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The CE17 earthquake in the Roman province of Asia was one of the largest and most destructive natural disasters to hit the Roman Empire during the first century CE. However, until recently, the potential of Tacitus’ description of this earthquake to enlighten scholarship as to the vast extent of its destructiveness, the character of Tiberius, and the methods Tacitus employed in writing – methods that can help historians pinpoint the time of the composition of his Annals – have been largely passed over. Now, through cross-examination with ancient writers like Strabo and Cassius Dio, and the archaeological record, largely preserved through inscriptions, we are better able to appreciate the bigger pictures of Asia, Tiberius, and the Roman Empire. An examination of this natural catastrophe and its aftermath will prove that Tacitus was heavily influenced by events in CE115 in his description of the CE17 earthquake. In addition, this paper will argue that the earthquake and Tiberius’ response to it were more significant than is often appreciated.

DETERMINING THE DATE FOR TACITUS’ ANNALS THROUGH THE 17 EARTHQUAKE
According to Tacitus:

Eodem anno duodecim celebres Asiae urbes conlapsae nocturno motu terrae, quo improvisior graviorque pestis fuit. neque solitum in tali casu effugium subveniebat in aperta prorumpendi, quia diductis terris hauriebantur. sedisse inmensos montis, visa in arduo quae plana fuerint, effulsisse inter ruinam ignis memorant. asperrima in Sardianos lues plurimum in eosdem misericordiae traxit. Tac. Ann. 2.47

In the same year [17] twelve famous cities in the province of Asia were overwhelmed by an earthquake. Its occurrence at night increased the surprise and destruction. Open ground – the usual place for refuge on such occasions [i.e. earthquakes] – afforded no escape, because the earth parted and swallowed the fugitives. There are stories of big mountains subsiding, of flat ground rising high in the air, of conflagrations bursting out among the debris. Sardis suffered worst and attracted most sympathy.

The methods Tacitus employed in finding evidence for the 17 earthquake are bound up with his composition of the Annals. Until the mid-20th century, modern historians argued that Tacitus published the Annals under Trajan in 116. But the methods Tacitus used to compose the Annals and over what period of time, were both deemed unknowable and therefore largely not discussed. In 1957, Mendell simply wrote that:

The Annals were probably “published” in 116, the last of the works of Tacitus to appear.¹

He provided no further explanation of this statement.

This common viewpoint was dismantled one year later, when Syme published his two-volume work on Tacitus, in which Syme argued that the Annals were not written under Trajan, but under his successor, Hadrian.² Syme believed that this explained why the Annals were so negative towards Tiberius’ military policy of non-aggression along the frontiers, a veiled criticism of Hadrian’s policy to halt all wars of Roman conquest. The Annals had many descriptions of battles between Roman and Parthian armies in the Julio-Claudian period. Surely, Syme posited, Tacitus

¹ Mendell (1957, p. 225).
² Syme (1958, pp. 746-782).
would never have devoted so much time and space to these wars during the last years of Trajan’s reign, when Trajan’s Parthian War, begun in 115, proved to be a spectacular failure, only ending with his death in 117. Syme’s answer to this was a resounding ‘Of course not.’ Tacitus might, however, have included his accounts of those wars as rhetorical exercises, to encourage Hadrian both to forget about his Tiberius-like non-aggression policy, and to emulate other Roman generals in the *Annals*, like Corbulo. This, in turn, might encourage Hadrian to launch a new war of conquest against the Parthians – one more fitting to Rome’s military reputation.  

Later, Syme revised this theory and hypothesised that, based on *Annals* 2.61 – at the time of writing the Roman Empire extended to the ‘Red Sea’ or rather, the ‘Persian Gulf’ – Tacitus’ account of Tiberius’ principate had to have been completed in 116. But later books, especially those that deal with Nero, must have been written later on, with Hadrian in mind. Even later, Syme altered this idea as well, arguing that since Suetonius’ and Cassius Dio’s portrayals of Tiberius were so similar to Tacitus’, that his portrayal of Tiberius’ reign must have been historical, and not a diatribe against either Trajan or Hadrian at all.  

Today, historians generally agree that Syme’s second argument, that Tacitus began composing under Trajan and finished under Hadrian, is probably the more accurate appraisal. However, the period of research that Tacitus employed stretched back much further than Trajan’s principate. According to Suetonius, Domitian modelled himself on Tiberius’ personal notes and memoirs, which, Syme argued, was reflected in the similar characteristics between the two emperors’ principates. Drawing inspiration from Suetonius and Syme, Martin plausibly suggested that by the time of the assassination of Domitian in 96, Tacitus had already learned the lessons of imperial concealment and intrigue so prominent throughout Tacitus’ Tiberian books. Then Bowersock demonstrated that Tacitus’ accounts of events in Asia Minor under Tiberius were heavily influenced by his proconsulship there in 112/3, and by political events over the course of several decades leading up to and including 112/3. Thus, Tacitus must have composed parts of the Tiberian *Annals* whilst in Asia Minor and other locations, beginning after the completion of the *Histories* in 109 up

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3 Syme (1958, pp. 746-782).
8 Martin (1981, p. 31).
to 113/4, using personal notes dating back to the Flavian era.9

The length of time Tacitus patiently took to write the *Annals* did not detract from his efforts to compose a cohesive work and was instead helpful. As O’Gorman points out, Tacitus’ description of events from Tiberius’ accession to the death of Nero appears to constitute beginning and end points of historical concepts that reflect Tacitus’ impressions, feelings, and thoughts that in the main transcend purely Trajanic or Hadrianic story-telling.10 For, as Ash reminds us, Tacitus was no mere court historian intent upon condemning past rulers. But rather, the *Annals* as a whole set forth a gradual decline under the Julio-Claudians that prequel the civil wars that open the *Histories*. In this regard, Tacitus followed Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, and Josephus, each of whom composed preludes to the wars each wished to narrate.11 Thus, as Gowing notes, the *Annals* were neither purely promotion nor condemnation of Trajan and Hadrian, but rather showed historical rigour and vigour.12 As a result, as Woodman puts it, far from being courtly affirmation, the *Annals* contained interactions with Trajan that were not exclusively positive or negative, but were nuanced, and engaged and expanded upon Trajan’s ‘Restored Coinage’ of 112; these depicted the emperors that Trajan considered ‘good’ – Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. Thus, the Tiberius of Tacitus had two sides: one positive, the other stern, corrupted, and at times scandalous.13

Tacitus’ portrayal of the 17 earthquake and Tiberius’ response can help to pinpoint when Tacitus wrote this section of the *Annals*, as well as Tiberius’ character as a ruler. Crucially, Tacitus’ account closely resembled Cassius Dio’s description of the large and destructive earthquake that hit Syrian Antioch in 115. By cross-referencing Tacitus’ description of the 17 earthquake with Dio’s, it becomes abundantly clear that Tacitus drew much of his inspiration from this contemporary event when composing this part of the *Annals* in 115. The close similarities are set forth in Table 1. Through general comparison and by cross-referencing both columns, one is able to determine that Tacitus lifted the destructive conditions faced during his contemporary earthquake in Antioch in 115 and foisted them upon the cataclysm of 17 in Asia Minor. First, both events were vast and extremely destructive to the urban centres where they occurred. In addition, he used contemporary events to describe a

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9  Bowersock (1993, pp. 3-10).
similar event from a century before, in order to stimulate a dramatic response in his audience. They, like Tacitus, knew something about the earthquake of 115, but little about the 17 Asia Minor disaster.

