Roman. Vatican Museums.



Figure 2. Odyssey Landscapes, 4.5 panels. 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.  
Roman. Vatican Museums.

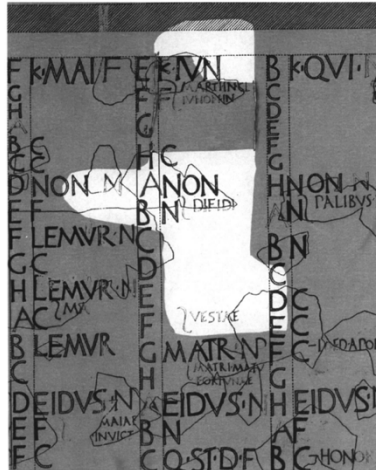


FIG. 6. Fasti Antiates Maiores. Detail of Iunius. (After A. Degraffi, *Inscriptiones Italiae* Vol. XIII (II) (Rome, 1963), tab. I, III (p. 10), I, III (p. 12) and II, III (p. 14))

Figure 3. Fasti Antiates Maiores. Detail of Iunius from the calendar found with the Odyssey Landscapes. (Image and caption source: Coarelli)



FIG. 4. Fragments of the Via Graziosa painted fasti. (From P. Matranga, La città di Lamo stabilita in Terracina secondo la descrizione di Omero e due degli antichi dipinti già ritrovati sull'Esquilino (Rome, 1852), tav. VI)

Figure 4. Fragments of the Via Graziosa painted fasti.  
(Image and caption source: Coarelli).

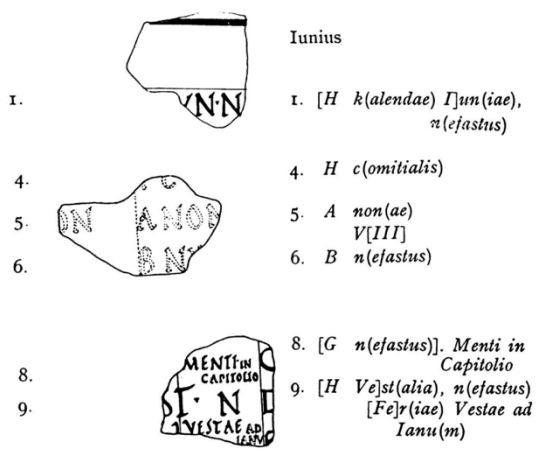


FIG. 5. Reconstruction of the fragments. (After A. Degrassi, Inscriptiones Italiae Vol. XIII (II) (Rome, 1963), tab. LXVIII)

Figure 5. Reconstruction of the fragments. (Image and caption source: Coarelli)

## Endnotes

1. Filippo Coarelli. "Odyssey Frescoes of the Via Graziosa: A Proposed Context" (1995): 31.
2. Volker Michael Strocka, "Domestic Decoration: Painting and the 'Four Styles'" in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. Peter Foss and John J. Dobbins (London: Routledge, 2007), 308.
3. Roger Ling. *Roman Painting*, 1991: 108.
4. Von Blanckenhagen "The Odyssey Frieze" (1963): 100-1. This assessment was later contradicted by Coarelli who says they "do not seem to have undergone any restoration," Coarelli (1995): 33.
5. Stelios Lydakis, *Ancient Greek Painting and its Echoes in Later Art* (2002): 198.
6. Coarelli (1995): 33.
7. Ling (1991): 110.
8. Ling (1991): 110.
9. Lydakis (2004): 209.
10. Lowenstam (1995): 222.
11. The Nekyia is Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus summons spirits from the Underworld. Polygnotus was an artist active during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE who painted the Nekyia. Though the painting is no longer extant, a description by Roman author Pausanias still survives.
12. Marques, et al. (2009): 19; Lydakis (2004): 198; Von Blanckenhagen (1963): 101-2.
13. Coarelli (1995): 35-7.
14. O'Sullivan (2007): 502.
15. Timothy O'Sullivan, "Walking with Odysseus" (2007): 500.
16. Marques, et al. (2009): 21.
17. Marques, et al. (2009): 19.
18. Juliana Bastos Marques and Marina Regis Cavicchioli "Re-reading the Odyssey Landscapes from the Esquiline" (2009): 9.

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Peace-building of the Peloponnesian War: The Authority of  
Allies and Individual Actors International Peace  
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Conflict is often categorized by the characteristics of two opposing states, their motivations, their willingness to engage in warfare, and their willingness to make peace. However, what is oftentimes overlooked, as in the Peloponnesian War of Sparta and Athens, is the polarity of the dispute and how the prospects of a peaceful resolution are influenced by outside actors and specific individuals. The Peloponnesian War, beginning in 431 B.C.E and fought for three decades, was an extremely complex and multi-faceted conflict that brought in countless allies and colonies which, in their own subtle or obvious ways, influenced the trajectory of conflict management efforts. The idea of warfare incited by Spartan allies and individual actors challenges the traditional perception that the root of the conflict was simply Spartan fear of a hegemonic Athens. In this way, the cause of warfare was unique, however, not without its observable patterns. This paper will examine the Peloponnesian War by analyzing the polarity and outside actors to argue that the success or failure of conflict management tools—such as sanctions, negotiation, and mediation—was often determined by the presence and authority of outside and individual actors.

### I. The Balance of Power

The Peloponnesian War was a prolonged and complicated conflict, and certain events within the series of disputes must be recognized in order to begin analysis. This paper will primarily focus on pivotal moments such as the Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition, two examples in which peace could have arguably been achieved. The Peace of Nicias in 421 B.C.E. marked Athenian general Nicias' precarious attempt to cease hostilities between Athens and Sparta, however, it ultimately lacked integrity

due to the opposition of Spartan's intrusive allies and Athenian general Alcibiades' untamed passion for a conquest of Sicily, known as the Sicilian Expedition (Kagan 2013, p. 20). The Sicilian Expedition itself was a consequence of the young Alcibiades' fervor and belief that Sparta would suffer if its colony Syracuse was conquered, as it produced vital wheat exports (Eddy 2022). These two events, along with an analysis of events that caused the war, are used to examine the prominence of multi-polarity and its effect on peacemaking strategies. Furthermore, it is important to understand the fundamental makeup of the international order prior to the outbreak of war, in which the balance of power began to tilt.

The upset of the balance between Athens and Sparta, which was greatly affected by Spartan allies and fueled by individual actors, reveals the attributes of the participating actors and caused the prolonged and devastating Peloponnesian War. The balance of power itself is the distribution within the international community that acts as a counterbalance to ensure that one actor does not become too overpowered (Claude 1962, p. 17). The strongest player in the system will feel the urge to conquer those around it, and the only guarantee that prevents this is the equalization of capability by another state, which craves stability and security (Claude 1962, p. 18). The rising power of Athens began to upset certain Spartan allies, namely Corinth and later allies such as Thebes, which became threatened by Athens' naval supremacy and domination of the Mediterranean, causing them to pressure Sparta into war (Novo 2006, p. 2). Sparta's desire to maintain command of the Peloponnesian League required it to appease Corinth and its alliance which ultimately led Sparta to defend the interests of Corinth (Novo 2006, p. 2). Themistocles, an Athenian statesman, spoke out about the urgency of a balanced distribution of power. According to his realist approach, even allies must uphold the balance to have merit (Forde 2004, p. 174). While Athens and Sparta were the two strongest Greek states at the time, the animosity between

Athens and Corinth was a testament to the profound influence that allies or third parties had on major actors and their decisions to engage in or cease a conflict. Hegemony over an alliance league necessitates legitimacy which can be derived from the hegemon's awareness of its allies' struggles. To maintain a balance of power, which appeared to be threatened by Athens' growing naval influence and presence in the Mediterranean, Corinth coerced Sparta to engage in warfare.

While a 'balancing act' of capability is required to maintain a balance of power, Sparta's initial domestic resources were not sufficient, and it was an individual's miscalculation in Spartan strength that led to overconfidence. The most hopeful approach for Sparta to even out the distribution of power was to secure Greek and Persian allies while consolidating domestic resources (Platias 2002, p. 383). Without substantial funds or navy competency, the Spartan king Archidamus revealed that Athens had overpowered Sparta's military capability, suggesting that involvement in a grand-scale war would not be wise. Contrarily, statesman Sthenelaidas proclaimed that the balance of power favored Sparta, and his fervor and rhetoric won over the Spartan population, who encouraged the entrance into the war with Athens (Platias 2002, p. 383). This misperception would affect the integrity of the Greek balance of power for nearly three decades.

## II. Incitement of War

Possibly the first evidence of sanctions as a tool of conflict management emerged through the strategy of Athenian general Pericles, whose individual actions sparked outrage among one of Sparta's allies (Legon 1969, p. 325). The Spartan ally Megara was the target of Pericles' pernicious trade embargo, imposed in 432 B.C.E. by effectively banning Megara from trading with the Athenian Empire, which was designed to either provoke Sparta or

punish Megara for earlier actions (Buchstein 2022). It is often thought that this embargo was the final straw before the outbreak of war. Regarding the effectiveness of sanctions as a manner of reducing conflict, they are a less costly strategy than physical conflict (Greig et. al 2019, p. 194). As the Megarian Decree is commonly regarded as the first use of economic sanctions, it would have been difficult for Pericles to determine how to better implement them to coerce Megara or gently nudge Sparta. Their use could have been more effective if the severity of the embargo were reduced, as Sparta saw their imposition as creating an ultimatum leading to war. Prior to the start of the conflict, Sparta expressed an opportunity for concessive peace in which violence would be avoided if the Megarian Decree were revoked; despite this offer, Pericles declined the offer, most likely believing that it was an assessment of the rectitude of Athens' willpower (Platias 2002, p. 385). Pericles' grand strategy did not allow for this type of military concession and demonstrated the persistence of Athenian generalship. In this instance, the use of sanctions as a tool of conflict management or strict military strategy performed the opposite of its intention, igniting a widespread dispute rather than simply applying diplomatic pressure, most likely due to Pericles' stubbornness and zeal.

### III. Negotiation and Treaty

The opportunity for negotiation emerged early in the Peloponnesian War during a time in which Athens held considerable negotiating power. In Pylos, during the seventh year of the war, Athens successfully captured a significant portion of Spartan soldiers that granted them negotiating leverage in the event of a peace treaty (Forte 2004, p. 183). Wounded militarily and weakened by the surprising capture, Spartan envoys offered a peace proposal to fulfill the wishes of Pericles and end the war. In a desperate attempt at negotiation, Sparta promised to betray their allies and



colonies by surrendering and ceasing all conflict in return for the captured soldiers. Despite the Spartan concession, Pericles rejected the offer. This was a spectacle that mimicked Sparta's previous rejection of an Athenian peace attempt, motivated by the fact that a deadly plague afflicted Athens' population and impaired its capabilities and resources (Forde 2004, p. 184). Pericles himself may have felt insulted by the peace offer, as his intolerance to the generous treaty constituted its swift denial. Two important aspects of negotiation are that conflicting sides recognize the high costs of war and the prospect that negotiation may be more efficient at achieving their interests (Greig et. al 2019, p. 266). Although Athens continued to suffer the costs of the dispute and was offered a gracious opportunity for negotiation, Pericles was a barrier to realizing the benefits of successful negotiations. During war, leaders such as Pericles may see the willingness to negotiate as a weakness and attempt to take advantage of the enemy's vulnerability (Forde 2004, p. 184).

Negotiations during the Peloponnesian War could have been expedited by certain circumstances involving specific actors. The Peace of Nicias is one such example. In 422 B.C.E., the Athenian politician Cleon and the Spartan general Brasidas were killed in the same battle, creating a new opportunity for negotiation as a tool of conflict management, as the two had been their cities' most aggressive statesmen (Thucydides 2013, p. 330). The remaining domestic statesmen of the cities seized the chance to advance their interests through peace-making (Forde 2004, p. 188). Athenian general Nicias, whose negotiating talent gave the Peace of Nicias its name, became a prominent figure in upcoming peace attempts. With the death of Cleon and Brasidas, both Athenian and Spartan generals were able to better express the costs that the war had imposed on them; each side had grown weary after the previous ten years of war and was searching for a break in the conflict (Legon 1969, p. 325). Defeats in Delium and Megara left Athens battered and with an incentive to

negotiate, while Spartans maintained their desire to rescue their soldiers who had been captured in Pylos many years prior (Kagan 2013, p. 17). Nicias aimed for the least risk and exposure of Athenian vulnerability, and the introduction of the Peace of Nicias in 421 B.C.E. caused a temporary break in the conflict, though it did not end the war decisively.

The implementation of the treaty showed evidence of commitment issues between the two actors, including outsider Spartan colonies. Although the Peace of Nicias was adopted, its conditions were never truly realized (Forde 2004, p. 189). Loyalty to the treaty was dependent on the satisfaction of Spartan allies and colonies such as Corinth and Thebes, however, these allies expressed their dissatisfaction with the peace treaty due to concessions that favored Athens, such as the granting of the city Amphipolis to Athens (Kagan 2013, p. 20). Diplomatic trust between these actors and Athens began to erode as the integrity of the peace treaty decayed.

#### IV. Diplomatic Sabotage and the Ruin of the Peace of Nicias

The disapproval from Corinth and Thebes was characterized by non-cooperation and attempts to interfere with the diplomatic process. These sabotage efforts failed, but the weak foundation of the Peace of Nicias did not take long to fall apart. Corinth expressed the most animosity for peace than any Spartan ally. Although it is believed that positive negotiation outcomes increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for other issues, the negotiation itself is moot if other participating parties do not adopt the resulting treaty (Greig et. al 2019, p. 245). Corinth's reluctance to accept peace stemmed from the very issues that had threatened it before the dispute, as it was still ailed by the problems that pressured it to call for Sparta's start of the war (Kagan 2013, p. 24). In this way, the Spartan ally had not achieved significant victory and Sparta itself had

meekly assisted in mending the disputes that escalated to war; territorial loss in the northwest and the ruin of Corinthian influence in the region severely disadvantaged its prospects and grand strategy (Kagan 2013, p. 24). Sparta's ignorance of Corinth's interests led the ally to engage in an amicable relationship with Argos, Sparta's enemy, in an attempt to exert influence over the Peloponnesian League (Novo 2016, p. 8). The Corinthian pressure to abolish the treaty eventually led Sparta to pursue its own defensive collective security alliance with Athens that was to persist for fifty years, accompanied by Athens' release of the captured Spartan soldiers that it had held prisoner since 425 b.c.e (Kagan 2013, p. 26).

Similarly, to Corinth, rather than reduce hostility, the prospect of peace intruded in the interests of Thebes, who participated in the defeat of Athens at Delium. This Spartan ally posed a threat to the stability of the peace as it saw the war as an opportunity to expand its power and influence in the Peloponnesian League (Kagan 2013, p. 24). As with Corinth, Thebes' diplomatic independence and reluctance to submit to Spartan interests branded it as an unstable and unpredictable ally (Novo 2016, p. 11). With new power gained through warfare, the Peace of Nicias posed a risk of stopping its rise. However, Thebes negotiated a truce with Athens that prevented fighting for ten days (Kagan 2013, p. 24). Despite this glimpse of cooperation, Thebes aimed to renew the war in the hopes of an Athens defeat. Thebes' behavior and unwillingness to accept the Peace of Nicias was a contributing factor to the treaty's failure and demonstrates the influence that outside actors may have on the outcome of peacemaking. Moreover, much like that of Thebes and Corinth, the influence of other Spartan allies hindered the longevity and legitimacy of the peace as well as its stability. Furthermore, appeasing allies was a fundamental concern of Sparta, as four-fifths of its naval power was endowed by its allies, and their disapproval could have severely exhausted Sparta's grand strategy (Novo 2016, p. 13). This demonstrates that significant

diplomatic pressure may arise not only from the main disputing parties but from allies and colonies who have their own interests and motivations for war.

## V. The Sicilian Expedition

Athens' precarious Sicilian Expedition, also known as the Sicilian Disaster, was characterized by the will to harm Sparta through its colony Sicily and was influenced by the blunders of the two Athenian generals who led the expedition. The conquest took place during the Peace of Nicias in 415-413 B.C.E. when Athenian general Alcibiades encouraged the revival of conflict that led to an invasion of Syracuse, a city on the island of Sicily (Eddy 2022). It was believed that a swift capture of Sicily would sever Sparta's indispensable supply of Sicilian wheat and that Athens could consolidate power by further invading southern Italy (Eddy 2022). These strategies demonstrate that disputes between two main actors may harm outside actors who either do not directly participate in the conflict or who aid the enemy in some vital manner. To ensure a quick capture of the city, Athens unleashed a fleet of at least 134 warships containing an estimated 5,500 infantry members in an impressive display of naval excellence (Eddy 2022). However, naval superiority did not bring victory for Athens, as betrayal and inadequate command led to the disaster of the expedition. The individual actors involved and the consequences of their actions showed that negotiation as a tool of conflict management can easily spoil.

A significant figure in the trajectory of the Peloponnesian War, Athenian general Nicias not only represented a desire for peace, but he remained loyal to his conservative beliefs during the tumultuous Sicilian Expedition. Accompanied on the expedition by the fanatical general Alcibiades, the two held opposing views on the structure of Athenian grand strategy. Elected against his will to fulfill the position of commander of the

Expedition, Nicias did not believe Athens was strong enough to conquer Sicily, citing the Carthaginians' inability to pacify the island despite their substantial power (Kagan 2013, p. 170). According to the great historian Thucydides' account, the disapproval of Nicias materialized in his impassioned speech to Athenian statesmen, in which he indirectly defamed Alcibiades by encouraging others to imagine an expedition led by an individual who "damage[s] the public interest while they expend their private means." (Thucydides 2013, p. 394). Quite obviously, Nicias recognized the potentiality of personal interests interfering with the objectives of the conquest and the virtue of the Peace of Nicias. His intense rhetoric condemned the inclusion of a general like Alcibiades, far too young and eager to lead, enchanted by the prospect of personal glory. However, Alcibiades' political stance was determined not only by the opportunity to solidify his reputation and increase his wealth but by Nicias' disparaging words (Thucydides 2013, p. 395). Furthermore, the Athenian statesmen appointed a third general, the experienced soldier Lamachus, in order to balance out the diametrically opposed Alcibiades and Nicias (Kagan 2013, p. 171). The two postures of the generals largely contributed to the failure of the following Expedition.