**TABLE 1**

Parallels Between the Earthquake of CE17 in *Tac. Ann. 2.47* and the Earthquake of CE115 in *Dio 68.24.1–25.6*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tac. <em>Ann. 2.47</em></th>
<th>Dio 68.24.1–25.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(graviorque) the people were surprised</td>
<td>(ἀμηχάνοις) the people were in dire straits (25.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(solitum) on open ground.</td>
<td>(ἐκτὸς τῶν οἰκιῶν) on open ground outside the houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hauriebantur) people were swallowed</td>
<td>(ἐπόνησαν) people were snatched up (24.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sedisse inmensos montis) big Mountains subsiding</td>
<td>(ὁρὴ τε ἄλλα ψφίζησε) mountains collapsing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(visa in arduo quae plana fuerint) flat ground raising.</td>
<td>(ἐπειτα βρασιμὸς ἐπ’ βιαιότατος ἐπεγένετο) buildings leap high into the sky (24.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(eosdem misericordiae traxit) most sympathy to Sardis.</td>
<td>(ἐδυστύχησεν) most unfortunate of all was Antioch went (24.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though Dio wrote these words a century after Tacitus, the latter clearly borrowed from 115 and not the reverse – no description of the earthquake of 17 exists in the manuscripts and epitomes of Dio’s history. By 115, Tacitus clearly had no source material for the earthquake of 17; it simply no longer existed. No other descriptions of the 17 earthquake exist in Tacitus or Dio. Given that no other detailed descriptions of earthquakes remain in the ancient sources before Tacitus, he had to improvise. He simply drew upon “stories” of “big mountains subsiding, of flat ground rising high into the air, of conflagrations bursting out among the debris.”  

Clearly, Tacitus learned some information about the 17 earthquake from conversations with locals while *proconsul*, but he framed his presentation of that earthquake in much the

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14 Tac. *Ann. 2.47*. 
same way as Dio set forth the 115 earthquake, since Tacitus had run out of sources for the Asian earthquake.\textsuperscript{15}

This paucity of sources can be accounted for. After the 17 earthquake, the emperor Tiberius rebuilt Asia Minor almost from the ground up, changing the urban landscape forever. In addition, nearly one century had passed since this disaster and few eye-witnesses were alive, certainly none that could bear witness to traces of earthquake damage, which Tiberius’ extensive reconstructive work had removed throughout the entire province. Thus, Tacitus had to look elsewhere for information on the effects of such an earthquake. When the earthquake in Syrian Antioch occurred in 115, Tacitus found a ready mine of information to underpin his narrative of events in Asia Minor in 17. Tacitus acted in much the same way while describing Rome’s defensive network under Tiberius in the eastern provinces (\textit{Annals} 4.5), by emphasising cooperation with its Iberian and Albanian allies. For, Iberia and Albania had only become close allies to Rome under the Flavian dynasty, and especially in the summer of 114, when Trajan, at the summit at Elegeia in Armenia, installed a new king over Albania and received formal submission from the Iberians. Thus, just as with Tacitus’ portrayal of Rome’s eastern policy, so too in the case of Tacitus’ portrayal of events in Asia Minor in 17 – the historian considered and pondered events that took place prior to the Flavian period and set them forth for public consumption using materials from Trajan’s principate in his \textit{Annals} in 115.\textsuperscript{16}

Trajan’s Parthian War eventually proved a dismal failure, but up until 116 his campaign had actually progressed well. According to Dio, Trajan led his armies into Mesopotamia and then, in 116, after taking the Parthian capital Ctesiphon, the princeps marched on to Messene to survey the Persian Gulf.\textsuperscript{17} Throughout the early twentieth century, many historians doubted Dio. However, those doubts were questioned when a Trajanic milestone dated to 115/6 was discovered near Singara in northern-central Mesopotamia\textsuperscript{18} and the ruins of a triumphal arch dated to 116 were found at Dura-Europos on the mid-Euphrates with a Latin inscription bearing the name of Trajan.\textsuperscript{19} These discoveries confirmed that Trajan had begun to turn the region into a Roman province, just as Dio recorded.\textsuperscript{20} The \textit{Annals} appear to have been

\textsuperscript{15} See Table 1; Tac. \textit{Ann.} 2.47.
\textsuperscript{16} Martin and Woodman (1989, p. 102); Bosworth (1977, p. 227 with n. 41).
\textsuperscript{17} Dio. 68.26–29.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{AE} 1927.161; Oates (1968, pp. 71-72).
\textsuperscript{19} Hopkins (1979, p. 68).
composed with Trajan’s successes up to that precise point fresh in Tacitus’ mind. There were no less than thirteen occasions on which Tacitus turned to Parthian affairs. These followed no strict history and their purpose appears to have been to help his audience imagine the fighting conditions Trajan might have encountered in the East.\footnote{See Tac. \textit{Ann.} 2.1-4, 50-60; 6.14, 31-37, 41-44; 11.8-10; 12.10-14, 44-51; 13.6-9, 34-41; 14.23-26; 15.1-18, 24-31; Ash (1999, pp. 114-135); Woodman (2010, p. 41).}

Next, we turn to Tacitus’ statement that, at the time of his work’s finishing touches, the Roman Empire extended to the ‘Red Sea’ – what we would today call the Persian Gulf. This suggests that Tacitus published the \textit{Annals} in 116, since after Trajan withdrew in 117 from that area, the Roman Empire no longer extended to the Persian Gulf.\footnote{Tac. \textit{Ann.} 2.61.} The Romans considered the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Indian Ocean all parts of the ‘Red Sea.’\footnote{Liv. 36.17.15; 42.52.14; 45.9.3-6; Strab. 17.1.25; 11.13.9; 17.1.6; Pl. \textit{NH}. 2.36; 2.173; 2.183; 6.106; 6.124; Stat. \textit{Theb}. 4.387-389; Plut. \textit{Crassus} 2.} Nonetheless, Pliny the Elder, a source that Tacitus relied heavily upon when writing the \textit{Annals} and the \textit{Histories}, revealed that the Persian Gulf was more often than not referred to as the Red Sea by the mid-first century CE:\footnote{On Tacitus’ use of Pliny as an historical source, see Tac. \textit{Ann.} 1.69; 13.20; 15.53; \textit{Hist}. 3.28; Gowing (2009, pp. 17, 27).}

\begin{quote}
Persae Rubrum mare semper accoluere, propter quod is sinus Persicus vocatur. regio ibi maritima Ceribobus; qua vero ipsa subit ad Medos … ad Persepolim, caput regni, dirutam ab Alexandro. \textit{Pl. NH} 6.115
\end{quote}

The Persians have always lived on the shore of the Red Sea, which is the reason why it is called the Persian Gulf … Finally they [Tigris and Euphrates] flow across Babylonia up to the Red Sea [the modern-day Persian Gulf].