More so than the involvement of outside actors, the actions of Alcibiades and the unfavorable speech of the Syracusan man Nicolaös decided the fate of the conquest. As the Athenians prepared to launch their conquest of Sicily, including an impressive 134 warships, Athens fell victim to a sacrilegious crime. The night before the launch of the expedition, various religious statues across the city were disfigured (Buller 2022). In part because of his scandalous nature and reputation, Alcibiades was accused of committing the heinous defilement and feared punishment for a crime he did not commit. This strange event and sudden accusation led Alcibiades to flee from his position as general and betray Athens, revealing to Sparta

the vital plot and strategy to capture Sicily and other parts of southern Italy (Buller 2022). The befoulment of the religious statues was interpreted as a bad omen and instilled fear in many Athenian citizens, foreseeing an impending disaster of the conquest. Thucydides' account claims that Athenian incompetency of Sicilian geography and population size contributed to its defeat, however, years prior, sixty Athenian triremes and their crews were well-educated about Sicily after having explored the island (Kagan 2013, p. 165). Therefore, it was not necessarily a lack of preparedness, but the betrayal of Alcibiades that led to the defeat of Athens' able-bodied navy.

After the majority of its navy was captured at the Assinaros River, Nicias was taken prisoner while eighteen thousand Athenian soldiers were killed and seven thousand held captive (Siculus et. al 1999, p. 65). The subsequent treatment of these prisoners of war was subject to fervent arguments between Syracusan politicians and Nicolaös. Diocles, a well-known populist politician, encouraged the citizens to support his proposal to torture and kill the Athenian generals, a symbolic execution that would display the strength and ruthlessness of their rule; however, Nicolaös, an elder who had lost two sons to the Peloponnesian War, delivered a speech that suggested magnanimity toward the captives would not only improve Syracuse's bargaining position but preserve the citizens' humanity and show Athens their good-will (Siculus et. al 1999, p. 65, 70). According to his speech, Nicolaös believed that a merciful treatment of captured Athenian soldiers would create the possibility of an alliance with Athens, a perspective that most likely reflects a propensity to bargain to manage the conflict. In addition to the prospect of an alliance, Nicolaös recognized a more pragmatic and plausible reason to not execute the generals and enslave the other prisoners; "Do not suppose, either, that the Athenian people have become completely debilitated as a result of their Sicilian catastrophe, seeing that they control virtually all the islands of Greece...[By]

putting these men to death we shall merely be satisfying our passions; whereas if we keep them in detention we shall earn their gratitude... and win universal approbation into the bargain.” (Siculus et. al 1999, p. 70) While his humane sentiment initially moved the Syracusan people, the speech of the Spartan general Gylippos, who had brought down the Expedition, expressed his hatred toward Athens and animosity toward being lenient. Invoking the mourning of those citizens who had lost loved ones to Athens in the war, the general used their suffering as a means to justify the brutal treatment of the Athenian captives. With the suffering of the Syracusans recognized, all prospects of salvaging the disgraced Peace of Nicias had disappeared, and further attempts at conflict management were at the mercy of actors who were captivated by the idea of war and victory. The imprisoned soldiers were sent to stone quarries for hard labor, and the generals, including Nicias, were immediately executed (Siculus et. al 1999, p. 78).

## VI. Conclusion

The ultimate failure of peacemaking attempts was not only characterized by the influence of outside and individual actors but also a lack of an impartial third party. Every involved actor presented their own bias regardless of whether or not it would affect prospective peace. Impartial third parties are important in order to provide mediation or arbitration assistance, as sides are not taken in order to ensure trust between the aggressors and the mediator (Greig et. al 2019, p. 307). The Persian Empire as a third party could have attempted mediation, however, following the Sicilian Expedition, it was in their best interest to create an alliance with Persia (Eddy 2022). Additionally, the lack of an impartial third party demonstrated that the war was unquestionably motivated by individual interests of power and authority from every side, which created a dangerous inequality in the balance of power system. While mediators

may be motivated by personal interests themselves, their ultimate goal is to integrate opportunities for peace, which, in the Peloponnesian War, was exclusively based on the temperament of certain commanding generals and the unscrupulous desires of allies.

Unrelenting conflicts between Spartan allies and Athens hindered attempts at peacemaking, as seen by the outcomes of both the Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition. The character of the commanding generals also often switched each aggressor's propensity to fight; for example, Pericles and Alcibiades favored a militarily strong and otherwise brutal Athens while the generalship of Nicias softened Athens' war sentiment and encouraged the city to consider peace. It is evident that the Peace of Nicias revealed fleeting opportunities to end the conflict, however, the interference of allies caused either aggressor to reconsider the effects of a stalemate and the chance of tilting the balance of power, leading them to fortify their ambition and continue the war (Forde 2004, p. 189). Thucydides has commented that untamed ambition leads actors of all sorts to act irrationally and impede the forging of peace, and in the complex, prolonged, and multi-faceted case of the Peloponnesian War, this appears to be true (Forde 2004, p. 189).

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Θυμός in Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXII: What it Means for the  
Greek Warrior  
Alison Emery '23

In Book 22 of the *Iliad*, Homer uses the similes of a hawk and a dove, and wolves and lambs, and likens them to Hector and Achilles, respectively. In this paper, I will analyze the difference between these two similes. Although they are both emphasizing a predator/prey relationship between Achilles and Hector, there is evidence that Homer may be making even deeper insights with the wolves/lambs simile. Specifically, Homer uses this simile to provide commentary on the character of warriors. I will pay particular attention to Homer's use of θυμός in these similes, as I believe they are semantically different, and are evidence of the θυμός that is integral to Homer's conception of a warrior.

The hawk/dove simile is found in Steadman as follows:

ἦ ὅτε κίρκος ὄρεσφιν, ἐλαφρότατος πετεηνῶν, 139

ῥῆϊδίως οἴμησε μετὰ τρήρωνα πέλειαν, 140

ἦ δέ θ' ὕπαιθα φοβεῖται, ὃ δ' ἐγγύθεν ὀξὺ λεληκῶς 141

ταρφέ' ἐπαῖσσει, ἐλέειν τέ εἰ θυμός ἀνώγει 142

ὥς ἄρ' ὃ γ' ἐμμεμαῶς ἰθὺς πέτετο, τρέσε δ' Ἑκτώρ 143

τεῖχος ὕπο Τρώων, λαιψηρὰ δὲ γούνατ' ἐνώμα. 144

The Eagles translation of the simile is as follows:

As the wild mountain hawk, the quickest thing on wings,  
launching smoothly, swooping down on a cringing dove and  
the dove

flits out from under, the hawk screaming over the quarry,  
plunging over and over, his fury driving him down to beak  
and tear his kill—

so Achilles flew at him, breakneck on in fury with Hector  
fleeing along

the walls of Troy, fast as his legs would go.

In this simile, Achilles is likened to a hawk that is chasing a dove, Hector. The diction is important here, with words and phrases such as “launching,” “screaming,”

“plunging,” and “to beak and tear” giving the clear picture that this scene involves a hunt. It is physical, violent even. Homer’s use of θυμός in line 142 gives the sense that Achilles’ is being driven by animal appetite. Evidence of this can be found in line 142 of the Greek: ἐλέειν τέ ἐ θυμός ἀνώγει. In this clause, Homer describes that the hawk’s θυμός is ἀνώγει, or driving him to grab the dove. Thus, θυμός as it is used here provides the impetus for the hawk, or Achilles, to attack Hector. This description of θυμός as animal drive is different than Homer’s sense of θυμός in the wolves/lambs simile, which reads in the Greek as follows:

ὥς οὐκ ἔστι λέουσι καὶ ἀνδράσιν ὄρκια πιστά, 262  
οὐδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν, 263  
ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέουσι διαμπερὲς ἀλλήλοισιν, 264  
ὥς οὐκ ἔστ’ ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ φιλήμεναι, οὐδέ τι νῶϊν 265  
ὄρκια ἔσσονται, πρὶν γ’ ἢ ἕτερόν γε πεσόντα 266  
αἵματος ἄσαι Ἄρηα, ταλαύρινον πολεμιστήν. 267

The Fagles translation of this simile is:

There are no binding oaths between men and lions,  
wolves and lambs can enjoy no meeting of the minds -  
They are all bent on hating each other to the death. So with  
you and me.

No love between us. No truce till one or the other falls and  
gluts  
with blood Ares who hacks at men behind his rawhide  
shield.

Here, θυμός takes on a different meaning. This simile comes at a crucial point in Book 22. Hector is exhausted and has given up. He tries to get Achilles to enter into an agreement with him, but Achilles refuses. This simile is Achilles’ response. Compared to the hawk/dove simile, this one is very similar, because it involves a predator/prey relationship. One may wonder what, if any, difference there is between a hawk and a dove versus a wolf and a lamb. The main difference is that lambs are typically domesticated. It is interesting that Hector is now likened to an animal that is not wild, like a dove, but rather confined to a space and thus there for Achilles’ taking. This might be speaking to the

characterization of Hector as a mortal man. While Achilles is half-god, and thus free to roam where he wishes as a wolf roams in the wild, Hector is more vulnerable because he is a mere human. In this way, these predator/prey similes reflect aspects of Achilles and Hector as men, and also reflect their position at this point in Book 22, with Hector near defeat, asking for a burial oath, and Achilles with the complete upper hand.

These similes go further than demonstrating a predator/prey relationship between Hector and Achilles. Consider the context. The hawk/dove simile occurs as a description of a hunt; Achilles is chasing Hector. It is generally expected that a simile in which two animals—a predator and a prey—are likened to two people is meant to highlight an unequal power dynamic. Specifically, a relation in which one person is better situated in terms of social, political, or economic status, or is able to physically dominate another person. This is a common interpretation of predator/prey similes. However, that is not what the wolves/lambs simile seems to be communicating, even though it is a predator/prey simile. As one piece of evidence, consider that θυμὸν in line 263 is modified by ὁμόφρονα. Here, Homer is not talking about θυμὸς as an animal drive. Instead, he is talking about uniting minds. Achilles states, *wolves and lambs can enjoy no meeting of the minds*. LSJ lists nine different definitions of θυμὸς, one of which is “mind, temper, or will”. Significantly, as an example of this translation of θυμὸς LSJ also lists the wolves/lambs simile in the Greek. Furthermore, in the lines before and after the wolves/lambs simile, Achilles is using words like ὄρκια in line 266 and συνημιοσύνας in line 261. The diction from the hawk/dove simile of launching, plunging, and screaming is starkly contrasted with Achilles’ utterances about oaths and a truce in this simile. This is further evidence that θυμὸς in these two similes are semantically different, and that θυμὸς in the wolves/lamb simile is not concerned with animal drive but instead conveys something closer to a rational will.

Considering more of the context of this simile is also crucial here. Hector asks Achilles to agree to an oath that would guarantee the burial of whomever is killed. Achilles explains that this conflict will not be settled with an oath or an agreement of some kind, and that it must be a fight to the death. It is interesting here that in this simile, although θυμὸς that is not akin to animal drive, but is closer to a definition of “mind” or “will”, Homer still seems to be reverting back to the animal drive, the violence, and the physicality that was present in the hawk/dove simile. In this way, one may view Hector’s response, considered with the wolves/lambs simile, as situating battle as antithetical to θυμὸς. However, I argue that battle is not antithetical to θυμὸς; rather, it is integral to it. The wolves/lambs simile is not only a way for Achilles to show that he and Hector differ in that he is half-god, whereas Hector is merely a mortal man, and therefore, is on the brink of defeat. More than that, Achilles is explaining that there is something fundamentally different about the way he and Hector are approaching this conflict. In other words, Hector and Achilles differ on the basis of their θυμὸς. Achilles is explaining that the rules between wolves and lambs makes it clear that the agreement Hector proposes is impossible. This is the point on which Achilles is trying to reason with Hector: that the θυμὸς of a warrior requires that conflict be solved in battle. It is also significant that Achilles, though some may view him as regressing to violence again, explains this to Hector very rationally. His will, or θυμὸς, is clearly at work here, and he cannot do the work of a warrior by entering battle without first making it known to Hector that this is what the θυμὸς of a warrior requires—of both of them.

Further evidence of this is in the lines following the wolves/lambs simile. For example, line 268 is παντοίης ἀρετῆς μμνήσκειο, which means, *remember excellence of every kind*. The imperative mood of μμνήσκειο draws the reader’s attention and demonstrates a sense of urgency and seriousness on the part of Achilles. This is important because Achilles is asking Hector to remember the ἀρετῆς, and surely he means the excellence of warriors. In this way, Achilles is

not only appealing to Hector as a warrior, but is also making a point about the essence of a warrior. This paper has shown that Hector has lost sight of how he should act in this situation because his conception of θυμὸς is different from Achilles'. By using the diction μνησκειο and the imperative mood, Achilles is trying to get Hector to reconcile his current sense of θυμὸς with the situation, and realize that it needs to change. Also, it is interesting that Achilles uses a verb meaning to remember, because this shows that for Hector, it is not an issue of learning, but of remembering what is already known: that a warrior must solve issues such as these in battle, and that reaching this conclusion is the work of the rational will, or θυμὸς.

Overall, I believe that Homer is trying to convey something with these similes that is more than just giving insight into the relationship between Hector and Achilles. Homer's use of θυμὸς is semantically different in the two similes. The use of θυμὸς in the hawk/dove simile has to do with an animal drive, whereas the θυμὸς in the wolves/lamb simile is driven by the will and reason. Evidence of this is in the diction of each simile. Words like plunging, launching, and screaming surround the hawk/dove simile, whereas the wolves/lambs simile talks about oaths, truces, and uniting minds. Considering this, I argue that Homer is making a statement about the kind of θυμὸς a warrior must have. More evidence of this is in line 268, in which Achilles says to Hector: *remember excellence of every kind*. Recall that the imperative verb μνησκειο is crucial here, as Achilles urges Hector to remember the excellence of a warrior. Achilles is not reverting back to violence and battle via an animal drive; he has used a different kind of θυμὸς to explain, rationally and clearly, that the θυμὸς of a warrior requires that issues like the one facing Hector and Achilles must be settled in battle. Therefore, battle is not antithetical to θυμὸς. It is integral to it.

### Agamemnon the King

Rebecca Rose Kaczmarek '23 & Carl Quist '23

This is a translation of *Iliad* 23.161-83, part of the funeral of Patroclus, composed by Rose Kaczmarek '23 and Carl Quist '23 arranged to be sung in ballad meter. Any tune that fits ballad meter may be used to sing this, such as *Amazing Grace*, *The House of the Rising Sun*, *The Yellow Rose of Texas*, or the theme to *Gilligan's Island*. Because this is a funeral passage, Rose arranged a simplified form of *Amazing Grace* in guitar chords to accompany it.

C Em Am C  
Agamemnon the king heard this,  
C Em F  
And sent the Greeks away  
C Em Am C  
while mourners stayed to build a pyre,  
C Em F  
a hundred feet of hay.

C Em Am C  
They placed the corpse atop the bier,  
C Em F  
And made off'rings with heart  
C Em Am C  
While great-hearted Achilles wept  
Cm Em F  
And wrapped him with sad art.

C Em Am C  
He wrapped from head to toe with care  
C Em F  
And piled th' off'rings around  
C Em Am C  
He gave two-handled jars of oil  
C Em F  
Perfumed and honey brown



C Em Am C  
And he drove four strong-necked horses

C Em F  
And placed them on the pyre.

C Em Am C  
He slew two of Patroclus' dogs

C Em F  
And placed them on the pyre.

C Em Am C  
Twelve sons of great-hearted Trojans

C Em F  
He slew with bronze in ire

C Em Am C  
While wept he for his dearest friend

C Em F  
And placed them on the pyre.

C Em Am C  
"Goodbye, my Patroclus, goodbye!

C Em F  
I'm doing all I swore!

C Em Am C  
I give you these burial gifts:

C Em F  
Twelve sons of Trojan corps.

C Em Am C  
But that Hector the son of Priam,

C Em F  
I won't put on the pyre.

C Em Am C  
He'll be eaten by hungry dogs

C Em F  
While laying in the mire."

Greek Song Poetry  
Peter Stamoulis '26

Preface:

The Greek tradition is one permeated by poetic expression. From antiquity through to now, verse has communicated the emotions and stories emblematic of the human experience. The following poems come from two opposite sides of the small nation and reflect emotions universal to us all. They have both been sung and recited by the peoples of Greece for generations and are passed down to descendants as a way of preserving timeless feeling.

Mantinada:

A mantinada is a short Cretan musical expression that typically revolves around the themes of love and its sorrows or exuberance. The following is a mantinada found in the village of Spili, Rethymno, and is written in the Cretan dialect of Greek.

Μόνο εκείνος π' αγαπά  
μπορεί να το πιστέψει,  
πως της αγαπης ο καημός  
τη σταματά τη σκέψη.

*Only he who is transfixed by love  
can ever comprehend  
how the yearnful sorrow of the heart  
paralyzes the mind.*

-Traditional mantinada of Crete from the village of Spili, Rethymno as sung by Thanasis Skordalos.

Mirologi:

A mirologi in its most basic form is a melody of sorrow. A typical theme of mirologia is that of ξενιτια, or the feeling that one is foreign even to their own body due to grief, or

general melancholy. The following *mirologi* began likely as a lament for the deceased but changed meaning in the late nineteenth century to the early eighteenth century as young men from Greece went abroad to the United States, Australia, Germany and U.K. in hopes of a brighter future. The lament was then used by the mothers, sisters, brothers, spouses, and even children they may have left behind to signal the sadness in their loss.

Ξενιτεμένο μου πουλί και παραπονεμένο,  
μωρέ ξέने μου και παραπονεμένο  
η ξενιτιά σε χαίρεται  
κι εγώ 'χω τον καημό σου, μωρέ ξέने μου  
κι εγώ 'χω τον καημό σου.  
Τι να σου στείλω ξέने μου  
αυτού στα ξένα που 'σαι μωρέ ξέने μου,  
αυτού στα ξένα που 'σαι;  
Σου στέλνω μήλο, σέπεται,  
κυδώνι μαραγκιάζει μωρέ ξέने μου,  
κυδώνι μαραγκιάζει  
Σου στέλνω και το δάκρυ μου  
σ' ένα φτενό μαντίλι μωρέ ξέने μου,  
σ' ένα φτενό μαντίλι  
ο δάκρυ μου 'ναι καυτερό  
και καίει το μαντίλι μωρέ ξέने μου,  
και καίει το μαντίλι

*My foreign bird, my grief-striking one,  
mine who is abroad and has evoked my grief,  
In the foreign land, they rejoice to have you but here I long  
for you, mine abroad,  
and here I long for you.  
What can I send you, my heart abroad,  
there in the distance,  
to remind of where we lament you.  
I shall send you an apple  
alas, it will only rot  
I shall send you a pear*

*alas, it would only wither  
all does wither.  
Then I shall send you my tears  
in ragged cloth, my dear departed  
In withered cloth.  
How the tears burn,  
and too I burn this old cloth  
My foreign one  
cloth burned by my sorrow.*

-Traditional song-poem of the Pogoni region in Epirus.