Gawlikowski’s theory that after Trajan’s death, Messene, a state roughly equivalent in size and location to modern-day Kuwait, remained a vassal state under Rome\footnote{Gawlikowski (1994, pp. 27-33).} is contradicted by the fact that immediately after Trajan’s death, Hadrian evacuated all Roman forces from Messene, Babylonia, and Mesopotamia.
To quote the *Historia Augusta*:

quare omnia trans Euphraten ac Tigrim reliquit exemplo. *HA, Hadrian* 5. 3

He [Hadrian] therefore gave up everything beyond the Euphrates and Tigris.\(^{26}\)

In other words, whilst many Romans could have traded throughout the markets in Messene after Trajan’s death, Messene was at that time neither a Roman province nor part of the Roman Empire. Therefore, Tacitus’ designation of the frontier as the area we now call the Persian Gulf must have been written and published prior to Trajan’s death and at the height of his military successes in the East in 116.

Taken together, the evidence clearly shows that Tacitus wrote his stylised portrait of the 17 earthquake in Asia Minor in light of events in 115, most notably the Syrian earthquake, and published it the following year, together with the rest of his *Annals*. Sailor suggests that Tacitus used Tiberius as a rhetorical device to enhance Hadrian’s positive qualities after Trajan’s death,\(^{27}\) and the same formula may be applied no less simply to Trajan, or any emperor. Indeed, it appears more likely that Tacitus highlighted Tiberius’ lacklustre non-aggression policy as a sharp contrast to Trajan’s militarism, animated by the realism of the Romano-Parthian conflicts in the *Annals*. In any event, by 117 Trajan had died and his Parthian War ended as a failure. Later historians, including Cassius Dio, made little use of Tacitus’ Tiberian books. Most likely, the ultimate failure of the Parthian War – the successes of which up to 116 those books commemorate – became the catalyst for the *Annals*’ own demise.\(^{28}\) However, there would be nothing unhistorical or misplaced about Tacitus’ description of Tiberius’ response to the 17 earthquake, as the following section will demonstrate.

\(^{26}\) On the brevity of time it might have taken for Hadrian to make this decision, see Birley (1997, p. 78).

\(^{27}\) Sailor (2008, p. 256).

\(^{28}\) Mellor (2011, pp. 126-127).
TIBERIUS’ RESPONSE TO THE 17 EARTHQUAKE

According to Tacitus, in 17, when Asia was hit by the especially destructive earthquake:

nam centes sestertium pollicitus Caesar, et quantum aerario aut fisco pendebant in quinquennium remisit. Magnetes a Sipylo proximi damno ac remedio habiti. Temnios, Philadelphenos, Aegeatas, Apollonidenses, quique Mosteni aut Macedones Hyrcani vocantur, et Hierocaesarium, Myrinam, Cymen, Tmolus levari idem in tempus tributis mittique ex senatu placuit, qui praesentia spectaret refoveretque. delectus est M. Ateius e praetoriis, ne consulari obtinente Asiam aemulatio inter pares et ex eo impedimentum oreretur. Tac. Ann. 2.47

Tiberius promised it [Sardis] ten million sesterces and remitted all taxation by the Treasury or its imperially controlled branches for five years. Magnesia-by-Sipylus came next, in damage and compensation. Exemptions from direct taxation were also authorised for Temnus, Philadelphia, Aegeae, Apollonis, Mostene (the Macedonian Hyrcanians), Hierocaesarea, Myrina, Cyme, and Tmolus. It was decided to send a senatorial inspector to rehabilitate the sufferers. The choice fell on an ex-praetor, Marcus Aletius. The governor of Asia was a former consul, so the embarrassments of rivalry between equals was avoided.

Two important factors in this passage, hitherto passed over by historians, illustrate the intensity and extent of this earthquake. Firstly, Tacitus stated “twelve famous cities” of Asia were “overwhelmed” by the earthquake of 17. Secondly, the historian then listed the names of only eleven cities that Tiberius “also” exempted from direct taxation as a result of the same earthquake damage that affected the first twelve. These two facts tell us much about the scale of this natural disaster, for just this evidence strongly suggests that twenty-three major cities in Asia were severely damaged by it all at once. As for the twelve unlisted famous cities, Strabo, writing at the time, listed these, otherwise known as the koinon or the commonwealth of cities: Ephesus, Miletus, Myus, Lebedus, Colophon, Priene, Teos, Erythrae, Phocaea, Clazomenae,

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29 Tac. Ann. 2.47.
30 Tac. Ann. 2.47.
and the island *poleis* of Chios and Samos.31 These twelve cities, Strabo informed us, were located along the busy maritime coastline of Lydia and northwest Caria in the province of Asia.32 Notably, Tacitus’ additional eleven cities listed by name were all located further inland from the coast and were situated in circular fashion around Sardis. By listing the additional eleven in full, Tacitus indicated that these eleven cities suffered most out of all Asian cities. Furthermore, since they were all centred around Sardis and Tacitus stated that “Sardis suffered worst,” Sardis was probably located near the epicentre of the earthquake. Strabo supported this scenario, stating that “many of its [Sardis’] buildings” were “lost” through this earthquake.33 Indeed, Strabo believed that popularity of the cult of Poseidon around Sardis, Philadelphia, Apameia, and Magnesia was due to the frequency of earthquakes in the area.34

Epigraphic evidence shows that other cities and towns also sustained damage as a result of this catastrophic seismic event. An honorific inscription found at Puteoli, dated to 30, commemorates a list of fourteen cities in Asia affected by this earthquake that Tiberius restored. The inscription includes the eleven cities Tacitus listed, and Ephesus, one of the *koinon* cities, and also Cibyra and Hyrcania – two additional cities that did not appear in Strabo’s or Tacitus’ lists.35 Murray suggested that these cities dishonourably added themselves to inscriptions on public monuments to gain greater fame and sympathy.36 However, he erroneously assumed that only Tacitus’ list of eleven were affected. Given the geographical extent of this earthquake based on the addition of the *koinon*, it is highly probable that not only these two cities, but even others, sustained much damage from this earthquake, and that help was given to them by the emperor Tiberius. Indeed, evidence exists that the village of Choriani, near Hierocaesarea,37 and the village of Gök Kaya, near Sardis, were also damaged by this earthquake and generously rebuilt under Tiberius’ orders, as well.38

Thus, we have evidence of 25 cities sustaining earthquake damage throughout the province of Asia in 17, as well as several other towns; these were the only attested ones we have evidence for today, so there may well have been many more. Indeed, not surprisingly, Tacitus passed over mention of other cities, towns, and locations in

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31 Strab. 14.1.3-4.
32 Strab. 8.7.1.
33 Strab. 13.4.8.
34 Strab. 12.8.18.
35 *ILS* I 156 = *CIL* X 1624; Murray (2005, p. 153).
37 *IGRP* 4, 1304 = *KP* 1.113; Tac. *Ann*. 2.47; 3.62; Broughton (1934, p. 216).
38 *IGRP* 4, 1348 = *KP* 1.13, nos. 22-24; Tac. *Ann*. 1.73; Broughton (1934, p. 216).
Asia affected by this earthquake. In the same way, his brief reference to the Campanian earthquake of 62 mentions only that certain buildings in Pompeii sustained damage as a result.\textsuperscript{39} Of course, this is partly correct: modern scholarship provides consistent testimony that many signs at Pompeii, even today, point to prolonged repairs to buildings and other structures damaged by the earthquake in 62.\textsuperscript{40} However, Tacitus omitted that many other cities in Campania were also damaged by the 62 earthquake, including Naples, Herculaneum, Nuceria, and numerous other cities and towns throughout Campania, as Seneca recorded soon after its occurrence. An inscription in Herculaneum commemorating Vespasian’s restoration of the temple of the Mother of the Gods “that had fallen down through earthquake” – corroborates the extent of earthquake damage to public buildings in that city in 62.\textsuperscript{41}

Therefore, it is in keeping with Tacitus’ style that he should not have recorded every Asian city damaged by the 17 earthquake. There may have been too many to record in full in a work such as Tacitus’\textit{Annals} in any case. Perhaps this accounts for why Velleius Paterculus provided neither a tally of the number of cities damaged by the earthquake, nor the number that Tiberius restored. Hence his simple remark in collective, but general, terms:

\begin{quote}
Reditur urbes Asiae, vindicatae ab iniuriis magistratum provinciae.
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
Vell. Pat. 2.126.4
\end{flushright}

The cities of Asia have been restored, the provinces have been freed from the oppression of their magistrates.