*All translations done by Peter Stamoulis '26.*

Vergilian Renovation: Diomedes Quelled  
Lucy Campbell '25

*Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis  
hic pietate prior. Coeant in foedera dextrae,  
qua datur; ast armis concurrant arma cavete.'*  
*Et responsa simul quae sint, rex optime, regis  
audisti et quae sit magno sententia bello."*  
*Vix ea legati, variusque per ora cucurrit  
Ausonidum turbata fremor: ceu saxa morantur  
cum rapidos amnis, fit clauso gurgite murmur  
vicinaeque fremunt ripae crepitantibus undis.*

Both were renowned in courage and preeminent in arms, and  
this one (Aeneas)

Was marked first with piety. May you join him in a contract  
with your right hand

As it is given, but beware meeting his arms with (your own)  
arms.

*Optime* king, you have heard the response just as it was and  
what the thoughts of the king are concerning this great war.  
Scarcely the ambassadors (had said this), when a changing  
(i.e. diverse) roaring sound rushed through the troubled  
Ausonian faces

Just as when rocks delay a rushing stream, and there is a  
murmur from the (churning of the) closed off whirlpool  
And the nearby banks roar with rattling waves. (*Aeneid*  
11.291-9)

In his commentary on *Aeneid* 11, Nicolas Horsfall  
points to the image of a whirlpool as a rare example of a  
Vergilian simile without a Homeric or Apollonian analogy.  
However, when considered in light of *Iliad* 5, this simile is a  
typical example of Vergilian renovation. He takes an image  
once associated with Diomedes in Homeric tradition, and  
adds an element that harnesses the power of the original and  
directs it towards a new purpose. Most crucially, he proves  
that the establishment of Rome is in agreement with fate.

Besides Andromache and Aeneas, Diomedes is the only human main character from the *Iliad* who also plays a large role in the plot of the *Aeneid*. For most of the Roman epic, his character is consistent with the reader's existing notion of Homeric tradition. For example, in Aeneas' first speech, he wishes that he had died by the hand of Diomedes in Troy. By identifying Diomedes as the mightiest of the Greeks (*Danaum fortissime*, 1.96), Vergil acknowledges Diomedes' reputation as a warrior capable of killing even Aeneas had it not been for the intercession of his divine mother. The simple reference to Diomedes' might carries a flood of associations to the many similes that describe him in the *Iliad*.

In a particularly vivid image in *Iliad* V, Diomedes is described as a "swiftly flowing" river (ὤκα ῥέων, 5.88). He bursts unrestrained across the plain of the battlefield, slaughtering so explosively that he is not able to be differentiated as a Greek or a Trojan (5.84-86). He is a force of battle and an icon of bloodshed even at the expense of ordering his destruction towards some structured purpose. The simile is made more vivid by describing the river as "swollen from rain and melted snow" (χειμάρρῳ, 5.88). The thawing remnants of winter charge up the river so that it is released all the more powerfully. The sudden release of stored up force emphasizes how unbounded Diomedes' path is.

Vergil's callback to this Homeric description of the battlefield of Troy plants an image of Diomedes that is later overturned in *Aeneid* 11. After envoys deliver a message from Diomedes, troubled murmurs rush through the assembly (11.296-7). The sound is compared to that of a "rapid river" (*rapidos amnis*, 11.28). The Oxford Latin Dictionary defines the adjective *rapidum* as "(of rivers, etc.) flowing so violently as to carry along anything in its path, strong-flowing." This adjective succinctly references the power and intensity once attributed to Diomedes' ruthlessness. Furthermore, the placement of this adjective directly after a scene expressing Diomedes' concerns

confirms that the image is a direct reference to Homer's simile. Finally, in his commentary on *Aeneid* 11, Horsfall points out that it is "striking and unusual" that just over one line of text receives almost three lines of simile description. Vergil is drawing special attention not only to this scene, but also to this particular choice of simile.

In his analysis of *Aeneid* 3, Ralph Hexter explores how Vergil "revisits [a] particular spot of Homeric landscape and revises the original, thereby showing us, from within the microcosm of the poem, what true renovation is." Similarly, in *Aeneid* 11, Vergil does not just reuse a Homeric simile, but rather reframes and alters it in order to create something new while still taking advantage of existing tradition. For example, in the *Iliad*, Homer gives special attention to the "dams" (*γεφύρας*, 5.88), which the river completely "scatters" (*ἐκέδασσε*, 5.88). These bridges were built for the purpose of holding back water and yet are completely ineffectual in the face of the rivers' power. In the *Aeneid*, however, the sound of the river is produced because rocks restrain it (11.297). The power of the river has not diminished, but the reader is introduced to the idea that it can in fact be controlled.

Vergil builds further on this image by describing the river in relation to "enclosed spaces" (*clauso*, 11.298) and "closeby banks" (*vicinae ripae*, 11.299). It rushes, still powerful, but only within these strict boundaries. This is in definitive contrast to Homeric tradition in which the fences of the threshing floors, built specifically to keep water out, did not hold back the flood (5.90). While once the landscape was crushed "under" the force of the river (*ὑπ' αὐτοῦ*, 5.92), it is now the principle that channels the force. The banks "echo" (*fremunt*, 11.299) the river back into itself.

Both Homer and Vergil also identify the effects of the rampage. In the *Iliad*, the Trojan battle lines were driven about by Diomedes (5.93). The chaos of the word "*κλωέοντο*", a verb with an inherent connotation of commotion, contrasts sharply with the highly ordered battle lines of the Trojans, the "*φάλαγγες*." In the Homeric case,

chaos prevails over regulation. In contrast, Vergil's Diomedes orders that the Italians enter into the offered treaties and beware of war (11.292-2). All conflict is rejected in favor of ordered agreements.

Vergil enhances the effectiveness of the rocks where Homer's dams failed. He gives control to the enclosing landscape of the banks where once Homer's river trampled all enclosures in its path. He paints a picture of a careful, thoughtful leader where once stood a champion of carnage. The simile in the *Aeneid* does not describe Diomedes, but rather how the crowd reacts to his words. Diomedes is still the river in this analogy. The crowd is the gushing sound that is produced from a rock planted in the middle of the river. Here, fate stops Diomedes in his tracks. He is heroic enough to submit to it.

Vergil reinvents the implication that the divine is involved in the force of the river. In *Iliad* 5, the river bursts as suddenly as rain falls "from the gods" (*Διός*, 5.91). In the context of the Trojan War, Diomedes' violence is fitting and thus fueled by the divine; Troy is destined to fall and the gods fuel his destruction. In the *Aeneid*, however, Diomedes warns that Aeneas is "preeminent in pietas" (*pietate prior*, 11.292). Vergil emphasizes that the war that Turnus is promoting is not endorsed by the gods. It is intended to be waged against Aeneas himself, who is righteously loyal to the gods. Additionally, war would challenge the future of Rome, which Jupiter has up to now continuously showed himself to be biased toward. Through all of these changes, however, the power of the river remains. By ordering the power of homeric tradition towards a new roman tradition, by taming the river, by enclosing the stream, Vergil accomplishes something entirely new.

While this enhanced simile clearly shows the larger epic theme that the creation of Rome is fated to such an extent that it actually restrains the power of mankind, it also brings up several other important questions. When the power of the river is curtailed, a gurgling whirlpool is left. The water rushes around both sides of the rock and crashes



together creating a vortex. While the chaos is now limited to within the banks, the power still remains and creates internal discord. Perhaps Vergil is continuing to hint that Rome is inherently built upon conflict. Dissension is built into its very foundation. The civil wars of his time are not a new phenomenon but have rather been there since the very beginning. Nevertheless, the control reflects that Rome still has the ability to exist and to function. Despite internal discord, Rome can still thrive. The foundation has been established, the discord contained.

Regardless of these symbolic understandings, the emotional value of having a foremost former enemy denounce continued bloodshed cannot be overlooked. Here, even the most ruthless of warriors permits Aeneas to take Italy at a pivotal moment in his journey. The Greek past gives way to the Roman future. The river is redirected.

#### Endnotes

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## Scholarly Debates Surrounding the Ravenna Mosaics

### Griffin Blood '26

Mosaics are means of artistic expression and speak to the experience, history, and beliefs of their producers. Academic research on these topics ultimately serves the goal of preventing anachronisms from creeping into the public perception of art, including mosaics, hence scholarly reviews and research on art is a necessary endeavor. The mosaics of Ravenna are of particular interest to scholars because of their uniqueness, preservation, and grandness. A survey of Ravenna's tempestuous history unveils the context whence her mosaics emerge. This paper seeks to explore the current academic and scholarly debates that are emerging concerning the Ravenna mosaics. I will focus on whether to categorize Ravenna, as a whole, as belonging to an eastern or western artistic tradition, whether the Orthodox and Arian Baptistries are eastern or western, or the possibility of political messaging from the imperial mosaics.

### **Architecture**

The architectural spaces which display the Ravenna mosaics are essential to understanding the significance of the mosaics and the tradition of Ravenna. In the Eastern Mediterranean, mosaics themselves were suitably fitted to the architectural design of the building. The ways in which mosaics conform to their space is best expressed through the unbroken flow of mosaics on the interior of a building.<sup>1</sup> Tesserae extend without end from one surface to another. Mosaics do not break at the corners of a building and are used to cover blunts and round sharp angles in the structure (Figure 1). Connectivity between architecture and mosaics also served aesthetic and practical purposes as well. In cathedrals and churches of the first half of the first millennium A.D, windows seldom provided a way for natural light to adequately illuminate the space. The

mosaics themselves became desirable as a means of lighting. When any natural light hit the surface of a mosaic, its uneven and glittering face reflected the light within the space.<sup>2</sup> Thus, mosaics helped better light up the interior.<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, Ravenna has been associated with eastern architecture, meaning the architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean and often of Constantinopolitan origin. Although, it must be noted that more recent scholarship is problematizing the binary way of viewing Ravenna's architecture as purely "eastern" as opposed to "western". The structural design of the Church of San Vitale serves as evidence of this eastern design.<sup>4</sup> Its edifice maintains an octagonal floor plan. Many note that the octagonal central floor plan of San Vitale (Figure 2) is comparable to SS. Sergios and Bacchos or Hagios Polyeuktos in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> The tradition of brick found in the edifice is foreign to any local traditions and is much more characteristic of the Byzantine tradition: thin and broad bricks.<sup>6</sup> The Proconnesian marble used in the interior of the church likewise points to eastern influence because Byzantine proconnesian marble had to be shipped from quarries of the Marmara Islands, not far from Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, pagan basilica designs remained very popular in the construction of new buildings in Ravenna (e.g. Theodoric's Arian Baptistry) which signifies an appreciation for western/Roman architecture.<sup>8</sup> Not only does the architecture of Ravenna reveal heavy eastern influence, but it also informs us of how mosaics were properly situated in their environment.

### **East and West**

Ravenna is traditionally characterized as possessing eastern architectural identity, but researchers are shifting their thinking on this subject. Academic discussions of Ravenna's mosaics ultimately grew into debates on when Byzantine art emerged as a distinct art. In the late 19th

century, art historian Josef Strzygowski was the first to argue that rather than being of classical Greek or Roman origin, early Christian art is instead based on Near Eastern art, especially Semitic and Coptic art. Strzygowski also asserted that Christian art diverged from Roman art as early as the 4th century A.D.<sup>9</sup> Following in the footsteps of Strzygowski, Charles Diehl interpreted the monuments and mosaics of Ravenna as being of near eastern origin. However, Diehl established an important understanding of Ravennate art as the “quintessential case study for early christian art/byzantine art.”<sup>10</sup> Because of Diehl, many scholars point to Ravenna as one of the most significant examples of early Christian art, thus shaping the way we define Christian art in antiquity entirely.

When entering into this debate, Giuseppe Galassi put forth his own unique theory that Ravenna’s art belongs to a strict and distinct “Ravennate school” which synthesized both Eastern and Western art in the mid first millennium, borrowing from both traditions.<sup>11</sup> Along with asserting the existence of this distinct Ravennate school, Galassi argued against Strzygowski’s dating of the birth of Christian art, instead claiming that this new tradition diverged from Roman art in the 6th century A.D.<sup>12</sup> This later date that Galassi offers coincides nicely with the construction of many of the Ravenna Mosaics and would likewise lend credence to Diehl’s claim that Ravenna is early Christian art’s “quintessential case study.” Other scholars have contributed to this discussion as well. Art historian F.W Deichmann claims that the eastern model of art was the basis of early Christian art, but that Ravenna itself is the origin of a western “twist.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the mere bones of Ravenna’s art can be categorized as eastern, but their western influence makes them unique. Contrary to Deichmann’s proposal, scholar Eugene Russo argues the position that western models of art were a stronger influence on Ravenna’s art than eastern models.<sup>14</sup> In the wake of this, Vladimir Cretulescu of the University of Bucharest suggests that rather than categorizing Ravenna as

either east or west, each mosaic and iconographic programme ought to be categorized on an individual basis. Crețulescu positions his thinking in the tradition of Galassi. Whatever the case, the categorization of Ravennate art as either eastern, western, or both has been a subject of debate among art historians and other scholars for over a century.

History offers the best glance into the traditions that Ravenna's art, and ultimately its mosaics draw from. In the year 402 A.D, during his retreat from Rome to Milan, Emperor Honorius fortified himself in Ravenna. Having seen its decrepit state, Emperor Honorius sought to rebuild the city of Ravenna and thus began a series of infrastructure, art, and civil projects. Because of the raging invasions of the Goths, Emperor Honorius was cut off from mainland Italy to import supplies and was forced to resort to the importation of supplies via the sea. At this time, all the supplies and contact from outside of the city came from the Byzantine Greeks. Eastern architects and artists were the primary workers who rebuilt Ravenna. They constructed a palace, administrative buildings, as well as, with the supervision of Archbishop Ursus, ecclesiastical buildings. The utilization of Greek artists is primarily regarded as the reason Ravenna's architecture and mosaics appear eastern.<sup>15</sup> However, not all architecture at this time was Greek. In the early 6th century, after Ostrogothic king Theodoric seized Ravenna, he hired Roman architects to build his palace, known as the Palace of Theodoric, which stood until the city was sacked by Byzantines in 539 A.D. This history reveals how complicated the origin of Ravenna's art and architecture is and why debates on this are likely to continue for much longer.

Both the history of Ravenna and the scholarship on Ravennate art enrich our understanding of how both eastern and western traditions influence the Ravenna mosaics. Given this, two things are very clear: there is no

consensus among scholars about how to categorize Ravenna's art most accurately, and the Ravenna mosaics represent some of the earliest forms of Christian art, also called "paleochristian" art.

## **Baptistries**

The Orthodox and Arian baptistries are also a place for academic debates. Structurally set apart from the Cathedral stands Ravenna's Orthodox Baptistry (Figure 3). Although commonly referred to as the Orthodox Baptistry, it is also referred to as the "Baptistry of Ursus", or more commonly, "the Neonian Baptistry." For the sake of consistency and contrast with the Arian baptistry, I will refer to it as the Orthodox Baptistry. In 396 A.D, Bishop Ursus of Ravenna built the Baptistry of the Cathedral with an octagonal design. Later during the episcopate of Bishop Neon of Ravenna, 451-473 A.D, the Baptistry was decorated with elaborate mosaics that are still extant. The mosaics (Figure 4) in the center cupola depict St. John the Baptist baptizing Christ in a golden field and a figure representing the Jordan River.<sup>16</sup> Then in a surrounding blue field rests mosaics of the 12 apostles. In the course of a century, the Baptistry's decoration had gone from the marble decoration of Bishop Ursus to the elaborate mosaics commissioned by Bishop Neon.

However, the dating of the mosaics in the baptistry is fertile ground for debate among scholars. The popular view, which I present in this paper, is that the mosaics in the Orthodox Baptistry were installed by Bishop Neon in the mid 5th century. This assertion is supported by the writings of Andreas Agnellus, a ninth century chronicler from Ravenna, who wrote in his work, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* that Bishop Neon is responsible for a mosaic of the 12 apostles.<sup>17</sup> However, some scholars assert that the mosaic decorations actually date to 396 and were installed in the Baptistry by Bishop Ursus due to their style which they believe to be older.<sup>18</sup> If the latter is true then

serious implications might emerge regarding whether the baptistery or the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia housed the oldest mosaics in Ravenna. For over 1,500 years, despite numerous restoration projects, the baptistery is believed to have retained its original iconography in the mosaics in the present day.<sup>19</sup>

Importantly, the Orthodox Baptistery can also offer insight into the political landscape of Ravenna during the 5th and 6th century. In her article exploring the possible baptismal rites that could have been offered there, scholar Annabel Wharton identifies the significance of the bishop and the participation of the congregation as being of utmost importance in this space. In her article, Wharton then extracts two implications surrounding the baptismal of the Orthodox Baptistery: because tension between the Bishop and community was often high, the community tension could generate power from it, and the baptismal hall assumed power itself.<sup>20</sup> The power which one could extract from the baptismal itself likely contributed to the tone set for future mosaics in Ravenna.<sup>21</sup> Power as a theme among the Ravenna mosaics will be discussed further in regards to the mosaics of the imperial court.

The Arian Baptistery (Figure 5) provides an excellent comparison for the Orthodox Baptistery, and so debates around its iconography, eastern and western influence are sources of scholarship. Having been built by Arian bishops and clerics at the turn of the 6th century A.D, the baptistery was seized by the Catholic Church in 561 A.D after the reconquest of Ravenna by the Byzantines and has since undergone many restorations.<sup>22</sup> The Arian Baptistery depicts a similar scene (Figure 6) to the Orthodox Baptistery with the exception of the background color. Rather than the blue background behind a scene of the baptism of Christ, the Arian Baptistery has a golden background. The Baptistery used to be adorned with mosaics along all its walls; however, only the dome survives to this day.<sup>23</sup> In the midst of debates about Ravennate mosaics belonging to eastern or



western traditions, the Arian Baptistry can serve as a reference for analysis.

In his analysis of the baptistries' artistic qualities, Vladimir Crețulescu asserts the Arian Baptistry is mostly eastern in its tradition while the Orthodox Baptistry is clearly a mix of the eastern and western tradition.<sup>24</sup> The accentuated uniformity of attitudes among the figures, more rigid folds on the apostles' robes, use of cooler and less varied colors are all indicative of the eastern tradition.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the uniform gold background suggests a Constantinopolitan origin.<sup>26</sup> For comparison, Crețulescu is descriptive of what makes the Orthodox Baptistry mixed eastern and western in its style. The dome of the baptistry combines an eastern concentric band decoration scheme with the more 'radical' decorative scheme of the western tradition and the blue background landscape is derived from an Italian tradition.<sup>27</sup> This evidence supports the case that Ravennate art, especially mosaics, do not belong to either eastern or western traditions, but rather, a synthesis of the traditions occurred over the centuries in the city.

### **Imperial Court**

As one of the most famous mosaics to come from Ravenna, the mosaic of the Imperial Court (Figure 7) found in the basilica of San Vitale has raised questions for scholars. The mosaics include on one panel Emperor Justinian and his court and on the other panel, Empress Theodora. The construction of San Vitale was finished by Bishop Maximian of Ravenna around the mid 6th century. Its architecture closely resembles the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, both of which were built by Justinian in the city of Constantinople around the year 527 A.D.<sup>28</sup> Although, italic features are prevalent as well.<sup>29</sup> The Church is obviously Byzantine in its style from its columns which resemble Byzantine Capitals to the portrait of Justinian.<sup>30</sup> The subject of debate and disagreement among academics

revolves around not its categorization as eastern or western but its political messaging.

A popular assertion is that the Imperial Court mosaic panels are supposed to communicate the authority of Justinian over his subjects in the west. Crețulescu defends this position by stating that the panels represent “the affirmation of the Empire’s political and religious authority over the recently founded exarchate of Ravenna.”<sup>31</sup> The political and religious context of Ravenna here is key to understanding this claim. The reconquest of the west was one of Justinian’s most pertinent goals as emperor. Justinian needed to affirm the legitimacy of his rule over the west and so art was an important means of doing this.<sup>32</sup> The panel also serves to showcase Justinian’s religiosity through the religious context of the mosaic and his strength through the depiction of soldiers with the Chi-Rho on their shields. An important matter of discussion is the role of Bishop Maximian in the mosaics. Maximian had been appointed to Ravenna by religious authorities in Constantinople, this move proved unpopular with the locals. Cretulescu argues that since Bishop Maximian was deeply unpopular at the time, by giving himself a near prime of placement in the mosaic, directly next to Justinian, as well as labeling himself contributes to the message that the Bishop has the backing of the Royal court and so he carries respect and authority.<sup>33</sup> In this way, Crețulescu argues that the mosaic panels communicate both the authority of the emperor and the authority of the new unpopular bishop. Other academics have argued against these interpretations of the panels. Jutta Dresken-Weiland pushes back against these claims of the panels representing Maximian’s authority. She asserts that the labeling of Maximians being of any significant importance may be an overstatement.<sup>34</sup> Dresken-Weiland also argues that since Maximian is not depicted idealistic, unlike Justinian, it speaks to his perception and the intention of the mosaic builder.<sup>35</sup> Although he is detailed, Maximian’s non-ideal traits are emphasized such as the fact that he is the baldest of all the

figures, has a very wrinkled face, bushy eyebrows, and thin lips.<sup>36</sup> Due to these reasons, some scholars are skeptical of whether the Imperial Court Panels were intended to bolster the popularity and authority of Bishop Maximian.

## **Conclusion**

Scholarship on the Ravenna mosaics encompasses a diverse range of subjects and topics. How we understand where they fit within the divide of the east and west is still hotly debated, all that we can say for certain is that mosaics must be judged on an individual basis within the context of the building their houses and that these mosaics represent some of the earliest forms of “paleochristian art.” Regarding the Orthodox and Arian Baptistries, they serve as great references to more fully understand eastern and western influences in the Ravenna Mosaics. Scholarship is not just limited to questions of cultural influence but also political and religious power as evident by the Imperial Mosaic panels and the Orthodox Baptismal rite. Taken together, this abundance of scholarship serves to further our understanding with art in the world and more fully explore artistic expression.

## Appendix

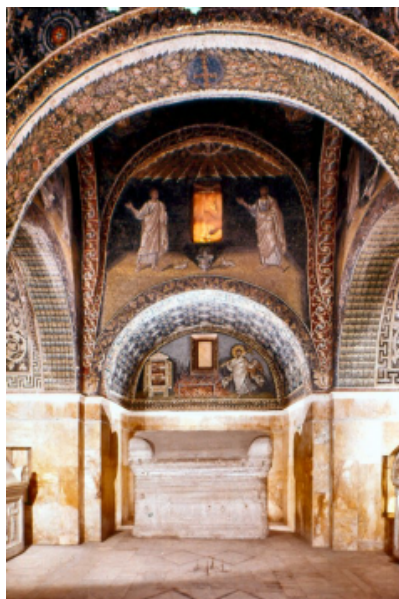


Figure 1. Interior of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Photo from Wikicommons.

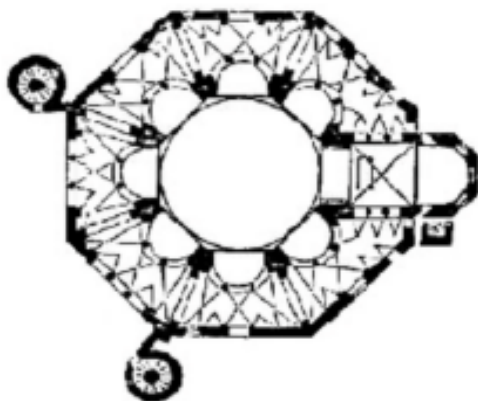


Figure 2. Floor plan of San Vitale. Image from wikicommons, originally published in *Nordisk Familjebok* in 1887.



Figure 3. Orthodox Baptistry. Photo by Nicola de' Grandi.



Figure 4. Mosaics of the dome of the Orthodox Baptistry. Photo by Nicola de' Grandi.



Figure 5. Arian Baptistry. Photo by Georges Jansoone.



Figure 6. Arian Baptistry mosaic. Photo by Petar Milosevic



Figure 7. Imperial Court panel 1. Photo by Roger Pulos.

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Above the Heroic: Milton's Response to the Greco-Roman  
Epic Tradition in *Paradise Lost*  
Yuyao Sun '25

While a student, Milton discovered the charm and majesty of Latin verse through his tutor Thomas Young. His penchant and careful study for classical authors are not only shown in his vast, sometimes overwhelming reference to canonical works in his own writings such as *Areopagitica*, but also in a vast array of Latin poems which, as Dr. Johnson later describes, have most successfully revived the “classic elegance” of Latin verses (Johnson S. [10]). However, as a Christian, Milton could never fully embrace the legacies of the Greco-Roman antiquities. For him, paganism has to be rejected, or at least, transformed in accordance with Christianity. Indeed, Milton has a complicated relationship with the Greco-Roman tradition. The tension between his love for classical works and the simultaneous discontent culminates in his greatest achievement, *Paradise Lost*. With the ambitious preface to the verse in the epic, Milton decisively returns to the classical form of epic poetry with his blank verses, claiming that rhyme is only an “invention of a barbarous age” (*PL* “The Verse”). While he attempts to revive the “ancient liberty” of heroic poetry without the “troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming” (*PL* “The Verse”), *Paradise Lost* exhibits many of his most direct and aggressive attacks on the classical tradition. Through subtle appropriation of the figures and scenes in traditional epics, Milton is able to emulate the epic tradition and eventually surpass his predecessors, asserting the primacy of the Christian epic.

Milton's use of the invocation in Book One forms a good starting point to investigate how he achieves this in detail. It is evident that Milton intentionally imitates the characteristic beginning of epics in the classical tradition. With “Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit/ Of that forbidden tree” (*PL* 1.1-2), he states the theme of his poem in a similar manner to the Homeric epics (“the wrath” and

“the man”) and the *Aeneid* (“the war and the man”). However, he pauses abruptly after this announcement of topics and inserts an extraordinary depiction of the Muse invoked. This lengthy invocation extending up to seven lines recounts the past inspiration provided by his Muse, covering names of places such as Oreb, Sinai, Sion, and Siloa: none of which belong to the dwelling places of Muses according to tradition. A unique existence in the Greco-Roman poetic tradition, the nine Muses usually live on mount Helicon, and have never inspired Moses “the shepherd” to teach how the origin of the world “rose out of chaos” (*PL* 1.10). Although the general form of this invocation is modeled on the classical convention, the nature of the Muse has changed along with this long recounting of her past deeds; she becomes a Christian Muse who can only find delight in Sion (“Or if Sion hill/ Delight thee more”, 1.10-11).

Johnson has noticed that, in this case, “[Milton’s] fame is thus measured in relation to biblical and classical traditions” (Johnson L. 71). Indeed, the conventional invocation modeled on the classical epic and this remodification establish a tension throughout the invocation of Book One. More strikingly, Milton has concluded the first sixteen lines of this invocation not with a continuation of the theme, but rather with an ambitious claim to “soar above the Aonian mount” (*PL* 1.15). The Aonian mount is mount Helicon, the traditional dwelling place of the Muses, and in a symbolic sense represents the classical verses associated with the Muses. After modifying the nature of the Muse, Milton boldly demands the aid of the Muse to surpass the height of classical poetry. In this sense, we could even embolden Johnson’s observation, and state that the new, Christian Muse is set against the classical Muses. Milton thereby has not only combined both Christian and classical traditions, but also set his epic the task of overcoming the classical one.

This claim is deliberately placed by Milton at the end of the first sixteen lines of the invocation, and only

before “While it pursues/ Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme” (*PL* 1.16), a line that further explicates Milton’s ambition. The invocation of Book One, like many other lines in *Paradise Lost*, features constant enjambment: these first sixteen lines are, for instance, one complete sentence connected by enjambments. Thus, the fact that the first part of the invocation is concluded by the two aforementioned lines gives these two lines extra weight by ending the flow of the prolonged enjambment. Moreover, that Milton pauses after stating his theme and inserts a lengthy re-elaboration of his Muse calls additional attention as it breaks off from the conventional epic beginning where the theme is further developed, *not* the meaning of the Muse. In the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, the entire first sixteen lines are an invocation of the Muse, and the actual continuation of his theme is deferred at the very end of this beginning: “And justify the ways of God to men” (*PL* 1.26). In this sense, Milton intensifies distance and antagonism to the Greco-Roman epics while maintaining the basic form of a classical epic with the invocation and the presentation of the theme.

In his essay “Milton’s Timeless Music”, Jason Rosenblatt discussed his theory of “literary form” and applied it to his personal reading of Milton. According to him, a literary form is ““an arousing and fulfillment of desires’ depending on what the reader brings into a text” (Rosenblatt 324). True appreciation of the literary form in poetry, therefore, demands a recurrent reading of a certain text, and in the process of which one gains an aesthetic experience with this text through unique and various occasions of his own. However, one of the fatal flaws, dare I say, with Rosenblatt’s essay lies in the fact that, due to the application of this theory of form, he could only share his personal experience with Milton’s texts, and has to infuse too much subjectivity in his articulation of the “timeless music”: by recounting his experience with Milton as an undergraduate, he did not impart onto his readers the timeless beauty of Milton, but only shew his entertaining,

personal tales. To make his theory of form an aid to objective literary criticism, we could, alternatively, study a recurrent part of one text, e.g. a motif or a figure, presented in different texts. For it is clear that a recurrent literary motif in another text may also succeed and present the beauty of the previous context in a different way.

At the end of Book One of *Paradise Lost*, Mammon leads other fallen angels to build the Pandemonium for their council after Satan's summon (*PL* 1.673-78). Afterward, Milton inserts a digression on the origin of the architect (*PL* 1.732-51) to refute the pagan explanation of Mammon as Mulciber<sup>1</sup> and traces the origin back to angels' revolt in Heaven. In this process, Milton spends nine lines recounting the famous tale related to him in Greco-Roman mythology (*PL* 1.738-46). This tale could be instantaneously recognized by readers familiar with Homer's *Iliad*. At the end of Book One of the *Iliad*, after Thetis has begged Zeus to protect her son, Hera becomes jealous and starts questioning Zeus, who is consequently irritated at her. At this point, Mulciber stands up and narrates the story of his fall in an attempt of persuading Hera to be modest instead of arrogant: "[Zeus] caught me by the foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold; the whole day long I was borne headlong, and at sunset I fell in Lemnos, and but little life was left in me" (*Iliad* 1.591-93). The result of Mulciber's intervention is the immediate laughter of gods, which closes this book with a joyful grace.

Equipped with our revision of Rosenblatt's theory, any reader well versed with classical literature, as Milton himself and his contemporaries, should be able to recall this pleasurable ending in the course of reading the aforementioned digression in *Paradise Lost*. However, immediately after the narration of Mulciber's fall, Milton concludes with the word "erring" (*PL* 1.747), and thereby illustrates the falsehood of the pagan explanation. To intensify the effect of this negation, Milton has deliberately placed "erring" at the very beginning of the

line, directly after “thus they relate” (*PL* 1.746) from the previous line. The enjambment, therefore, forms a sharp contrast between the truth of Milton’s explanation and the falsehood of paganism. This “erring”, in addition, also breaks off Milton’s continuous re-rendering of Mulciber’s fall in the previous enjambments from lines 738 to 746. Should a reader identify the aforementioned reference to Homer, the abrupt “erring” would not only powerfully dramatize pagans’ assumption that Mulciber falls because of Zeus, but also nullify the pleasure and joy someone may have recollected from recognizing the context of Milton’s re-narration.

Milton’s emulation of Homer does not stop here. Immediately after the word “erring”, he offers his own correction of the misunderstanding, referring the actual fall of Mulciber back to the original revolt in Heaven against God: “For he with this rebellious rout/ Fell along before; nor aught availed him now/ To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he scape/ By all his engines, but was headlong sent/ With his industrious crew to build in hell” (*PL* 1.747-51). By this correction, Milton reveals that Mulciber, in fact, Mammon, has already fallen since the primordial time along with the “rebellious rout” led by Satan, that the pagan fails to recognize the true identity of Mulciber, and has ignorantly attributed his fall to the pagan Zeus. Because Homer is unable to understand this, his representation of Mulciber is also inevitably weakened and only reflects a semblance of truth: Mulciber is not a god who serves and delights Zeus and Hera, but rather a rebellious conspirator of Satan. By reducing the fall of “Mulciber” to the fall of Mammon, Milton connects and compares the Greco-Roman portrayal of Mulciber with Satan’s revolt in Heaven described earlier in Book One, and in so doing affirms the primacy of his Christian interpretation as well as the inferiority of paganism. In a different sense, since this Greco-Roman interpretation of Mulciber’s fall stems from Homer, Milton’s falsification

signifies the ignorance of Homer and his own superiority as a better, Christian epic poet, launching a symbolic agon with the greatest epic poet.

At a different level, this connection between Mammon and Mulciber is another emulation of Virgil. Milton models the Mammon episode closely on one in Book Eight of the *Aeneid* (Aeneid 8.416-53), where Vulcan (Mulciber), after being entreated by Venus, agrees to forge a shield as well as other armors for Aeneas. The similarities between these two are obvious. In both texts is either a hill or island surrounded by smoke (*PL* 1.671; Aeneid 8.416); either the fallen angels or Cyclopes are working to build and forge (*PL* 1.674-78; Aeneid 8.424), and their working procedures are portrayed in detail (*PL* 1.688-730; Aeneid 8.426-53). Milton's close imitation of Virgil's Vulcan episode invites comparison. The Vulcan episode belongs to one of the most critical moments in the *Aeneid*. The shield not only protects Aeneas in the culminating event of the epic — the decisive battles with the Rutilians — in later books, but also germinates an ekphrasis that reveals the future glories of Rome carved on its surface or, symbolically, the glory of Virgil himself as an epic poet singing the foundation of those glories. This Virgilian episode, however, faints immediately, when contrasted with the Mammon one, for how could a shield be comparable with the Pandemonium, the base of Satan where he summons and assembles his rebellious angels against God's heavenly kingdom? In this way, the original sublimity of Aeneas's shield as well as the glories of Rome are diminished — along with Virgil's insuperable position in the epic tradition. Milton, too, is able to elevate the height of his own epic and himself as a poet no less inferior than Virgil.

Milton's most aggressive engagement with the classical epic tradition occurs in the invocation of Book Seven. This book also contains the most frequent reference to the Greco-Roman Classics: out of the 39 lines in the invocation, 30 lines are related to Greco-Roman mythology. If he only shows the distance with traditional epics by subtly

modifying the implication of his Muse in Book One, here Milton singles out his Muse, Urania, from the nine traditional ones: “By that name/ If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine/ Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,/ Above the flight of Pegasean wing./ The meaning, not the name I call: for thou/ Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top/ Of old Olympus dwell’st, but heavenly born” (*PL* 7.1-7). With the line “The meaning, not the name I call” (*PL* 7.5), Milton liberates Urania from her traditional identity as the Muse of astronomy by reviving her name’s literal significance as the symbol of heaven.

One might wonder why Milton would reinforce his antagonism towards the classical Muses here. Personally, I agree with Johnson’s observation that the four invocations in the epic “suggest a descending sequence from the poet’s closest proximity to heaven to his growing preoccupation with the earth” (Johnson 75). In the process of the poet’s descent, the Muse, at first directly addressed as the “spirit”, becomes a symbolic “light” in Book Three, and finally here in the “traditional and conventional guise of “Urania”” (Johnson 75), gradually moving away from the poet. Although Johnson does not provide the reason why the Muse would distance herself from the poet and the world, it is related to the fact, I think, that the poet and his Muse are approaching the deadly sin of mankind in this very descent. The modified Muse who converses with eternal wisdom beside God (*PL* 7.9-11) does not intend to mingle her holiness with the foul revolt of mankind. However, while the main theme of this invocation is descent, Milton still calls Urania to help him soar higher (*PL* 7.3-4). One does not err if one contends that this forms a type of paradox — and why, after all, is this related to Milton’s antagonism towards the classical epic tradition?

It is not without use to look at the two other Greco-Roman references in this invocation. The first one is related to Bellerophon, who falls from the horse Pegasus in an attempt to fly to heaven. The second recounts the death of Orpheus and the weakness of his mother, Calliope, in



defending him. It is obvious that both of them contain two themes together: poetry and failure. Pegasus conventionally symbolizes poetic inspiration and heroic deeds, and both Orpheus and Calliope represent poetic artistry. Nevertheless, neither has Bellerophon successfully reached Olympus, nor has Calliope protected her son from the cruel fate of being torn apart. In this case, they could hardly be viewed as accidental. Symbolically taken, they display the failure and weakness of the classical tradition when confronted with the increasing challenge of narrating the sin of mankind. The disobedience of the first parents, Milton implies, may in fact be too lofty and difficult for a Greco-Roman epic.