Tacitus clearly believed that the praises of those like Velleius for Tiberius to be “fictitious,” “for fear of the consequences” during his principate, whereas after Tiberius died other accounts of his rule were “influenced by still raging animosities.”\textsuperscript{42} However, the scale of the natural disaster that was the earthquake of 17, and the scale of Tiberius’ response to the plights of so many cities, towns, and villages throughout Asia, without doubt warranted genuine and sincere admiration on Velleius’ part.\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[39] Tac.\textit{Ann.} 15.22.
\item[41] Sen.\textit{NQ} 6.11-3; \textit{CIL} X.1406 = MN inv. 3708; Butterworth and Laurence (2005, pp. 156-157).
\item[42] Tac.\textit{Ann.} 1.1.
\item[43] Tac.\textit{Ann.} 1.1; Syme (1958, pp. 367-368).
\end{footnotes}
### TABLE 2

All Attested Cities Damaged by the 17 Earthquake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strabo 14.1.3-4</th>
<th>Tac. Ann. 2.47</th>
<th>ILS I 156 = CIL X 1624</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ephesus</em></td>
<td>Sardis</td>
<td>Sardis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Miletus</em></td>
<td>Magnesia-by-Sipylus</td>
<td>Magnesia-by-Sipylus</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Myus</em></td>
<td>Temnus</td>
<td>Temnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lebedus</em></td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Colophon</em></td>
<td>Aegeae</td>
<td>Aegeae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Priene</em></td>
<td>Apollonis</td>
<td>Apollonis</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Teos</em></td>
<td>Mostene</td>
<td>Mostene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Erythrae</em></td>
<td>Hierocaesarea</td>
<td>Hierocaesarea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Phocaea</em></td>
<td>Myrina</td>
<td>Myrina</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Clazomenae</em></td>
<td>Cyme</td>
<td>Cyme</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Chios</em></td>
<td>Tmolus</td>
<td>Tmolus</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Samos</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ephesus</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cibyra</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Hyrcania</em></td>
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</tbody>
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**Key:**
- **Plain** – Feature in Tac. Ann. 2.47
- **Italics** – Feature in Strabo 14.1.3-4
- **Bold** – Feature in neither Tac. Ann. 2.47 nor Strabo 14.1.3-4

However, Velleius’ sincere endorsement for Tiberius was not shared by all Romans at the time. Suetonius, drawing upon senatorial sources contemporary to Tiberius, whose memoirs made Suetonius himself believe that Tiberius was “close-fisted to the point of miserliness”\(^44\) with regard to disaster aid, painted a very different picture, no doubt heavily influenced by those senators, who all appeared hostile to that

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\(^{44}\) Suet. Tib. 46.
emperor. But even Suetonius, using such senatorial sources, had to admit praise for Tiberius’s response to the 17 earthquake, however briefly:

*Ne provincias quidem liberalitate ulla sublevavit, excepta Asia, disiectis terrae motu civitatis.*

Suet. *Tib.* 48

The only free money grant any province got from him [Tiberius] was when an earthquake destroyed some cities in Asia Minor.

Tiberius rebuilt the central cities of Lydia in Asia on a lavish and vast scale. Archaeologists working at Sardis have unearthed traces of Tiberius’ post-earthquake rebuilding of the ancient city, and the scale and extravagance of the gymnasium alone that Tiberius had built there after the 17 earthquake, illustrates the importance these cities wielded in Tiberius’ vision for the province following this earthquake. Archaeologists have also found the street network Tiberius had built through Sardis post-17, and the new water supply installed there at the same time. Furthermore, earthquake resistant building methods were also experimented with in Asia Minor at this time, as well.

However, although many of Rome’s senators might have seen sense in rebuilding Asia, most begrudged Tiberius’ personal oversight of that enterprise. Not only had Tiberius intervened in a senatorial province, effectively robbing senators of the chance to make their personal mark in Asia, but Tiberius did so on a grand scale. Channelling senatorial sources hostile enough to Tiberius to omit that emperor’s building programs in Asia, Suetonius observes:

*Princeps neque opera ulla magnifica fecit – nam et quae sola susceperat, Augusti templum restitutionemque Pompeiani theatri, imperfecta post tot annos reliquit.*

Suet. *Tib.* 47

No magnificent public works marked his [Tiberius’] reign: his only two undertakings, the erection of Augustus’ Temple and the restoration of Pompey’s Theatre, still remained uncompleted at the end of all those years.

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One reason for Tiberius’ enthusiasm in rebuilding Asia was his renowned philhellenism. Greek culture had heavily influenced Tiberius ever since his youth, and Rutledge argues that such philhellenism affected his response to this earthquake. However, Tiberius’ primary motivation for rebuilding Lydia and the wider Asian region from the ground up was still that of political exhibitionism. Tiberius had contented for power with Rome’s senators since succeeding Augustus. According to Tacitus, the succession had not unfolded smoothly. There was talk in Rome of impending civil war, and rumours among Romans that Agrippa Postumus or Germanicus, who controlled the eight Rhine legions and who would flout and show contempt for Tiberius’ imperial policy by illegally touring Egypt, were themselves considered potential successors by Augustus. That one or the other might have made a worthy emperor further added to instability. Such expressions of internal dissent were not constrained to the lower levels of society either. Upon his accession, only after Tiberius had secured the allegiance of the consuls and the Praetorian Guard in Rome, and control of the corn supply in Egypt, thus gaining an unassailable strategic power-base throughout the empire, did he finally receive the promise of allegiance by the Senate. Then, in order to maintain control and public order, Tiberius punished the senators who had offended him Gaius, Asinius Gallus and Lucius Arruntius. But such harshness served only to aggravate civil unrest, which in turn, only aggravated the emperor. As a result, in 16 Tiberius embarked upon the first of his notorious years-long string of treason trials, and condemned Marcus Scribonius Libo Drusus to death for looking into astrological predictions concerning Tiberius’ future and presumably, the conditions surrounding his death. As a sign of internal submission, sincere or contrived, Rome’s senators expressed their support for the princeps by declaring holidays of public thanksgiving for his escape from possible assassination.