On the contrary, the superiority of the Christian Muse, Urania, is stated in the self-descriptive lines explaining Milton's successful cantation of his song even "though [he is] fallen on evil days,/ On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;/ In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,/ and solitude" (7.25-8). The aforementioned fact, that the Muse is being distanced from the poet and his epic world, would hence reaffirm the strength of Milton's Christian Muse. Even though the Muse is becoming vaguer, Milton could nevertheless gain inspiration to complete his epic project.

As Johnson indicates, since the majority of lines in *Paradise Lost* is enjambed, "a regularity of phrasing that harmonizes with the given line-length can therefore stand out" (Johnson 70). After showing Calliope's deficiency in saving Orpheus, the invocation concludes Milton's most aggressive emulation with an extraordinarily self-contained line: "For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream" (7.39). In this final proclamation, Milton's Muse reveals herself as different from Calliope, the traditional Muse for epic, by nature: the traditional epic symbolized by Calliope is devalued as meaningless as "an empty dream". What the traditional epic fails to achieve, the heavenly one succeeds.

The invocation of Book Nine provides us with the final illustration of Milton's response to the traditional epic. Here, after presenting the central theme of this book as well

as the entire epic, the disobedience of mankind, he characterizes this theme as “no less but more heroic” (*PL* 9.14) than the Homeric and Virgilian ones. Milton’s disputation with the classical heroics here embarks us to question if it is an oversimplification to reduce the entirety of his innovation on the epic tradition to the fact that he is composing a Christian epic and wants to thereby demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over paganism. For Christianity itself also allows possibilities for an epic of adventure and war (e.g. the war between God and Satan), which is closer to epics in the Greco-Roman context. Similar cases, such as Tasso’s *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, with which Milton must have been familiar during his self-study are at hand for us. In order to understand Milton’s agon with the classical muses more thoroughly, we should rather ask why Milton would, after all, respond to and remodify the epic tradition in the way he *does*. The fact that he openly questions the Homeric and Virgilian epics here is particularly interesting: “[Traditional epic] not that which justly gives heroic name/ To person or to poem” (*PL* 9.40-41). This insinuates that Milton’s emulation of the classical epics results from the insufficiency of the traditional ones. Indeed, he later describes his task as a “higher argument/ [that] remains, sufficient of itself to raise/ That name” (*PL* 9.42-44).

The *Iliad* is an epic based on the unreasonable, wild wrath; the *Odyssey* is one that focuses on the deceitful man who attempts whatever he could regardless of the price and justice; and Aeneas is driven by the ruthless, unintelligible necessity of fate. While featuring dramatic battle scenes, all of them do not engage intellectuality in the way *Paradise Lost* does (also *Paradise Regained*). Which epic before could have its major event completely in intellectual debates— not killing or slaughter— and culminate everything in a plain line “she plucked, she ate” (*PL* 9.781)? Furthermore, except in Book Six, battle scenes are absent from the entire epic, *the* mark of the primary characteristic of the primary epic, the *Iliad*. The reason why Milton is so

fond of debates and the use of reason, instead of force, may be related to the fact that he has a new understanding of the heroic based on intellectuality. This new heroic, if rightly understood, is likely to account for a critical reason why Milton would emulate the traditional epics. His attention on intellectuality could be traced back to his earlier works such as *Comus*, where the intellectual debates and reason become more significant and also more powerful than the demonstration of force. In this sense, Milton's ultimate response to the Greco-Roman epic tradition is not even one explicitly shown in his work itself, but rather a transformation of the epic heroics — from the epic of action to the epic of *ratio*.

In summary, Milton emulates, appropriates, and complicates the Greco-Roman epics in *Paradise Lost*. While his Christian epic overcomes certain conventions, such as the implication of Muses and dramatic battle depictions, Milton's familiarity with classical legacies and his application of them nevertheless allow him to invent a unique epic ideal that invigorates the tradition itself.

### Endnotes

For sake of convenience, whenever possible, I will refer to him simply as "Mulciber" following Milton, instead of Hephaestus or Vulcan according to the original contexts.

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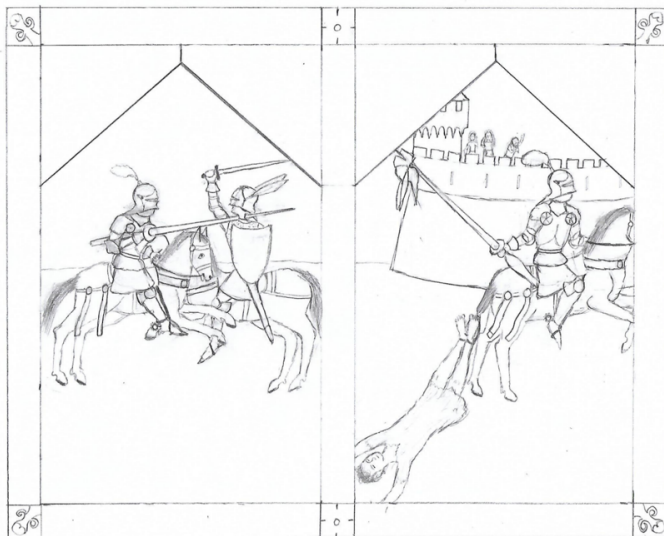
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How the Homeric Age looked in the Medieval Age  
Stephen Pittman '23



I have attempted to depict two scenes from the *Iliad* contained roughly between lines 247 and 515 of book 22. One is when Hector is finally engaging in combat with Achilles and the second is when Achilles drags Hector's corpse around the walls of Troy. The scenes are drawn in a style mimicking the illustrations seen in medieval European manuscripts from the 15th century, or roughly thereabout. I chose to stylishly depict these scenes in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the narrative even when it is removed from our best scholarly understanding of the rough historical setting in which the story could have taken place. Of course, the stories occupy a place in myth and not history strictly, thus allowing this change in setting to work excellently. After all, the *Iliad* does not even seem to depict consistently a particular time in history, and surely ancient listeners and readers of the epic imagined the scenes in many varied ways. But why this stylistic approach then?

The first and simplest reason for my choice of this style is that it is perhaps the best style of drawing which I

myself can reproduce, primarily because I have long admired manuscript illustrations. Second, I have always been intrigued by the reception of ancient stories in pre-modern times, as the images produced often depict scenes that appear to represent the world at the time of the illustrators despite the artists knowing the stories occurred long before them in other parts of the world among different cultures. The illustrations in medieval European manuscripts of classical stories, such as the *Iliad*, often show very clearly medieval soldiers in a medieval landscape and not ancient bronze-clad warriors assembled according to ancient tactics in a clearly ancient landscape, even to the point where the depictions contradict parts of the text. It is exciting to speculate why this is the case. It is reasonable to believe that the common person, and even the educated who would be making these manuscripts, within the medieval European society would be unfamiliar with the exact appearance of people and places from the ancient Mediterranean. Even if the educated scribes and illustrators of the medieval era did have a sense of what that environment would have looked like, placing the stories firmly in history is made even more difficult through inconsistencies in the text themselves concerning their setting in time. After all, the oral tradition whence came the epics stretches long after the time when a historical Trojan war would have been actually fought, thus making it prone to change according to later customs and perceptions. Even different styles and materials of armor and weaponry are described and anachronistically mixed amongst each other throughout the epics.

Further, attempted “historically accurate” depictions might not have been recognizable or enjoyed by whomever was intended to see the illustrations themselves, which would weaken the ability to perceive and relate to the events in the story.

The medieval illustrators, presumably aware of the timelessness of the myths and epics, seem to have even sacrificed fidelity to the texts themselves for the use of an

intelligible visual language. For example, it is stated clearly in Book 22: 398-399 that Hector is strapped to a chariot, but medieval illustrations often depicted Hector tied to the tail of a horse and dragged. This is probably simply because riding on a horse's back in war was a familiar practice during the illustrators' time, and chariots, being so long obsolete, were perhaps too foreign or unfamiliar to display the themes of the story ideally to the audience. Perhaps this specific deviation from the text is not intended by the illustrator at all, but because they might be illustrating based off a mere summary of the *Iliad* text in which the fact Achilles uses a chariot is not specified.

The So-Called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia  
Mary Whitney '23

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ellen Swift and Anne Alwis aptly describe Christian buildings as “microcosm[s] of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Ravenna became the administrative capital of the Roman Empire in 402 AD,<sup>2</sup> bringing with that [maybe “taking on” instead of “bringing with that” for flow purposes] the responsibility of securing the religious and political prestige of the Theodosian dynasty. As an empress and patroness, Galla Placidia used her position to construct a building containing “[t]he earliest monumental mosaics dating to the fifth century”<sup>3</sup>: the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Based largely on the shape of the building and the images depicted in the mosaics, it instead seems more likely that the building serves as a chapel for prayer or a repository for the relics of martyrs rather than an imperial mausoleum. This paper aims to provide a brief overview of the architecture and mosaics of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia to glimpse [“glimpse” seems to give the paper the agency of seeing, maybe something like “illustrate” instead?] the artistic development of Ravenna in the fifth century AD.

## **NORTHERN LUNETTE MOSAIC OF CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

The mosaic above the door depicts Christ as the Good Shepherd holding a cross-shaped shepherd’s crook symmetrically surrounded by six sheep, a potential reference to the creation of mankind on the sixth day.<sup>4</sup> By the first half of the fifth century, the iconography of the Good Shepherd largely disappears from Eastern and Western Christian art, reappearing in the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup> In the first four centuries of the Church’s history, the didactic and protective connotations of Christ as the Good Shepherd were appropriate for its status and developmental stage during that time. The threats Christians faced in the pre-Constantinian age necessitated an image of Christ as “an ethical figure, a



symbol of love or *humanitas*, and also a symbol of salvation”<sup>6</sup> that would protect and guide His “flock” [does this need to be cited or is it quoted for emphasis?] through the world’s trials. With the rise of Arianism and the growing security of the Church’s authority, the fifth century signaled a movement away from the emphasis on Christ’s gentleness and instead toward His majesty.<sup>7</sup> Notably, he is also seated rather than standing, recalling the iconography of the *Maestas Domini*; with the rock as his throne, Christ simultaneously affirms St. Peter as the foundation of the Church as well as his own dominion over the earth through his sacrifice on the Cross.<sup>8</sup> This particular depiction of Christ seated on a rock and flanked by the Apostles is also seen in the Basilica of San Lorenzo Maggiore in Milan, while the colors of Christ’s tunic recall the apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana in Rome.<sup>9</sup> The Good Shepherd of the “mausoleum” of Galla Placidia, therefore, is a reinterpreted typology: Christ, in a “gold tunic, sewn with blue bands, and with a purple mantle draped over one shoulder,”<sup>10</sup> becomes a king or emperor rather than a mere shepherd.

### **SOUTHERN LUNETTE MOSAIC OF SAINT LAWRENCE OR SAINT VINCENT**

On the opposite side of the entrance, the lunette mosaic depicts a male saint carrying a cross and an open book on the right running toward a flaming grill in the center; on the left, an open cupboard reveals the four Gospels, each labeled. Multiple scholars interpret the mosaic as an allegorical representation of St. Lawrence’s martyrdom on the gridiron and his role as a deacon, protector of the Word as contained in the Gospels.<sup>11</sup> Gillian Mackie, based on the depicted narrative elements, instead identifies the saint as St. Vincent of Saragossa, who was also martyred on a gridiron and depicted as a deacon, rather than the traditional interpretation as St. Lawrence. Mackie connects St. Vincent’s Spanish origin to Galla Placidia, citing the Spanish descent of the Theodosian family, her journey as a captive bride through Barcelona under the Visigoth king

Athaulf in 414, and the deaths of Athaulf and her infant son Theodosius in Barcelona in 415.<sup>12</sup> Mackie notes evidence for St. Vincent's cult in Rome through a sermon by Pope Leo I (440-461), whom Galla Placidia kept in close contact with, as noted in surviving letters.<sup>13</sup> This confusion and debate suggest that "the saint portrayed had not yet acquired a standard iconography,"<sup>14</sup> corresponding to the Church's development of official dogma and art, and thus comparable to the mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.<sup>15</sup>

### **EAST AND WEST LUNETTE MOSAICS OF DEER DRINKING AT A POOL**

The lunettes of the east and west axis each depict two deer entangled with golden scrolls of vines drinking from the waters of paradise. The vines carry multiple symbolic meanings, such as "the realm of paradise, the people of God, Christ himself, or the wine of the Eucharist."<sup>16</sup> This [which of the two?] particular image of the deer likely references the text of Psalm 42, which emphasizes "the Christian soul longing for God"<sup>17</sup>:

As the deer longs for streams of water,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, the living God.  
When can I enter and see the face of God?<sup>18</sup>

Notably, despite both lunettes depicting the same subject matter, they vary slightly in both style and execution, suggesting the labor of different artists. This is manifested in the more abstract rendering of the deer and vines on the east lunette, as seen through the geometrical bodies and overabundance of flowers. In contrast, the mosaics of the west lunette have a more naturalistic rendering, depicting the deer with muted colors and more delicate proportions and the vines with fewer flowers and more leaves.<sup>19</sup>

## THE STARRY SKY CENTRAL VAULT AND LUNETTES

The central vault mosaic is “a geometrically continuous design” achieved by “using infinite, exquisite gold *tesserae*, laid out to form a compact and clean image.”<sup>20</sup> It depicts a central gold cross surrounded by 567 eight-pointed gold stars with the Four Evangelists as the four living creatures of the tetramorph in the four pendentives.<sup>21</sup> Their shape also recalls that of an eight-petaled flower. The stars are not arranged in a naturalistic manner but instead radiate outward from the cross in a series of concentric circles. The size of the stars and the distance between them in their respective rings gradually decreases as they approach the cross, creating the simultaneous illusion of the dome being taller and the cross being closer to the viewer.<sup>22</sup> Although invisible to the naked eye, the deep blue background consists of *tesserae* arranged in defined circles, contributing to the illusion of expansion.<sup>23</sup> Eight-pointed stars are also seen on the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the Dura Europos baptistery in the *Domus ecclesiae* and the Mithraeum.<sup>24</sup> The stars on the flat ceiling of the baptistery and in the intrados of the arch above the baptismal font, composed of eight points surrounded by smaller dots, are organized in a pattern that follows the plane of the arch.<sup>25</sup> In utilizing a generalized representation of cosmic order, the astrological aspect of Mithraism was often reflected in wall paintings of the cult image, where “the cloak of Mithras is often painted blue, with a decoration of gold stars.”<sup>26</sup>

The Cross in the central vault echoes motifs in Constantine’s Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and Helena’s Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome.<sup>27</sup> The Cross set among the starry sky recalls both Constantine’s vision in 312 and the apparition of the Cross over Jerusalem in 351 under the reign of Constantius.<sup>28</sup> However, Galla Placidia is also credited with the mosaic decorations and structural alterations of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme,<sup>29</sup> suggesting her link to the cult of the True Cross established by Helena, and thus an association with the symbology of

Christ's triumph over death and the sacrifices of the martyrs.<sup>30</sup> The Cross' long arm lies on the "mausoleum's" east-west axis, forcing the viewer to face east to see the Cross in its proper orientation.<sup>31</sup> This placement suggests the association between Christ and the rising sun, a symbology echoed in the mosaic of "Christ the Sun" in the Cappella di Sant'Aquilino in the Basilica of San Lorenzo Maggiore in Milan.<sup>32</sup>

The four lunettes each depict two Apostles flanking an alabaster window; above the figures is a conch and below them are pairs of doves, commonly associated with the Holy Spirit, drinking from or surrounding a fountain.<sup>33</sup> Sts. Peter and Paul are the only figures definitively identified, decorating the eastern lunette. Both Apostles gesture to the left and direct their gaze upward toward the window, "equat[ing] the window and its light with the absent Christ."<sup>34</sup>

## MOSAICS OF THE BARREL VAULTS

The east and west barrel vaults depict what are suggested to be prophets surrounded by vines that sprout from two large acanthus plants at the springers.<sup>35</sup> The Chi-Rho symbol within a victory wreath sits at the crown of the arch, forming an association with Constantine's vision and subsequent conversion to Christianity.<sup>36</sup>

The north and south barrel vaults depict a different starry sky pattern from the central vault. The extreme abstraction and symmetrical layout of this starry sky grant them the interpretation [would "impression" be a better word choice here maybe?] of being flowers scattered throughout a meadow.<sup>37</sup> These octagonal stars alternate between red and white flowers surrounded by dark or gold leaves and are interspersed with gold dots and smaller white flowers.<sup>38</sup> These designs recall silk textile patterns of the fifth century, and "could thus represent the plenitude of heaven [*sic*] through the imitation of this luxury textile."<sup>39</sup> Like the stars in the central vault, these stars are organized symmetrically

rather than naturalistically, with a row of eight of one type followed by a row of nine of the other type.<sup>40</sup>

This abstraction of nature balances *kosmos* with *varietas*, combining rigid organization with the subtleties of color and shading that transform the worldly into the supernatural.<sup>41</sup> The intrados of the northern arch supporting the central vault depicts a cross surrounded by an abundance of fruit from each of the four seasons, recalling the mosaic decorations of Santa Costanza in Rome. The location of the cross at the keystone suggests Christ's dominion over the seasons, just as the cross in the apex of the central vault asserts Christ's heavenly sovereignty.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, the intrados of the southern arch supporting the central vault depicts an isometric multi-colored meander, which has sometimes been used to demarcate sacred spaces.<sup>43</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE

The ninth-century historian Andreas Agnellus is largely credited with associating the chapel with the function of an imperial mausoleum in his *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, a popular myth of the Medieval and Renaissance periods that has persisted until today.<sup>44</sup> Agnellus writes that Galla Placidia died in Rome, but was buried "in what he terms the *monasterium* of Saint Nazarius," a potential reference to a chapel in the Basilica of San Vitale; by the thirteenth century, misinterpretations of Agnellus' text led to associations between that *monasterium* and the current "mausoleum."<sup>45</sup> Galla Placidia is also traditionally attributed by Agnellus to the construction of San Giovanni Evangelista, Galla Placidia's palace church, and the Basilica of Santa Croce, which the "mausoleum" was connected to at the southern end of the basilica's narthex.<sup>46</sup>

The "mausoleum" has a cross-shaped floorplan<sup>47</sup> with four barrel-vaulted recesses that surround a central vault situated at the intersection. The upper halves of the walls are decorated with mosaics, while the lower halves are covered with marble veneers.<sup>48</sup> The "mausoleum" contains fourteen windows: "7 windows in the lower level (2 east, 3

south, 2 west); 3 windows in the lunettes (1 east, 1 south, 1 west); 4 windows in the tholobate (1 east, 1 south, 1 west, 1 north).<sup>49</sup> The visual impact of the mosaics, already discussed, was enhanced by the integration of light and its association with Christ. The reflective quality of the gold *tesserae* stars, mimicking their defining light-giving characteristic, especially aided in the solemnity of worship by drawing the viewer's gaze toward the ceiling decorated to represent Heaven, in turn placing them in a position of reverent supplication.<sup>50</sup>

Curiously, the "mausoleum" exhibits "a north-south bearing that is highly unusual compared to other sacred Byzantine buildings in Ravenna," with a transept that is not perpendicular to the nave.<sup>51</sup> The irregularity of the architecture is not ascribed to a lack of planning, but instead to coordinate the light of specific liturgical days with the pictorial programs of the building.<sup>52</sup> At the time of the building's construction, the azimuth of the transept aligned with the sunsets on the 26th and 27th of March and on the 13th and 14th of September. The former dates fall close to the Feast of the Annunciation, the commemoration of the Virgin Mary accepting her role as Christ's mother from the angel Gabriel, while the latter date coincides with the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, further solidifying the building's connection to the Basilica of Santa Croce.<sup>53</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Galla Placidia was an empress "well-aware of the political capital to be gained by showing wealth and artistic magnificence."<sup>54</sup> By associating herself with her Constantinian predecessors, Galla Placidia used her imperial status and religious devotion to build a richly-ornamented building that responded to the highly-visual culture that developed in Ravenna. The mosaics, far from purely aesthetic, instead conveyed a developing religious language tied to symbology and the effect of natural light. The reception and subsequent reinterpretation of earlier motifs reveal not only the inherited artistic traditions from Rome

and Milan, but also the production of new images as Ravenna embraced its role as “the dispenser of artistic fashion”<sup>55</sup> as the Church solidified its dogma and iconography.