Tiberius’ harshness then gave rise to an attempted coup when, on the island of Planasia, a slave named Clemens disguised himself as the deceased Agrippa Postumus and made for Rome. There he intended to make a bid for the principate, and a number of senators, equites, and some members of Tiberius’ own palatial court ad-

49 Suet. Tib. 70–71.
52 Tac. Ann. 1.1–6.
vised and funded him in order to rid themselves of Tiberius. However, upon learning of these plots, Tiberius had his guards capture Clemens and bring him secretly to the palace, whereupon the princeps had him executed.56

Eventually discerning that such an aggressive policy was not serving his own interests well, Tiberius embarked upon a different course. In order to regain popularity in Rome, in early 17 Tiberius decreed a triumph for Germanicus through the city. Although Germanicus’ war against the Germans had not yet been brought to a completion, Tiberius decreed it terminated,57 believing that more could be achieved in Germany through diplomacy rather than war.58 But, once the triumph was over and public concord restored, Tiberius immediately commissioned Germanicus and Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso to the eastern provinces.59

Debate still rages as to Tiberius’ motives for deploying Germanicus and Piso to the East together. Tacitus stated that Piso was commissioned by the emperor to be Germanicus’ adviser in order to undermine the prince at every turn. In contrast, some modern historians argue that the purpose of Germanicus’ commission to the East was to monitor Piso, who had opposed Tiberius openly on several occasions and had been given Syria as a province to secure the support of the Senate.60 No doubt, such considerations had a part to play in the final decision, but clearly, Tiberius’ prime intention was to remove these two powerful figures from Rome.61 By removing Piso, who had shown open dissent, and Rome’s darling Germanicus – grandson of the triumvir Marc Antony, the political rival of Tiberius’ own imperial predecessor – with the lure of a glorious commission in the eastern provinces, Tiberius made an emphatic statement to Rome’s senators that he would not be trifled with any longer. Loyalty would secure them glorious provincial commissions, but disloyalty would result some of their most famous members, such as Piso, enduring the public disgrace and humiliation of taking orders from such a young and inexperienced imperial commander as Germanicus, whose imperium depended entirely upon Tiberius.62

At that point Tiberius announced he would rebuild the twelve cities of Asia. Seen in its historical and political contexts, therefore, the timing of this announce-

56 Tac. Ann. 2.38-40.
57 Tac. Ann. 2.40.
59 Tac. Ann. 2.42-44.
61 Tac. Ann. 2.42-44.
ment made this rebuilding endeavour an external response by the emperor not only to the destructiveness of the earthquake in Asia, but a fresh public display of his own power through magnanimous imperial benevolence. These actions were clearly intended to remind senators that Tiberius alone had the power to intervene in any part of the empire, even the senatorial province of Asia itself, if so ever, and whenever, he might wish. Thus, as Levick notes, Tiberius needed desperately to cement his “reputation” and “serviceability to the state” in the eyes of his provincial subjects after Augustus’ death, and thereby reinforce his claim “to merit as the highest authority in the whole Roman world.” By responding to the 17 earthquake as he did on such a grand scale, Tiberius effectively achieved that end. Up until this point, Tiberius’ own legitimacy as rightful emperor rested largely upon Augustus’ own dynastic accomplishments, military achievements, and fame. Tiberius would not have touched the Rome that Augustus rebuilt and had effectively re-founded, but he would nevertheless have attempted to equal or even surpass Augustus in other ways and by other means. He would have rebuilt and effectively re-founded not just one city in Italy, but many cities of Asia on a massive scale similar to Augustus’ architectural achievements in Rome itself.

Tiberius’ dutifulness to Asia garnered the princeps much popular approval throughout the empire. Two inscriptions that once adorned honorary monuments dedicated to Tiberius – the one from Puteoli, dated to 30, and another from Mostene, one of the cities effected by this earthquake itself, dated to 31/2. Indeed, these two inscriptions also reveal a deep level of collaboration between some fourteen cities of Asia of the koinon, including Ephesus, in their collective efforts to coordinate public honours for the princeps.

The inscription from Mostene in Asia also honour Tiberius as “founder of the twelve cities simultaneously.” Notably, Mostene was not actually one of the twelve koinon cities, demonstrating the deep connections between all of the cities mentioned in the inscription and the koinon cities together, simply in order to make this particular honour on this particular inscription at all possible.

Three other inscriptions, virtually identical to the above examples, have also been discovered in two other cities effected by the 17 earthquake: one in Latin has

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63 Tac. Ann. 2.41-47.
64 Levick (1976, pp. 87, 89).
65 Tac. Ann. 1.77; 4.37; Woodman and Martin (1996, section Ann. 3.56.3); Levick, (1976, pp. 82-83).
66 ILS I.156 = CIL 10.1624.
67 ILS II².8785.
been found in Aegae,68 and another two Greek inscriptions have been found in Cibyra.69 Sardis, Mostene, Hycania, and probably also Cyme, assumed the title ‘CaesarEA,’ while Philadelphia adopted the new name, ‘Neocaesarea.’70 An inscription from the village of Choriani, near Hierocaesarea, commemorated the dedication of an altar to Rome and Augustus, of whose cult Tiberius was chief priest. It was set up there around the same time that the above inscriptions were dedicated.71 At this time as well, at Gök Kaya, near Sardis, another inscription shows that a sacred society called the Caesariastae was also formed in honour of Augustus, with Tiberius as its supreme earthly leader.72

CONCLUSION

For Tacitus, writing in 115, the 17 earthquake portended the gradual decline in the Julio-Claudian dynasty – a decline that would slowly contribute to the civil wars of 69. These wars, in turn, caused Rome’s fortunes to plummet to their lowest ebb, only to be rescued, in time, by the Flavians and Nerva, and then restored to new heights by Trajan in 116, to whose greatness the Annals were dedicated. However, in 17 Tiberius simply made the best out of one of the most destructive earthquakes to ever hit Asia through his political strategy and intervention. The detailed memory of the event faded for several reasons. Firstly, there were no Tacitean historians at hand to record them, and even Velleius recorded very few details. Secondly, Asia was rebuilt on such a complete and grand scale that official memory began again there from the time of the province’s re-foundation under Tiberius, its new ‘founder.’ Tacitus’ brevity regarding the rebuilding of this important province served to not undermine Trajan’s less grand rebuilding of Antioch in 115. But he sacrificed a discussion of the possible ramifications that Tiberius’ grand intervention in a senatorial province had in Germanicus’ downfall a few years later after his own intervention in Tiberius’ imperial province of Egypt.

68 CIL 3.7096.
69 IGR 4.914, 915.
71 IGRP 4.1304 = KP 1.113; Tac. Ann. 2.47; 3.62; Broughton (1934, p. 216).
72 IGRP 4.1348 = KP 1.13, nos. 22–24; Tac. Ann. 1.73; Broughton (1934, p. 216).
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__________. “Greece (Including Crete and Cyprus) and Asia Minor from 43 B.C. to A.D. 69,” *CAH X²* (1996): 641-675.