## Endnotes

1. Ellen Swift and Anne Alwis, “The Role of Late Antique Art in Early Christian Worship: A Reconsideration of the Iconography of the ‘Starry Sky’ in the ‘Mausoleum’ of Galla Placidia,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 78 (2010): 215, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41725294>.
2. Cecily Hennessy, “Patronage and Precedents: Galla Placidia’s Chapel in Ravenna and the Holy Apostles, Constantinople,” *Byzantinoslavica* 1-2 (2016): 27, <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=526436>.
3. Maria Cristina Carile, “Production, Promotion and Reception: The Visual Culture of Ravenna Between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” in *Ravenna: Its Role in Earlier Medieval Change and Exchange*, ed. Judith Herrin and Jinty Nelson (University of London Press, 2016): 55, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv512x7n.10>.
4. Genesis 1:24-31 (NABRE). Carile suggests that the six sheep are “an allegorical number for the twelve apostles” (57), but I could not find other sources that support such an analysis. Considering the context of the Good Shepherd as the “protector of the flock,” I propose this possible interpretation, but as with many cases of Biblical numerology, other interpretations are highly plausible.
5. Boniface Ramsey, “A Note on the Disappearance of the Good Shepherd from Early Christian Art,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 76, no. 3 (1983): 375, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1509531>.

6. Ibid., 376.
7. Ibid., 376.
8. “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...” (Matthew 16:18, NABRE).
9. Carile, 55-57.
10. Ramsey, 376.
11. Deichmann, *Kommentar*, 77-78 quoted in Gillian Mackie, “New Light on the So-Called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna,” *Gesta* 29, no. 1 (1990): 55, doi: 10.2307/767100.
12. Mackie, 54.
13. Leo I, Sermo XIII, in *Natali S. Vincentii Martyris*, PL. LIV, cols. 501-504 and *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, XII, *Leo the Great*, 57 quoted in Mackie, “New Light on the So-Called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna,” 55.
14. Mackie, 56.
15. Stuart Cristo, “The Art of Ravenna in Late Antiquity,” *The Classical Journal* 70, no. 3 (1975): 19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3296444>.
16. Swift and Alwis, 202.
17. Swift and Alwis, 202.
18. Psalm 42:2-3 (NABRE).
19. Lisa Onontiyoh West, “Re-evaluating the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia,” Master thesis, Louisiana State University, 2003: 23, [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_theses/1328](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/1328).
20. M. Incerti, G. Lavoratti, S. D’Amico, and S. Giannetti, “Survey, Archaeoastronomy and Communication: The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna (Italy),” *Mediterranean Archaeology*



- and Archaeometry* 18, no. 4 (2018): 184, 183, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1478672.
21. Incerti et al., 182 and Hennessy, 32.
  22. Swift and Alwis, 208.
  23. Incerti et al., 183.
  24. Carile, 58.
  25. Swift and Alwis, 194.
  26. Ibid., 193-195.
  27. Hennessy, 42.
  28. Swift and Alwis, 203.
  29. Janet Charlotte Smith, "Form and Function of the Side Chambers of Fifth- and Sixth-Century Churches in Ravenna," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, no. 2 (1990): 195, doi: 10.2307/990476. Smith claims Galla Placidia's connection to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme is "attested by an inscription," but does not include any citation.
  30. Swift and Alwis, 203.
  31. Incerti et al., 184-185.
  32. Incerti et al., 185.
  33. Cristo, 19. Incerti et al. (185) say that the alabaster slabs are not original, but were donated by King Victor Emmanuel II in 1911.
  34. Kirsten Ataoguz, "The Role of Light-Shadow Hierophanies in Early Medieval Art," in *The Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*, ed. Clive L.N. Ruggles (New York: Springer, 2015): 1735-36, doi: 10.1007/978-1-4614-6141-8\_177.
  35. Swift and Alwis, 202.
  36. Incerti et al., 185.
  37. Bente Küllerich, "Abstraction in Late Antique Art," in *Envisioning Worlds in Late Antique Art: New Perspectives on Abstraction and Symbolism in Late-Roman and Early-Byzantine Visual*

*Culture (c. 300-600)*, ed. Cecilia Olovsson (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2018): 78, doi: 10.1515/9783110546842-005.

38. Carile, 60.
39. Swift and Alwis, 205.
40. Incerti et al., 183.
41. Kiilerich, 82-83.
42. Carile, 62.
43. Kiilerich, 81.
44. Hennessy, 28.
45. Ibid., 29.
46. Smith, 202.
47. Hennessy (37-39) argues that it is because of this floorplan that it is unlikely Galla Placidia was buried in the “mausoleum.” Emperors and empresses were traditionally buried in circular (or even octagonal) mausoleums, such as Augustus and Hadrian in the first and second century. Imperial mausolea continued to follow this trend, as seen in the circular mausoleum of Theodoric, built in the sixth century. It is instead believed she was buried in the Mausoleum of Honorius, where she buried her first son Theodosius.
48. Swift and Alwis, 199-201.
49. Incerti et al., 185.
50. Swift and Alwis, 209.
51. Incerti et al., 185.
52. Ataoguz, 1734.
53. Incerti et al., 85.
54. Smith, 201.
55. Cristo, 17.

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## The Struggle over Patroclus' Body and the Stretching of Leather

Alison Maloney '23

Throughout the *Iliad* by Homer, different heroes repeatedly strip the armor from the bodies of their opponents. Not only was the armor expensive and could be used in future combat, the action of taking off the armor and then wearing it was a way to publicly assert one's glory on the battlefield. While there are many instances of stripping armor off opponents in the *Iliad*, equally of note are the scenes where a hero does this and goes *beyond*—taking, and often desecrating, the newly stripped body. Despite this, character dialogue seems to reveal there are certain codes of conduct regarding killing, and violating the opponent's body after death seems to oppose—to some degree—these unwritten rules of war. What are the motives that go behind action like this, and how can it contribute to Homer's telling of the Trojan War? Book seventeen may provide some unique insight as it tells in immense detail the fight over Patroclus' body with a simile. As Trojans and Achaeans both seize hold of Patroclus' body in a massive tug-of-war, the struggle is likened to the grueling process of stretching a cowhide for leather. Upon close reading, it seems that this scene's language and graphic simile work together for two purposes: emphasizing the inhumanity of war and, as a result, the ways in which codes are broken and renegotiated for other motives.

The simile runs from lines 384-414 in book seventeen, first detailing the length of the struggle and the toll it is taking on both sides:

τοῖς δὲ πανημερίοις ἔριδος μέγα νεῖκος ὁράρει  
ἀργαλέης: καμάτῳ δὲ καὶ ἰδρῶ νωλεμές αἰεὶ  
γούνατά τε κνήμαί τε πόδες θ' ὑπένερθεν ἐκάστου  
χεῖρές τ' ὀφθαλμοί τε παλάσσετο μαρναμένονιν  
ἄμφ' ἀγαθὸν θεράποντα ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο.

So all day long for the men of war the fighting raged,  
Grim and grueling, relentless, drenching labor, nonstop,  
And the knees, shins, and feet that upheld each fighter,  
Their hands, their eyes, ran with the sweat of struggle  
Over the great runner Achilles' steadfast aide-in-arms  
An enormous tug-of-war. (Fagles)

First, from this brief section of the text, it becomes clear that Patroclus' body is of great importance to both sides of the war. The fighting has been going on "all day long," and the soldiers on both sides are fighting with extreme determination with no signs of stopping. Neither side wants to lose possession of the body, and they exert themselves to the maximum as evidenced by the detailed descriptions of the sweat running down different parts of their bodies. To further emphasize how far the soldiers are willing to go to keep the body, Homer really brings out the details of the physical toll of the fight—using words like "ἰδρῶ" (translated by Fagles as "drenching," but also can be taken as "sweating" or "perspiring") and then describing all the parts of the body with sweat for further effect. It is interesting that the line discussing the sweat running down the "γούνατά τε κνήμαί τε πόδες" (knees, shins, and feet) seems to follow the natural path sweat would roll down, further bringing out the very physical, laborious nature of the struggle to readers with this detailed imagery. Perhaps equally significant is the way the bodies of the soldiers are reduced to just parts—knees, shins, feet, eyes, hands—producing an effect that brings out the confusion of the fight around the body; from far off, it may look like limbs flying about, each one trying to grab parts of Patroclus' body or fight an opponent. The word "παλάσσετο," taken by Fagles as "ran with the sweat" also can be translated as "defiled" or "sullied," perhaps starting to emphasize the grotesque nature of what this fight is about and how its corrupting the soldiers. Overall, Homer's vivid description here makes clear that both Achaean and Trojan soldiers are

willing to physically strain themselves in a dangerous frenzy over a long period in the hope of possessing the stripped body of Patroclus. It is evident that even without armor both sides see some value in seizing the corpse.

The passage continues; this time revealing a striking illustration of what this “tug-of-war” really looks like through a simile:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ταύροιο βοὸς μέγαλοιο βοείην  
λαοῖσιν δώη τανύειν μεθύουσαν ἀλοιφή:  
δεξάμενοι δ' ἄρα τοί γε διαστάντες τανύουσι  
κυκλός', ἄφαρ δέ τε ἱκμάς ἔβη, δύνει δέ τ' ἀλοιφή  
πολλῶν ἐλκόντων, τάνυται δέ τε πᾶσα διὰ πρό:  
ὥς οἱ γ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέκυν ὀλίγη ἐνὶ χώρῃ  
**εἴλκεον ἀμφοτέρω:** μάλα δέ σφισιν ἔλπετο θυμὸς

As when some master tanner gives his crews the hide of a huge bull for stretching, The beast's skin soaked in grease and the men grab hold round in a broad circle, Tugging, stretching hard till the skin's oils go dripping out as the grease sinks in, So many workers stretch the whole hide tough and taught—so back and forth in a cramped space they tugged, both sides dragging the corpse and hopes rising.  
(Fagles)

In this simile, Patroclus' human body is reduced to a cow's hide. This comparison of human to animal emphasizes how this tug-of-war has really disrespected Patroclus' corpse, dehumanizing a part of his once living form. The comparison of a domestic activity, stretching a cowhide, to this horrific sight of war adds a sense of deeper shock, as something normal and easily imaginable is juxtaposed with a nearly unimaginable sight. This scene may have been meant to surprise an audience with its horrifying descriptions, further brought to life with this easily imagined simile. The animated verbs, like μεθύουσαν (“soaked”), “ἐλκόντων” (here: “tugging,” can also be translated as “tearing” which is

even more violent), and “τάννται” (“stretching”) further bring this sense of shock to the scene. Also significant is the verb “εἴλκεον.” Fagles translates it as “dragging” in references to the corpse. However, according to Liddell Scott Jones, this verb can also be translated as “doing violence to.” Given this meaning, “εἴλκεον” could help to further convey the horror of this war scene, and directly indicate that Patroclus’ body was being wronged and maimed. In a similar way, the description of the oils, grease, and liquids coming out of the hide—and thus Patroclus’ body as well—further add to the sense of desecration that is being done to the body.

The scene concludes with a final picture of the struggle as well as the reaction of the onlooking Olympians:

Τρῳσὶν μὲν ἐρύειν προτὶ Ἴλιον, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοῖς  
 νῆας ἔπι γλαφυράς: περὶ δ’ αὐτοῦ μῶλος ὀρώρει  
 ἄγριος: οὐδέ κ’ Ἄρης λαοσσόος οὐδέ κ’ Ἀθήνη  
 τόν γε ἰδοῦσ’ ὀνόσσαιτ’, οὐδ’ εἰ μάλα μιν χόλος ἵκοι:  
 τοῖον Ζεὺς ἐπὶ Πατρόκλῳ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ ἵππων  
 ἥματι τῷ **ἐτάνυσσε** κακὸν πόνον:

The Trojans hoping to drag Patroclus back to Troy,  
 Achaeans to drag him back to the hollow ships  
 And round him always the brutal struggle raging.  
 Not even Ares, lasher of armies, not even Athena  
 Watching the battle here could scorn its fury,  
 Not even in their most savage lust for combat, no—  
 So tense the work of war for the men and chariot teams  
 That Zeus stretched taut across Patroclus this one day.  
 (Fagles)

Here, the lines reveal that both sides want to bring Patroclus’ body away from the battlefield. Though each side probably has differing purposes of dragging the body away, this further explains the tug-of-war nature over the body since both sides are trying to leave in opposite



directions with it. Also significant within these lines is the shift to discuss Ares, Athena, and Zeus. Ares and Athena—both immortals associated with war—take note of the fierce struggle over Patroclus’ body and the devastation it is doing to the body. The sight of the men pulling the body and vehement fighting is a sight both Olympians cannot ignore or disapprove of. These lines seem to imply that Ares and Athena seem to pay attention to and approve of violence and war, and this ferocious scene is something even divine sponsors of battle are surprised by. The fact that neither Ares or Athena can deny the fury of the fight and its gruesomeness speaks to the bloodiness of this scene and the fact that this might be defying norms surrounding the treatment of bodies after death. Finally, important to note is the way that this scene ends using the word “ἐτάνυσσε,” which Fagles translates as “stretched taut.” Liddell Scott Jones mentions that this word can sometimes be used in a more domestic context—stringing a bow, stringing a harp, and even weaving. The use of “ἐτάνυσσε” reflects continuity with the simile of stretching a cowhide. Just as the domestic scene of making leather was used in the form of a simile earlier in this passage, here a verb used often outside the context of war is brought in. Both the simile and this verb serve to compare the unlike scenes of domestic life and war, bringing to life a grotesque and nearly unimaginable scene with something more imaginable.

Though there may be codes surrounding the treatment of a body after death, these graphic lines indicate that rules may be ignored in pursuit of other motives. For the Achaeans, keeping Patroclus’ body intact and bringing it back for proper burial is of utmost importance. Letting the body be taken and further violated would be shameful to them. The Trojans may want to acquire the body for this very reason—not letting the Achaeans give Patroclus a proper burial would be a huge blow to Greek morale, which would be an advantage for the Trojans. Finally, this overall practice of taking the body and further disrespecting it after death may be a final way to triumph over an enemy and gain

glory. On the battlefield, simply killing and stripping armor may not be enough, and norms and humanity can be ignored in this pursuit.



Camilla  
 Éowyn Bailey '26

### **Translator's Introduction**

For my stylish translation, I decided to go with the scene where Poseidon negotiates with Hephaestus for Ares' and Aphrodite's freedom (as well as the surrounding moments that precede and follow). Since there is a focus on Ares needing to pay a physical price for his crime against Hephaestus, there is a lot of honor and transactional language in this passage. Thus, one of my goals was to adapt those nuances by employing phrases commonly found in hostage negotiation scenes in various media as well as language I have come across when discussing transactional matters. Additionally, I want to have fun with translating words and phrases in new ways that I have not seen before (with some added alliterative awesomeness) and simplify complex phrases into colloquial ones. I am setting these as my goals because they would allow me to play to my inherent strengths when it comes to how I think. For one, alliteration comes easily to me, so I wanted to showcase that in the various epithets. Select phrases like "Hephestus the extraordinary engineer" or "the famous fragile footed god" both accurately represent what the Greek says while also adding a playful flair to the translation, encouraging the reader to... well... enjoy reading it. Regarding the hostage negotiation remark, this scene plays out like something from a nameless crime show I have watched with my parents. We have the hostage taker (Hephaestus), the well-respected negotiator (Poseidon), and the hostages (Ares and Aphrodite). By employing common phrases, I have heard in these modern analogical situations like "pulling out" of a deal, holding someone to their word, I hope to invoke the similarities between this mythical scenario and modern-day stories told through the TV. Also, with the added notion that someone could sexually "pull out" of someone else, the conditions of the agreement change to

where if Ares pulls out of the deal, he would not pull out of Aphrodite, and vice versa. As for transactional situations I have been in, I have definitely used the phrase “I’ll cover for you” when talking about payment.

Finally, I want to translate this passage with a bit of Gen Z flair, informality, and joy since it brings this translation into the very present day for people to understand the emotions of the gods. By saying “Poseidon was not having it” versus the more literal “Laughter does not hold Poseidon,” I can convey Poseidon’s unamusement with Hermes’ previous remark with language used by me and others nowadays. However, I did not limit myself to this playful and informal tone for the whole translation. I took great pleasure in translating Aphrodite’s post adultery/incest spa moment with grace(s) and beauty to reflect how mesmerized I was by the passage.

## **Translation**

So Hermes spoke, and laughter infected the death-exempt deities.

But Poseidon was not having it, and was quick to beg Hephaestus the extraordinary engineer to free Ares.