If the ability to name is a mark of the divine, confusing names is surely human. From the image of the tower of Babel to the Dao that can’t be named⁴ to current arguments about the “true” definition of patriotism, semantic instability, when words shift meanings and mean different things to different people and even to the same person at different times,⁴ is part of the human condition. When semantic shift occurs, our socio-political realities concurrently change. Effects range from a descent into anarchic disorder and meaninglessness to simple neutral change to evolution and even “progress”³ in regards to individual development and understanding of

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1 “The Way is hidden and without name.” (Daodejing of Laozi 41, tr. Ivanhoe). Cf. DJ 1, 32, 37.
2 As Hobbes noted, “The names of such things as affect us, that is, which please and displease us, because all men be not alike affected with the same thing, nor the same man at all times, are in the common discourses of men, of inconstant signification. For seeing all names are imposed to signifie our conceptions; and all our affections are but conceptions; when we conceive the same things differently we can hardly ayoed different naming of them.” Lev. 4.17.
3 The post-enlightenment notion of ‘progress towards perfection’ in regards to naming has admittedly a social Darwinist flavor compared to random evolution, and thinkers voice very different notions of what constitutes ‘progress.’ For example, a Confucian seeks to restore the meanings of names to what they meant under the Zhou dynasty, a Platonist to make names match the Forms to which they refer as much as possible, and a Ciceronian promulgates a political vocabulary of an idealized republic that never really existed.
others’ points of views. In the global classroom, diversity of language and meaning is prized as a tool for enhancing learning. We encourage students to voice varying definitions of words such as “justice” and “equality” so that a breadth of views fosters both a depth of understanding and a respect for varying interpretations of these values. In stark contrast to this fostering of definitional plurality, pre-modern thinkers both in the Greco-Roman world and ancient China encouraged their students to practice semantic stability as a means of ensuring unity of thought and thereby harmonious political order. The thing to which a name refers, its nominatum, should be the same thing for everyone. Why does semantic instability cause, rather than diminish, social instability for these classical thinkers, and why did they think “out of one foolish word may start a thousand daggers,” as Bentham later warned?

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In Greece of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, conversations about semantics were typically couched in the larger debate about the contest between nature, or physis, and nurture, or nomos, which were treated for the most part as antagonistic, rather than complementary, binaries. Ever since Plato’s Socrates was famously blamed for having divided the “mind” from the “tongue,” series of binaries have shaped the Western philosophical and rhetorical tradition. Conventionalists, represented here

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4 For example, in our globalized Great Books curriculum at NYU, students learn the difference between arithmetic (one for one equity) and proportional justice (the more one puts into a system, the more one gets out of it) and grapple with the Ciceronian view that (arithmetic) equality is most unequal. Cf. Cic. Rep. 1.43, 53; Plato, Laws 757b, Rep. 558c; Arist. Pol. 1301b29ff.

5 For more on diversity in all forms as a key ingredient in modern education and the perspective that “there is no education without diverse points of view” and “Diversity is like Veritas: it’s an ideal of which we are in constant pursuit,” see Powell (5/31/18).


7 For more on the fifth century interest in investigating the nature of language, see Connor (1984, p. 99, n. 48).

8 For Cicero’s lament that Socrates divorced eloquence from wisdom, see esp. De Orat. 3.56–62, 72. The following binaries dominate ancient Western philological discussions on naming: Conventionalism: Realism :: Nomos: Physis :: Non-Being: Being :: False: True :: Unstable: Stable :: Ignorance: Knowledge :: Body: Mind :: Experience: Reason :: Eloquence: Philosophy.
by Hermogenes from Plato’s late dialogue *Cratylus* and by Hobbes,⁹ argue that names are the result of an artificial consensus and are customs created by man to avoid the anarchy that would result if everyone were to name everything as he or she pleased.¹⁰ True and false are aspects of speech, not of things,¹¹ and the application of a name is no guarantee of a thing’s epistemological reality. For these moderate skeptics, the application of names allows us to have a working knowledge of the world, but this application will not confirm the “realness” of said world. We shall never be sure if our perceptions, or anyone else’s, are correct or not, and submission to an agreed upon name ensures the preservation of peace and security for all.¹² From the conventionalist standpoint, incorrectly applied names create propositions that are not simply errors but logical absurdities.¹³

In contrast to conventionalists, realists posit that truth is an aspect of reality and that names should reflect that reality accurately if they are to be correct according to nature. As Socrates argues, “…we cannot name things as we choose; rather,

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⁹ Though not ancient, I’ve added Hobbes since his words epitomize the materialist, Epicurean attitude towards naming as conventional, which neatly contrasts with the realist view posited by ethical idealists like Plato. He also shared the view of Thucydides, whom he translated, that man’s tongue could well be a “trumpet to war and sedition; and it is said that Pericles once made thunder and lightning in his speeches and threw all Greece into confusion.” (*De Cive* 5.5, tr. Tuck).

¹⁰ Arguing that new names given to domestic slaves by their masters are just as correct as their old names, Hermogenes asserts, “…no one is able to persuade me that the correctness of names is determined by anything besides convention and agreement…No name belongs to a particular thing by nature, but only because of the rules and usage of those who establish the usage and call it by that name.” (Plato, *Crat.* 384c-d, tr. Reeve).

¹¹ “For True and False are attributes of speech, not of Things. And where Speech is not, there is neither Truth nor Falsehood…” Hobbes, *Lev.* 4.15. Following Aristotelian logic, Hobbes posits that true and false are attributes of “affirmations,” (i.e. propositions): “…truth consisteth in the right ordering of names in our affirmations.” Thus, if a name is incorrectly applied to its nominatum, then it is the application of the name that is false, but not the name itself.

¹² The Hobbesian sovereign, for example, is first and foremost a name maker who takes man out of the state of nature, which for Hobbes is a state of war thanks to man’s ability to name things for himself. For more on the epistemological need of a sovereign, see *Civ.* 5, *Lev.* 13, 17–18. As Ball points out, “The sovereign supplies nothing less than the common coin of political currency, the conceptual currency that makes civil society possible... Word and sword are two sides of the coin of civility.” (1985, p. 759).

¹³ According to these thinkers, only humans (but not animals) have the “priviledge of Absurdity” thanks to their ability to speak, which is their ability to reason (*Lev.* 5.20). Hobbes, for whom reason is the reckoning of names, argued the Greeks thought not that “there was no Speech without Reason; but no Reasoning without Speech…But when we Reason in Words of generall signification, and fall upon a general inference which is false; though it commonly be called Error, it is indeed an ABSURDITY, or senslesse Speech…the possibility of it is unconceivable.” *Lev.* 4.16-5.19. Cf. Cicero, *Div.* 2.119. For the requirement that words denote conceivable things, see Murphy (2005, p. 141).
we must name them in the natural way for them to be named and with the natural tool for naming them. In that way, we’ll accomplish something and succeed in naming, otherwise we won’t.” Both sides, however, admit that the distinctions between conventionalism and realism are not hard and fast. Hobbes, for example, tells citizens not to defer to commonly used definitions of absurd, albeit conventional, words like “transubstantiation,” and even the realist Socrates admits that, although in theory names ought to represent their nominata perfectly, in reality names are, like portraits, merely approximate representations, not exact replications, of their nominata. Just as a perfect replication of Cratylus would be a duplicate Cratylus, a perfect name would be the thing itself it names so perfection of names is just not in the cards. Both convention and realism play a role in the naming process, and the etymologies that pervade Cratylus are Socrates’ method of decoding conventional, derivative names to find their earlier, uncorrupted meanings, which would have been more accurate, i.e. names that partook of the essence of their nominata, had the early name-makers known the Forms and not have been dizzy on Heraclitean flux theory.

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15 For more on how common men speak “insignificantly” and how the meanings of even weighty philosophical terms like “Entity” and “Essence” are in actuality “no Names of Things” but rather moving targets or “Signes, by which wee make known, that wee conceive the Consequence of one name or Attribute to another,” see Lev. 5.19-21, 8.39, 46.
16 Crat. 432b-c.
17 Socrates, recognizing that “an image cannot remain an image if it presents all the details of what it represents,” admits that correctness in regards to naming sensory qualities can never be exact as calculating numbers is, and thus “we must look for some other kind of correctness in images and in the names we’ve been discussing, and not insist that if a detail is added to an image or omitted from it, it’s no longer an image at all.” Crat. 432a-d. By revealing the impossibility of the realist project of naming and the importance of knowing the limits of language, the “Cratylus is thus an exercise in comporting oneself correctly toward language.” Ewegen (2014, p. 144).
18 As Socrates puts it, “…both convention and usage must contribute something to expressing what we mean when we speak…I myself prefer the view that names should be as much like things as possible, but I fear that defending this view is like hauling a ship up a sticky ramp, as Hermogenes suggested, and that we have to make use of this worthless thing, convention, in the correctness of names.” Crat. 435b-c.
19 Socrates, positing that there is a “civil war among names” in regards to their claims to truth, admits that it is far better to understand things “through themselves than to do so through their names,” since the original name-givers, who, wrongly thinking that the things they named were, like everything else, “moving and flowing” and constantly “coming into being,” fell “into a kind of vortex and are whirled around in it dragging us with them.” The epistemological value of a name is thereby critically limited, “and surely no one with any understanding will commit himself or the cultivation of his soul to names, or trust them and their givers to the point of firmly stating that he knows something…” Crat.
This assumption that earlier applications of names would be more correct than later attempts, which Plato undercuts in the *Cratylus*, is characteristic of classical thinking globally. During the late 6th to 3rd centuries BCE, when philosophical and rhetorical discourse blossomed in China as it did in Greece and Rome, Legalistic thinkers, Mohist etymologists, and Confucian scholars posited in varying degrees that a rectification of names (*zheng ming*) would usher in a return to the Golden Age when *Zhou li* (rituals that actualized one’s potential *ren*, goodness) flourished and reflected the Way of Heaven. In the *Analects*, Confucius argues, like Socrates, for a realist conception of naming, i.e. that names should accord with reality/the Way as much as possible in order to foster social and civic harmony. Consider the grave socio-political ramifications of incorrect naming in the following vignette:

Zilu asked, “If the Duke of Wei were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?”

The Master answered, “It would, of course, be the rectification of names (*zhengming*).”

Zilu said, “Could you, Master, really be so far off the mark? Why worry about rectifying names?”

The Master replied, “How boorish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent. If names are not rectified, speech will not accord with reality; when speech does not accord with reality, things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practices and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments

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20 Scholars of classical Chinese rhetoric, positing that rhetorical traditions do exist even when they are not explicitly identified as such, argue that *ming bian* (the power of names) is, albeit different in aims and methods, comparable to the western rhetorical tradition. For this position and ways of approaching Chinese rhetoric on its own terms, see especially Lu and Frank (1993, pp. 445-463); Lu (1998, pp. 1-43, 293-303); You (2006, pp. 425-448).

21 For more on the relationship between *ren* and *li* in Confucius, see Shun (2002, pp. 53-72). For Mohist and Legalistic interpretations of *zheng ming*, see Lu (1998, pp. 203-222, 272-283). For the Neo-Mohists, whose focus shifted from ethical concerns to the nature of language itself in their project of *lei ming* (categorizing names), see Zhiming (1990, pp. 210-215).
and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. The gentleman simply guards against arbitrariness in his speech. That is all there is to it. (Confucius, *Analects* 13.3, tr. Slingerland)

Many of the assumptions made by Greco-Roman philosophers – for example, that the ordering of names affects moral character, is constitutive of socio-political structures, and is thus a prescriptive and not merely descriptive process – are shared by Confucius. Plato separates dialectic as a *technê*, or craft, aimed at truth and knowledge from rhetoric, a *tribê*, or knack, aimed at persuasion and belief. Likewise, Confucius distinguishes between the good speech of gentlemen (*junzi*), which reflects the Way, versus glib speech of base people (*xiaoren*) whose words exceed their actions. And like Plato and Aristotle, who posit that the misuse of words like “equality” leads to civic upheaval, for Confucius, misapplied names divert the human Way from the universal Way of which humans are just a part. Improper naming dooms civil society to confusion and social anarchy.

One’s words (*ming*), which ought to correspond to one’s actions (*shi*), are really bearers of the human social order and, if mixed up, will lead that order astray from the heavenly one it should mirror. There are differences

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22 Because rhetoric is merely irrational flattery that can give no account of the real nature of the things it is discussing, it is a knack. Cf. *Gorg.* 463a-466a.


24 Distinguishing between verbs like “taking” vs. “borrowing” (Social superiors can only take, but never borrow, from their social inferiors) and proper names such as “lord” vs. “minister,” Confucius admonishes his listeners to use names correctly to ensure political stability: “Certainly if the lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain will I ever get to eat it?” *Analects* 12.11. Cf. *An.* 12.17, 13.14, *Exoteric Commentary* 5.33.

25 Although such a “one-to-one” correspondence might seem logically impossible, considering that one has varied *it* to discharge in multiple social roles (e.g. as father/son/husband), for Confucius, as for Panaetius and Cicero, the self is social, “relational,” and defined by how it navigates the various relations in which it finds itself. Cf. Zhiming (1990, p. 207).

26 For more on how the “language-world relationship in the classical conception of language is analogous to the doctrine of the unity of Heaven and man,” and how man’s words are of a piece with the reality they describe and therefore need to be correct to ensure harmony, see Zhiming (1990, pp. 195–219).
between Confucianism and Platonism: the Confucian Way is more in flux than the forms, Confucian chiastic style treats opposites more as complements than binaries, and Confucius seeks restoration, while Plato aims at re-direction. Still, both posit that careful, non-arbitrary communication builds character and community, while empty, or arbitrary, eloquence destroys them.

Faulty communication leading to a lack of community is a key theme in Thucydides. His famous Corcyrean *stasis* description is the *locus classicus* of semantic instability:

So the condition of the cities was civil war, and where it came later, awareness of earlier events pushed to extremes the *revolution in thinking*…
*And in self-justification men inverted the usual verbal evaluations of actions.* Irrational recklessness was now considered courageous commitment, hesitation while looking to the future was high-styled cowardice, moderation was a cover for a lack of manhood, and circumspection meant inaction, while senseless anger now helped to define a true man, and deliberation for security was a specious excuse for dereliction…those who managed to accomplish something hateful by using honorable arguments were more highly regarded…In this way every form of viciousness was established in the Hellenic world on account of the civil wars, and the simplicity (*to euêthes*) that is especially found in noble (*to genaion*) natures disappeared because it became ridiculous…The weaker in intellect were more often the survivors; out of fear of their own deficiency and their enemies’ craft, lest they be defeated in debate and become the first victims of plots as a result of the others’ resourceful (*ek tou polytropou*) intellects, they went straight into action…With public life confused to the critical point, human nature, always ready to act unjustly even in violation of the laws, overthrew the laws themselves and gladly showed itself powerless over *passion* but stronger than justice…