And he spoke to him carefully,

“Let him go. I’ll do just as you say

And I will respect your demands on the immortal gods’ behalf.”

Again, the famous fragile-footed god responds,

“Don’t even, Earth-embracing Poseidon.

Ares’ promises aren’t worth the paper they’re written on.

How could I hold you to it on the immortal gods’ behalf If Ares pulls out?”

Again, Poseidon the Earthshaker responds,

“Hephaestus, if Ares pulls out,

Then I’ll cover for him.”

Then the famous fragile-footed god retorted,

“Ugh, fine. It would look bad if I didn’t respect your word.”

As soon as he finished, he released his power with a snap.

Once the two of them were freed from those unbreakable  
bindings, They booked it: Ares fled to Thrace  
While audaciously amorous Aphrodite reached Cyprus, to  
Paphos. Here there was a temple and altar smelling sweet  
with sacrifice for her. Here the Graces bathed her and  
anointed her with  
Ethereal olive-oil, which cover the unceasing gods,  
And dripped lovely clothes around her,  
Serving golden goddess glamour and glory.  
So the famous bard sings such things. Looking to Odysseus,  
He delights in the bard's wit as he sings  
As do the oar-loving Phaeacians, those star-studded seamen.

Clodia: A Threat to the Republic  
Alexandra Berardelli '25

Cicero evidently understands that a successful oration must be grounded in persuasion, which can be accomplished by using his relationship with the audience to elicit their serious consideration and efforts to benefit the case. Unfortunately for the figure he casts as chief villain in the *Pro Caelio*, Cicero goes to extremes to characterize her to invoke fear and hatred among the audience. He wants the jurors to understand that his defendant, Caelius, should be acquitted on the pretense that his ex-lover, Clodia, is to blame. To address the charges against Caelius in light of this woman, Cicero goes beyond claims of Clodia's public sexual immorality and overall lack of virtue to fabricate a woman who herself obtains enough power and resources to pose a threat to the republic he is so keen on protecting.

While L. Sempronius Atratinus initiated a prosecution against Caelius on account of five charges of political violence (*vis*), Cicero's defense strategy was to create a striking figure to be the center of his defense. The object of Cicero's pure brutality is Clodia Metelli, a woman from the famously noble and politically eminent Claudian family. She married the consul Q. Metellus Celer, whose death in 59 B.C. made her a widow. Moreover, Clodia was already linked to Cicero since her brother, tribune P. Clodius Pulcher, was one of Cicero's enemies after he sought out revenge by sending Cicero into exile. Therefore, Cicero already had a bitter personal investment with Clodius and, by extension, Clodia.

From the beginning of his defense, Cicero triggers a distinct emotion in his audience that suggests Clodia is a serious threat: a fear of powerful and resourceful women against the republic. To understand just how extreme this characterization is, this emotion must be considered in the context of Cicero's audience: the male jurors. It is a heavy emotional charge on Cicero's part, but he knows it will tap into his audience's undeniable misogyny. Cicero arouses

gendered anxieties the jurors when he claims that this trial having “no crime, no audacity, no violence (*vim*),” was being financed (*opibus*) by a prostitute (*meretriciis*). Even without naming her, the jurors could be counted on to understand that this prostitute (*meretrix*) would be Clodia. This description sets up the argument as centered on a woman, who is claimed to be disreputable and dishonorable due to the social construction of prostitution. Moreover, she supposedly has enough resources to provide and pursue such a serious matter. If the audience catches onto this, all that follows should already dull support for the woman involved.

Now that there is an awareness of some prostitute behind Caelius and this case, Cicero trolls his audience by conserving her appearance until later. This space could be most useful for the jurors to gather feelings about women in their own lives and hypothesize if they have someone in their own family who would be similar to Clodia. And so, when he makes the following reference to this woman, Cicero begins his construction of her as a monster within the republic. Cicero includes an obvious citation of the Roman poet Ennius’ *Medea exsul*:

‘For never a wandering woman’ would have presented this trouble to us, ‘Medea sick in spirit, wounded by savage love.’ And so, indeed, jurors, you will discover that which I will show you, when I will have come to this point, that this Palatine Medea and the change of residence was whether the cause of all bad deeds of the young man or rather of the gossip of all.

While he continues to draw out (*ostendam*) his characterization of Clodia, Cicero presents this allusion to the witch Medea, who herself sought out revenge by killing her own two children, the king and his daughter after her husband, Jason, left her.

By presenting her in this manner, Cicero makes Clodia Rome’s real-life Medea (*Palatinam Medeam*). Medea’s literary tradition shows that men are fearful of her since her irrational behavior has the potential to pollute the



minds of their wives and daughters. If they become like her, they may also cause destruction to their family and the patriarchy. Fear of this woman and her possible harm is explicitly expressed in the conversation between King Creon and Medea in Euripides' *Medea*: Creon is concerned that if Medea remains in Corinth, she may stir up some harmful thoughts in his own daughter on account of her cleverness in evil. If Clodia, like Medea, were to use her intelligence to entice other women to this state of being, they would make many men fearful for the sake of their families and the patriarchy. There is certainly a parallel where an ex-lover (Medea/Clodia) seeks revenge against their abandoner (Jason/Caelius). While Cicero does not present Clodia as the killer of her own children, he relies on this extreme image to invoke fear in the jurors that women have an innate potential to do destructive deeds: they just need something to prompt it. For Cicero, this shows that this woman can pull off the most absurd things: whether it comes in the form of killing her children or risking the lives of many men with political power.

After Cicero notes other details regarding Caelius' charges and largely Clodia's sexual immorality and possible investment, he uses this developing characterization of Clodia as an angle to address the accusation of Clodia poisoning her late husband, Q. Metellus. Cicero does not seem to have the grounds to formally accuse Clodia of this charge. Still, he includes an emotional account of his death, particularly stressing how Metellus' death would be a loss for the republic:

Indeed at that time that man dying, although his mind had now been oppressed in other matters, he was reserving his last sense for the memory of the republic (*ad memoriam rei publicae*), when while looking at me crying he was showing with a fading and dying voice, how great a storm threatens me, how great a tempest threatens the state (*[impenderet] civitati*), and when he often striking his wall, which was shared with Quintus Catulus, he

was often naming Catulus, often me, and most often the republic (*saepissime rem publicam*), he was grieving not so much because he was dying as because both the fatherland (*patriam*) and also I were being robbed of his protection.

Cicero pointedly includes grave concern for the republic (*ad memoriam rei publicae*) that follows the death of Metellus. If the jurors understand this gossip, then Clodia can be seen as an actual threat to the republic.

Cicero claims that the death of Metellus threatens the state (*[impenderet] civitati*) and the fatherland (*patriam*). And so, Rome would no longer be protected because it was being robbed (*spoliari*) by Clodia. If Clodia actually killed her husband, Cicero implies that the republic would be at a serious disadvantage. He gives his best attempt at characterizing Clodia as a serious threat, first to Caelius, then to the republic through her close association with “mad” mythical women. He uses the death of her husband and supposed involvement as a manifestation of these qualities to show that Clodia certainly has the potential to be involved in Caelius’ charges. Cicero drives this point home later in the speech by referencing Caelius’ witty description of Clodia as a “two-bit (*quadrantaria*) Clytemnestra.” Before he unfolds the events at the Senian baths, Cicero drops this reference which should evoke for the jurors the downfall Clytemnestra created by killing her husband, Agamemnon. Again, Clodia’s associations with both Medea and Clytemnestra *literally* surrounding the suspicious death of her husband demonstrate the type of women Cicero claims Clodia to be in the context of Caelius’ life and Rome’s political climate.

After Cicero accomplishes this, the other piece of work entails convincing the audience that she actually has the means to pull it off. Therefore, Cicero examines her figure within the boundaries of the resources she possesses or lack thereof. Keeping in mind the emotions being elicited for this woman, Cicero puts Clodia right into the scheme of things: “Moreover there are two charges, one of gold and one of poison; in which one and the same character is

involved. Gold was taken from Clodia (*sumptum a Clodia*), and poison was sought, which was to be given to Clodia, as it is said.” Cicero suggests that this woman had enough wealth to support the cause for which Caelius was mistakenly charged: the attempted murder of Dio. It would be fitting that Clodia would finance something so shameless because she also uses her wealth to support her own luxurious lifestyle:

Now, I say nothing against that woman; but, if there was some woman unlike that one who makes herself open (*pervolgaret*) to all, who openly had some other man selected as her lover, in whose gardens, house, Baiae, her lusts of all were coming and passing freely, who even supported young men and sustained the frugality of fathers at her own expenses (*suis sumptibus*), if a widow were living freely, if she were living recklessly and shamelessly, if a rich woman were living extravagantly (*dives effuse*), if a lustful woman were living in a whorish manner (*meretricio more*).

Straightaway, Cicero claims that Clodia has the financial means to support several matters on her own (*suis sumptibus*). He wants to demonstrate to his audience that when a woman, who can be greatly feared, is in a position to obtain resources to her advantage, she is in an even more threatening position. This works very well because Cicero knows that the male jurors do not want to see women in their positions of power, particularly in a position to dismantle their patriarchal society.

Presenting Clodia with such resources supports her ability to partake in these charges against Caelius. Still, Cicero’s speech has obvious inconsistencies that weaken his case and further undermine the historical veracity of his characterization of Clodia. Continuing his defense, Cicero slowly contradicts his previous characterizations regarding Clodia’s wealth, effectively casting doubt on her role in these charges. It begins to become imprecise when Cicero describes that Clodia prized her suitors gifts, being a

frequent despoiler of people with wealth: “Did you dare to take the gold from your chest, to despoil that Venus statue of yours of its ornaments, despoiler of your other lovers, although you knew for how great a crime this gold was sought, for the murder of the ambassador for the perpetual stain of evil of Lucius Luceius, a very venerable and untouched man?” This completely shifts Cicero’s previous narrative and puts Clodia in a different position. Here, she is not the one providing. Instead, she is put in a much more dependent relationship with her suitors. This contradiction weakens the efficacy of Cicero’s argument that Clodia has enough resources to pull off something as disgraceful as using gold to destroy powerful political figures.

Looking into the strengths and weaknesses of Cicero’s characterization of Clodia is necessary to evaluate its historical veracity. Cicero was undoubtedly a skilled orator and is famously known for going to any and all extremes to win an argument. This is exactly what he did here. Cicero’s claims against Clodia are completely based in *fama*, so he muddles with the character of Clodia only for the sake of winning an argument. The true figure of Clodia is a long-time debate and can be continuously challenged within the text itself. Due to the obvious extremes and lack of legitimate grounds, it can be concluded that Cicero’s Clodia is certainly not some insane Medea figure or war-like leader. However, because she is a woman with enough gossip surrounding her problematic qualities, Clodia is an easy target to objectify. This was further stimulated by the fact that Cicero’s audience was a group of male jurors with prejudices against powerful women with resources and abilities to participate in serious matters.

Cicero could only successfully define Clodia as ruthlessly and villainously as he did and present her as a possible threat to the republic because he touched his audience’s deep misogyny. Clodia’s connection to women like Medea and Clytemnestra allows Cicero to play with the jurors’ fears. After Cicero presents these potential qualities in Clodia, he needs to show his audience that, in reality,

Clodia had the means to be a part of Caelius' charges, where he outlines her excessive wealth. However, inconsistencies in these particular descriptions muddle her overall character, thus impacting how the audience perceives the authentic Clodia. Regardless, Cicero is well-trained in persuasion and fabricated an appropriate character for Clodia so that the audience may perceive her as a villainous threat to Caelius and, quite possibly, the republic.

### Endnotes

1. James M. May, "Ciceronian Oratory in Context." *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric*. (Brill: 2022) p. 61.
2. Stephen Ciraolo, "Introduction." *Cicero: Pro Caelio*. p. xxix.
3. Anne Leen. "Clodia Oppugnatrix: The Domus Motif in Cicero's Pro Caelio." *The Classical Journal*. (2001) 141; similarly in Marilyn B. Skinner. "Clodia Metelli," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983) pp. 273-275.
4. James M. May. "Chapter One: Cicero: His Life and Career." *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric*. (Brill: 2002) 10-11.
5. *cum audiat nullum facinus, nullam audaciam, nullam vim in iudicium vocari* (*Pro Caelio* 1.11-12)  
All Latin translations are mine.
6. *ipse in iudicium et vocet et vocarit, oppugnari autem opibus meretriciis* (*Pro Caelio* 1.15)
7. Stephen Ciraolo. "Vocabulary and Notes." *Cicero: Pro Caelio*. p. 90-91.
8. 'Nam numquam era errans' hanc molestiam nobis exhiberet 'Medea animo aegro, amore saevo saucia.' Sic enim, iudices, reperietis quod, cum ad id loci venero, ostendam, hanc Palatinam Medeam migrationemque hanc adulescenti causam sive malorum omnium sive potius sermonum fuisse. (*Pro Caelio* 18.209-216)

9. Euripides. *Medea*. 311-370, translated by Ian Johnston of Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo, BC.
10. Marilyn B. Skinner. "Palatine Medea," *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune's Sister*. (Oxford: 2011) pp. 105-107.
11. *Quo quidem tempore ille moriens, cum iam ceteris ex partibus oppressa mens esset, extremum sensum ad memoriam rei publicae reservabat, cum me intuens flentem significabat interruptis ac morientibus vocibus, quanta impenderet procella mihi, quanta tempestas civitati, et cum parietem saepe feriens eum, qui cum Q. Catulo fuerat ei communis, crebro Catulum, saepe me, saepissime rem publicam nominabat, ut non tam se mori quam spoliari suo praesidio cum patriam, tum etiam me doleret. (Pro Caelio 59.736-744)*
12. Marilyn B. Skinner. "Palatine Medea," *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune's Sister*. (Oxford: 2011) p. 110
13. *Sunt autem duo crimina, auri et veneni; in quibus una atque eadem persona versatur. Aurum sumptum a Clodia, venenum quaesitum quod Clodiae daretur, ut dicitur. (Pro Caelio 30.354-356)*
14. *Aurum sumpsit, ut dicitis, quod L. Luccei servis daret, per quos Alexandrinus Dio qui tum apud Lucceium habitabat necaretur. (Pro Caelio 51.625-629)*
15. *Nihil iam in istam mulierem dico; sed, si esset aliqua dissimilis istius quae se omnibus pervolgaret, quae haberet palam decretum semper aliquem, cuius in hortos, domum, Baiae, iure suo libidines omnium commearent, quae etiam aleret adolescentis et parsimoniam patrum suis sumptibus sustineret; si vidua libere, proterva petulanter, dives effuse, libidinosa meretricio more viveret. (Pro Caelio 38.474-482)*
16. *Tune aurum ex armario tuo promere ausa es, tune Venerem illam tuam spoliare ornamentis,*

*spoliatricem ceterorum, cum scires, quantum ad facinus aurum hoc quaereretur, ad necem legati, ad L. Luccei, sanctissimi hominis atque integerrimi, labem sceleris sempiternam? (Pro Caelio 52.632-637)*

17. Basil Dufallo. "Appius' Indignation: Gossip, Tradition, and Performance in Republic Rome," *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014)*, 2001, Vol. 131 (2001), pp. 122-128.

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## Love, Ladies, and Lucretius

Stacey Kaliabakos '23

Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* is known for its discussions of atoms, death, religion, nature, and a multitude of other topics. However, his views on love are especially interesting when analyzed through the lens of Epicureanism (a school of philosophy to which Lucretius was deeply devoted) and through the eyes of a modern woman, such as myself. Lucretius' perceptions of women and the whole concept of love are, at times, problematic-- within the lines of *De Rerum Natura*, he attacks different women, both divine and mortal, on the basis of their sexuality, femininity (or lack thereof), attitudes, odors, spending habits, untrustworthiness, and more. As a reader overall impressed with the complexity and nuances of *De Rerum Natura*, this approach to women and love in general left me perplexed and with many questions. In this essay, I seek to more deeply understand Lucretius' opinions on sex, love, and women through an analysis of Epicurus' own stance on these subjects in conjunction with Lucretius' discussion of various women throughout *De Rerum Natura*, both mortal and divine, concluding that the definition of pleasure as the absence of pain is central to both philosophers' arguments.

Epicureanism is often thought to be the advocacy or pursuit of sensual pleasures and delights. This is partly true-- Epicureans do believe that pleasure is the highest good, but, at the same time, mental pleasure is regarded as higher than physical pleasure. The ultimate pleasure, according to Epicureans, is freedom from anxiety and mental pain, especially that which arises from fear of death and of the gods. Additionally, since Epicureanism has always been set apart from other philosophical ideologies because of this ardent commitment to leading a life of pleasure, it is believed by some scholars that Epicurus, the founder of Epicureanism, condemned love in his philosophical writings and said it was unwise for a man to commit himself to a woman by means of marriage. This statement on the subject

is attributed to Epicurus by the Vatican collection of Epicurean sayings: “Indulgence in love never benefits a man, and he is lucky if it does not harm him.” Although this may seem damning for Epicurus, suggesting that he did not have faith in a woman’s ability to provide a man with love in Greek society, evidence indicates otherwise. The aforementioned fragment may have very well been taken out of context by Diogenes Laertius, who wrote about Epicurus and his ideas several centuries after Epicurus’ life and may not have cataloged a fully accurate analysis of his outlook on love. This theory is supported by the fact that Epicurus himself is said to have included women, slaves, and even female slaves in his school at Athens, which for a man living in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC seems extremely progressive and forward-thinking. Additionally, Epicurus even dedicated one of his own works, now unfortunately lost to the passage of time, to a woman. Although Epicurus himself was unmarried, he also was supposedly fond of children and encouraged his students to marry and have families (according to Diogenes Laertius, which is seemingly a self-contradiction). Overall, scholarly writings contend that Epicurus seemed to be in favor of love, associating it with the highest good of pleasure.

Lucretius is often viewed as a second Epicurus to a modern audience, since his entire purpose throughout *De Rerum Natura* is to convince his friend, Memmius, to become an Epicurean. For a long time, *De Rerum Natura* was even actually thought to be a Latin translation of a lost text of Epicurus rather than an original work written by Lucretius. Although most people now accept that Lucretius was the author of *De Rerum Natura*, he still owes a large portion of his ideas and opinions to Epicurus, among other ancient writers and philosophers such as Empedocles, Democritus, Thucydides, and Homer. In contrast to our fragmentary evidence of Epicurus’ views on love, about one fifth of *De Rerum Natura* is devoted to a discussion of this topic. However, the spirit of Lucretius’ tirade against love cannot be characterized as truly Epicurean and differs widely

from what Epicurus himself might have taught and thought. Lucretius may have actually been influenced by Democritus, a Greek pre-Socratic philosopher who also believed in a similar atomic theory to Epicurus and Lucretius, on his opinions of love instead. Lucretius is adamant that men in particular should be wary of Venus (the personification of love and sex in *De Rerum Natura*) because of the almost inescapable “snares, pains, and vanities of love.” It also is entirely possible that Lucretius’ negative judgments of love-- which are so dire that they have even earned him the epithet “the anti-love poet”-- may stem from his own experiences with women that could have been tragic: after all, Saint Jerome did tell the (now widely-disputed) story where Lucretius took his own life because of his broken heart. A final theory about Lucretius’ hatred of love stems from the fact that Greek and Roman society, although often lumped together in history, are quite different from each other and that Epicureanism arguably developed greatly on its journey from 4th century BC Athens to republican Rome: in other words, Lucretius’ own Epicureanism may have possibly been different from the original tenets postulated by Epicurus centuries before. Whatever the case, *De Rerum Natura*, although on the whole serving as a valid supporting treatise on Epicureanism, does not align with the spirit of Epicurus on love’s pleasure as a high good.

In order to properly analyze Lucretius’ perceptions of love, one must first delve into his ideas on women generally in *De Rerum Natura*. Although *De Rerum Natura* itself is not a work of epic poetry, it undeniably contains many of the subjects that would adorn an epic work as a backdrop to Lucretius’ arguments about the formation of the Epicurean self. It is clear throughout the poem that Lucretius intended *De Rerum Natura* to be consumed by an entirely male audience, given that it contains several references to wartime conduct, running for political office, the accumulation of wealth by rising up in rank in Roman society, and more situations that would be relatable to only Roman men and not women. Therefore, women are not even

considered by Lucretius as potential converts to Epicureanism (which is interesting, especially given Epicurus' dedication to the inclusion of women in his school-- another aspect where Lucretius strays from the teachings of his Hellenic master); rather, women are present in the poem as analogies meant to represent the natural world and the tenets of Epicureanism that are related to physical reality. Furthermore, unless they are characters popular in the mythology (or religion) of his day, such as Venus or Iphigenia, women tend to remain nameless in *De Rerum Natura*, making Lucretius' work even more exclusive, rather than inclusive, to women.

A womanly figure found in the text of *De Rerum Natura* is *Natura*, the female personification of nature. It is interesting to mention at the outset, however, that associating *Natura* with femininity has been a choice long placed upon translators of *De Rerum Natura*, such as Stallings and Rouse. Of course, it makes sense, given the English conception of "mother earth" or "mother nature." At the same time, in English, nature does not literally have a gender-- it is a neuter noun. Ascribing *Natura* a feminine gender in translation and in the conception of nature within *De Rerum Natura* is significant in that it incorporates womanhood into her imagery while also keeping with the original Latin feminine inflection of the word as well. In any case, as discussed before, the women in Lucretius' poem are often linked to corporeal, material subjects, and *Natura* is no different. She may be interpreted as the primary generative body from which all else is born-- essentially, as the source of the creation of atoms and the universe as humans understand it. We see this in Book II, where Lucretius writes, *quare Magna deum Mater Materque ferarum / et nostri genetrix haec dicta est corporis una* (DRN II. 598-99). As Nugent notes, the wordplay found here (*nostri genetrix corporis*) ultimately reduces *Natura*, in all her might and generative power, to the same matter as all else involved in creation-- *corpora*.

Additionally, Lucretius' comparison of Natura to a human female can be seen in his imagery of gestation. Initially, Natura is in her prime, able to produce a variety of forms: *hoc ubi quaeque loci regio opportuna dabatur, / crescebant uteri terram radicibus apti* (DRN V. 807-08). Her wombs provide the potential for unregulated births throughout nature, populating the earth with more matter and atoms. However, not long after this, Lucretius likens Natura to an aged woman who is weakened and unable to live up to her previous birthing accomplishments: *sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere, / destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto* (DRN V. 826-27). Nugent suggests that

The earth is now tamed, like a properly socialized wife, no longer capable of polymorphous activity... the potentially uncontrolled fecundity of mother-nature-earth presents no threat and is figured as a human female body which passes through stages from youthful fertility to barrenness in old age.

Therefore, instead of being in awe at Natura's ability to create all of the seemingly impressive aspects of the earth and nature, Lucretius instead reduces this female to mere matter, constraining her to her ability to reproduce early in life and then later on being unable to perform her feminine functions in an adequate manner. He places her into a box where the limits of her femininity are what define her character.

Would Epicurus agree with Lucretius here? It is difficult to say, since Epicurus' *On Nature* has been mostly lost to history, having only been preserved in the form of a summary in his *Letter to Herodotus* and among the burnt scrolls in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum. This *Letter to Herodotus* is particularly valuable because it reveals the method of thinking by which Epicurus viewed nature-- not quite Natura herself, but his beliefs surrounding *corpora*, which were nearly identical to Lucretius. Epicurus' central point is that at some small level, the universe is composed of eternal, natural particles which cannot be created, divided, or destroyed. Natura is merely a personification of this natural

process and would not be thought of by either Epicurus or Lucretius as existing as an actual figure. However, since the *Natura* of *De Rerum Natura* is the source for most natural things found upon the face of the earth, it hardly seems that Epicurus would agree that her decreasing capabilities in propagating would detract from her contributions to humankind. The properties of what is being created are what matter, not the means by which they may be created in *De Rerum Natura* (i.e., by *Natura* herself). Additionally, given Epicurus' positive view of women, he may have not taken a liking to Lucretius' imagery of *Natura* aging into a non-threatening "socialized wife."

*De Rerum Natura* opens with an invocation to Venus, who is ironically the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Here, Lucretius seems to have been inspired by Empedocles' invocation to Aphrodite in the opening lines of Book One of his *Physics* (*Physika*), which only remains in fragments. Lucretius begins the poem saying, *Aeneadum genetrix, hominum diuomque uoluptas, / alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa... concipitur uisitque exortum lumine solis* (*DRN* I. 1-5). These opening lines indirectly inform readers of Lucretius' views of a man-woman dynamic, even if the subjects in question are divine: Lucretius has placed Aeneas, the son of Venus, before the subject of the sentence, which is, in fact, Venus herself. Aeneas, the famous founder of Rome and the model of masculinity and heroism for men across the ancient world, has found himself occupying the first word of *De Rerum Natura* without having anything to actually do with the narrative. Whether that is due to his sheer notability or simply his manhood is unknown, but it nevertheless sets a precedent for Lucretius to deny the women in his poem the place they deserve. It is likely that Epicurus would not have begun his *magnum opus* in this way, as he valued women coming into his school to learn and philosophize alongside him, and would not wish to turn them away with the insinuation that divine status could not even protect them from coming second to a man.

Interestingly enough, however, Lucretius goes on to ask for Venus' allyship in developing his poem-- although he doubts religion and the gods (hypothesizing that if they were to exist at all, they would not be involved in human affairs), he still seeks direction from her, suggesting that he at least values her qualities as a generative figure, like Natura. He also asks Venus to put an end to the works of war (*effice ut ... fera moenera militiai*, *DRN* I. 29-30). Lucretius writes that Venus may be the only viable option to obtaining peace because she is on the side of the god of war, Mars, who is soon overcome by his love (or lust) for her. He describes Venus and Mars in an intimate scene during the proem of Book I, describing the mighty god of war as dazed by his lover's beauty. Lucretius' language in the passage is quite suggestive, describing Venus as possessing a "holy body" (*DRN* I. 38) and talking to Mars with "honeyed speech," (*DRN* I. 39) highlighting the fact that she is abusing her femininity to get what she wants from Mars. Mars either knowingly or unknowingly plays into her advances, obviously smitten by the goddess' irresistible beauty and form. This famous passage arguably serves as foreshadowing-- later, Lucretius will discuss how men should not fall for the advances and promises of women because they may ultimately cause them more harm than pleasure (i.e., in this case, depriving the god of war from enjoying the consequences of a bloody war).

In Book IV, *De Rerum Natura*'s book on the senses, Lucretius draws intense parallels between Venus and the verbiage used to describe sex. From lines 1058 to 1190, Venus is mentioned in a sexual context a total of thirteen times. She is to blame for men who fall in love and subsequently get hurt by women from whom they seek pleasure; she is present when Lucretius suggests that women are objects meant to be used by men at their convenience (... *si non prima nouis conturbes uolnera plagis, / uoluigaeque uagus Venere ante recentia cures / aut alio possis animi traducere motus*, *DRN* IV. 1070-1072); and she is even compared to a prostitute and is described as a mistress of

men (*DRN* IV. 1071, 1185). Lucretius' use of this kind of imagery in relation to Venus throughout Book IV suggests that he views her (and also intends for his male audience to view her) primarily as a sex object. He establishes an inextricable connection between Venus and sexual acts, images, and emotions (such as *Veneris sudor* and the decomposition of the sea-colored garment, *DRN* IV. 1128). These comparisons are baffling, since he began his poem with an invocation to the same goddess and did not portray her in an entirely negative light within it. Lucretius' inconsistency here may indicate his seemingly complex view of women. As we will see later, although he mostly bashes women (especially mortals, but even Venus who possesses a more-than-human status) for their inadequacies and charms that "ensnare" men in the "knots of Venus," he relents that love may not always (emphasis on always) be a metaphorical death sentence for men, which is a sentiment that Epicurus would most likely agree with.

Towards the end of Book IV, Lucretius discusses erotic love and the women who cause men to fall into a life of distress and temptation. Lucretius argues that a certain romantic, life-consuming, "head-over-heels" type of love is futile and that it corrupts the lives of those who partake in it. His language in this section of *De Rerum Natura* is quite explicit in order to emphasize how terrible falling in love with a woman is because of what it causes a man to do: he wastes his wealth on expensive gifts (*labitur interea res et Babylonia fiunt / unguenta, et pulchra in pedibus Sicyonia rident*, *DRN* IV. 1123-1125) or extravagant parties (*eximia ueste et uictu comiua ludi / pocula crebra unguenta coronae certa parantur*, *DRN* IV. 1131-1132) only for his lover to make him jealous by eyeing another man (*aut nimium iactare oculos aliumque tueri / quod putat, in uoltuque uidet uestigia risus*, *DRN* IV. 1139-1140). Not only does falling in love with a woman put a man in danger of falling into debt, but no matter how hard they try to please their partner, all their efforts may not be enough to keep their woman loyal. It seems as if the uncertainty of love and its potential to cause a



man pain is a formidable reason as to why Lucretius warns men so vehemently to do whatever possible to avoid being captured by it.

Although most of the course of his attack on romantic love in Book IV is directed at women generally, there is a point in the text where he talks about a woman so beautiful that her suitor thinks of her as almost divine, which is a dangerous thing to do (*nam faciunt homines plerumque cupidine caeci / et tribuunt ea quae non sunt is commoda uere*, DRN IV. 1153-1154). Lucretius describes the *exclusus amator*, a man who has been barred from entering the home of a woman he finds extremely attractive. He waits at her doorstep, hoping to be let in. However, Lucretius takes this moment to bolster his case against sexual and emotional attachment to a woman by asserting that no matter how beautiful she may be, the lover *nempe eadem facit-- et scimus facere--omnia turpi, et miseram taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa, quam famulae longe fugitant furtimque cachinnant* (DRN IV. 1174-1176). He follows this by saying no man, even the *exclusus amator*, should waste his time on a woman who not only smells bad, but is also just a simple mortal: *stultitiaque ibi se damnet, tribuisse quod illi plus videat quam mortali concedere par est* (DRN IV. 1183-1184). Just as sexual desire can arise from the visual effect of *simulacra* flowing from an attractive material body (DRN IV. 1030-57), like from the body of the aforementioned beautiful woman, it may also be diminished by a negative sensory assault-- i.e., a mysterious bad smell.

Why does the lover smell bad? Based on Lucretius' description, it is difficult to directly locate the source of her odor, as he is quite vague in that regard. The hints he gives are that the smell is common to all women (*eadem facit... omnia turpi*, IV. 1184), it is embarrassing (*furtimque cachinnant*, IV. 1176), it is an ultimately forgivable flaw because it is associated with being a human (*praetermittere et humanis concedere rebus*, IV. 1191), and it is so serious that it causes the woman to try and fumigate the smell (*taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa*, IV. 1175). The gravity of

Lucretius' insult to the woman and women in general is maximized if the smell is originating from the woman's actual body. It is therefore possible that he is referring to her defecation, which is an entirely natural process, and also one that men partake in if they are functioning human beings. However, it is also reasonable to suggest that her odor is due to menstruation, which is an inherently female phenomenon. This suggestion is more telling because it is an insult directly pointed at women alone, and it would make more sense for the male lover to be shocked and repulsed by the woman's smell. It also falls in line with Lucretius' previous criticisms of women throughout *De Rerum Natura*. In this scenario, Lucretius is suggesting that when women do not perform to the standards men have for them, they become unattractive and deeroticized, no matter how attractive they may be in reality. It seems as if sex appeal wanes when men are forced to encounter the side effects of what makes sexual reproduction possible.

However, the question of why Lucretius chooses to address the topic of love at all within *De Rerum Natura* remains at large. Even if Lucretius was heartbroken and seeking an outlet for his emotions, it hardly seems plausible that he would utilize twenty percent of his six books for that purpose, slaving away at finding the perfect pattern of dactyls and spondees to express his sorrows and anguish. His attack on romantic love is also, as I said before, not Epicurean-- it goes against what scholars have established as Epicurus' own stance on love. Despite this, Lucretius is operating within an Epicurean mindset, so there has to be evidence for his Epicureanism within his condemnations of love and women. This evidence may be found in the simplest definition of pleasure proposed by Epicurus: pleasure as the absence of pain. If love often has the potential to cause a man to live the remainder of his life in heartbreak, pain, and anguish, how could love possibly be one of the highest forms of good, or even be good or worthwhile at all? If Lucretius also did not view the women in Roman society as potential converts to Epicureanism, they would be unable to conceive

of love in this way, making them all the more dangerous to a man's happiness. It is ironic how, because of the time gap between the founding of Epicureanism and his own lifetime, Lucretius takes the definition of pleasure as taught by Epicurus to argue against a particular view possessed by Epicurus himself.

An interesting turn of events may be found in the final lines of Book IV, where Lucretius writes

*Nec divinitus interdum Venerisque sagittis /  
deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur; / nam facit  
ipsa suis interdum femina factis / morigerisque  
modis et munde corpore culto, / ut facile insuescat te  
secum degere vitam. / quod superest, consuetudo  
concinнат amorem; / nam leviter quamvis quod  
crebro tunditur ictu, / vincitur in longo spatio tamen  
atque labascit. / nonne vides etiam guttas in saxa  
cadentis / umoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa?*  
DRN IV. 1278-1287

It is hard to tell what point Lucretius is making here. If a woman is not unpredictable and a man can be entirely sure that they will not cause them pain, only then will she be desirable and fit to live with? Does ugliness not matter if a woman tries to remain mannerly and clean as much as possible? The language here seems to be teetering on the verge of an insult-- if a woman is boring, unchanging, and consistent, they will erode the will of a man like water beats its way through a stone? It seems that these few lines are as accommodating as Lucretius is going to get. Epicurus would likely be more lenient than Lucretius when describing what qualities a proper partner should be endowed with, but this seems to be an unexpected revelation for Lucretius. He is once again as inconsistent as he was with his use of Venus imagery, backtracking from his initial hatred of all romantic love to supporting it within a very limited scope. Perhaps he is assured that a man will not be in danger of pain by loving this strict vision of an ideal woman, allowing him to pursue a lifestyle in accordance with the tenets of Epicureanism.

Lucretius is a fascinating figure due to his incredible postulations on atomic theory and death, but one must simultaneously acknowledge that he is building his arguments on the words of those who came before him. Epicurus seems, to a modern audience, to also be a progressive and innovative philosopher whose ideas have influenced countless people throughout the course of history, including Lucretius. Their views on love, though different, stem from the very same root: pleasure as the absence of pain. Their dualistic conclusions (love is good versus love is bad) makes for riveting scholarship to be done and discussed even thousands of years later. As for me, I believe I fall between the two. It is never good to become an obsessive lover, but it is also not good to never fall in love at all. As Horace once said, the golden mean, or the *auream mediocritatem*, is what one ought to strive for in all things, but especially in such a complex and nuanced thing as love.

#### Endnotes

1. Stearns, pp. 343
2. *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, 51, pp. 66
3. Stearns, pp. 346.
4. Stearns, pp. 347.
5. Stearns, pp. 349.
6. Leonard and Smith, pp. 616.
7. Betensky, pp. 291.
8. Nugent, pp. 181.
9. Nugent, pp. 181.
10. Hanses, pp. 208.
11. Nugent, pp. 184-85.

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Pirate Translation, *Odyssey* 12.153-183

Ryan Wynn '23

I hollered for me mateys, grieving in me heart:

“Ahoy hearties, since it is not right for any one of ye  
godforsaken lads to know alone,

Ye all ought to know the foresights that the divine  
prophetess Circe uttered to me.

Alas, me will recount it as we might be sent to Davy Jones’  
Locker,

Or escape its blimey fate.

First, she warned yes to evade the voices of the lovely  
Sirens.

She swore that only me can hear their enchanting singing.

Ye shall bound me taut with rope so me is bounded firmly

To the mast of the ship. Ye must fasten the ropes in a knot.

If me crimp ye to unfasten the rope, and even if me beg ye  
buckos more,

Tighten the ropes giving no quarter.”

Arrr, me spoke this speech to me mateys.

Our mighty sloop sailed swiftly

To the island of the Sirens. The briney deep and air  
becalmed.

The prophetess could put any godforsaken thing to rest.

Me mateys furled the sails

And they sat down and rowed through the silvery water.

Then, me sliced a large wheel of beeswax with me cutlass,

And me squeezed it in me hardy hands.

Quickly, the wax was heated up, as the rays of

The Sun melted it.

Me placed the wax into the ears for me mateys one after another.

They binded me on the ship. Me hands and me feet were tightly

Strung to the mast. The rope ends were tied in a knot.

All hands ahoy, they struck the briney deep with their oars.

Though the sloop was far from the island, alas we could hear a clamor.

Rowing quietly, the sea-swift sloop stirred up to escape

From nigh at hand. Me mateys prepared for the Siren's singing.

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Apollo at rest on Mount Parnassus. Palazzo Altemps –  
Museo Nazionale Romano  
Alexandra Berardelli '23