Thuc. 3.82-4; tr. Lattimore

Although there is debate among commentators whether Corcyrean revolutionaries deliberately changed the meanings of names as in Orwell’s *1984*, or whether they merely exploited the valences of existing names, or, if lacking the concepts of “the good” and “the noble” in their degenerated state, they were obliged to apply the vocabulary of goodness to bad things and vice versa, the passage nevertheless shares

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27 For a discussion of these varying viewpoints, see Wilson (1982, pp. 18–20). Employing both hyper-
the Confucian belief that the disintegration of language is both the effect and the cause of political stasis.\textsuperscript{28} Whether it be Greek “courage” and “moderation” or French liberté, égalité, and fraternité, as Dickens later lamented, names, slogans, and the values behind them in a violent world are readily radicalized to the point of reversal of meaning, or even meaninglessness. Excess (pleonexia), a natural tendency within human nature and language, breeds further excess which eventually leads to the silencing of voice and self. Indeed, Thucydides presents Athens’ own self-destruction as a result of her ever-growing inability to communicate effectively with the Greek community (e.g. her Persian-like verbal assault on the Melians) and with herself (the disastrous Sicilian expedition).\textsuperscript{29} Athens’ self-annihilation can be blamed on her hubris, but, as Thucydides intimates, it may also be due to the inevitable corruption that is inherent in the very words by which Athens herself is made. Just as ancient scientists thought that the seeds of destruction were inherent in things (e.g. rust was inherent in iron),\textsuperscript{30} so they thought that language was both constitutive and destructive, hence the need for a rectification of terms. If only the Greeks could restore, rather than laugh at to euèthes, “ancient simplicity,” a stable, traditional value, and if only they could reject, rather than admire, the novel and clever sophistry that revels in shifting words and values, they could resist corruption and save their social order. Thucydides nicely terms the new ethos that was in fashion in Corcyra to polytropon, “being of many faces,” the adjectival form of which Homer had applied to Odysseus, another role shifter and name changer.

Names, however, have many valences that are easily exploited and tend towards entropy. “Freedom,” for example, can be confused with “dominion” since it means both “freedom from” and “freedom to.” As Hobbes argued, the Greeks and Romans overly stressed the “freedom to” valence of the term, and in doing so transformed the meaning of “freedom” to “dominion.” The Western parts, as he puts it, paid dearly for learning Greek and Latin since their “specious name of Libertie” threw them bole and euphemistic understatement, the revolutionaries tampered with the existing ordering of names and thereby insinuated new “affirmations” which, as Hobbes posited, determine what is considered to be truth (Lev. 4.15).

\textsuperscript{28} As in Hobbes, since language itself is a fluid substance that paradoxically destabilizes meaning even in the act of creating it, it likewise undermines the political structures that are constituted by it. Cf. Skinner (2011, pp. 569-577).

\textsuperscript{29} For more on Athens’ inability to live up to her own standards of civilized speech and on her political instability as a result of being a polis built upon speech, which is inherently inconstant, see White (1984, pp. 59-92).

\textsuperscript{30} The theory of bugonia similarly rests on this assumption. cf. Verg. Georg. 4.281-314, 554-558.
into a state of nature, another Corcyra, where since everyone has freedom to every-
ingthing, including naming, no one has freedom to anything. For Hobbes, for whom
“subjects” and “citizens” denote the same thing, and the vaunted term “tyrannicide”
really means “regicide,” true freedom is removing oneself from the state of na-
ture and submitting to a sovereign who regularizes names. Of such rectification
Herbert Hoover would have approved, who himself became victim to a semantic
reversal of the very same word. Before FDR, the valence of the word “liberal” that
was emphasized was the “freedom from” part, and “liberalism” meant what today is
called “conservatism,” i.e. freedom from big government. After FDR, however, who
emphasized the “freedom to” valence, “liberal” became associated with liberalism, the
New Deal, and big government. Hoover, none too pleased about this semantic shift,
gave up the word “liberal” altogether and famously said, “They have nested in this
word until it stinks. Let them have the word. It no longer makes sense.”

Is a rectification of terms the best way to deal with the political threat that sem-
antic instability poses? Does semantic instability even pose such a threat? Indeed,
there are two points of view that contrast with the ones we have met so far. First, is
the Daoist position here represented by Lao Tzu, Khongzi’s teacher in legend who
liked to shock his student with dirtiness and other deliberate breaches of ritual con-
duct as a way to teach Khongzi, whose Jesuit name, Confucius, means “to bathe,” to
be natural. For the Daoists, Confucianists were degenerate Daoists who, in an effort
to accommodate and rationalize human reality, had in their reliance on rites slipped
away from the universal Way (Dao), an indivisible unity of which humans are a

31 “And by reading of these Greek, and Latine Authors, men from their childhood have gotten a
habit (under a false shew of Liberty,) of favouring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of
their Soveraigns; and again of controlling those controllers, with the effusion of so much blood; as I
think I may truly say, there was never any thing so deerly bought, as these Western parts have bought
the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues.” Lev. 21.111.

32 Since that which our atoms are attracted to we call “good,” whereas that by which our atoms are
repulsed we call “evil,” for Hobbes a tyrant is simply a monarch that somebody does not like; the only
correct term for denoting an illegitimate leader is a hostis (public enemy); hosticide, but not tyrannicide,
is licit. cf. De Civ. 7.3, 12.3. According to Hobbesian semantics, freedom under a monarchy is no different
from that under a democracy, and the Aristotelian division of good vs. bad regimes based on rulers’
aims is mistaken: “The ancient writers on Politics have introduced three other kinds of commonwealths
in opposition to these: in opposition to Democracy is Anarchy, or confusion; to Aristocracy, Oligarchy, i.e.
government by a few; to Monarchy, Tyranny. But these are not three further kinds of commonwealth,
but three alternative names, which have been bestowed by people who were annoyed with a government
or its members.” De Civ. 7.2. cf. De Civ. 10.8, Lev. 21, 29, 46.

33 Public Statements, 1945, Hoover Papers.
part.\textsuperscript{34} The Confucian attempts to manifest the Way of humans (\textit{ren dao}) through rituals (\textit{li}), working from the outside in, while the Daoist focuses on manifesting the Way of heaven (\textit{tian dao}) through spontaneous (\textit{wu wei}) action, working from the inside out.\textsuperscript{35} In contrast to Confucius’ rectification of names (\textit{zheng ming}), which Daoists saw as actually widening the gulf between humans and the Dao, Daoists emphasize namelessness (\textit{wu ming}) to avoid distorting the Way:\textsuperscript{36}

A Way that can be followed is not a constant Way/A name that can be named is not a constant name/Nameless, it is the beginning of Heaven and Earth… These two come forth in unity but diverge in name/Their unity is known as an enigma. \textit{Daodejing of Laozi}, tr. Ivanhoe. \textit{DJ} 1\textsuperscript{37}

In ancient times, the best and most accomplished scholars were…Honest, like unhewn wood. \textit{DJ} 15

The Way is forever nameless/ Unhewn wood is insignificant yet no one in the world can master it…When unhewn wood is carved up, then there are names/ Now that there are names, know enough to stop! \textit{DJ} 32

In short, Daoists reject the name game altogether since names, which inherently classify and divide things into binaries, can never capture the essence of a reality that is a unity.\textsuperscript{38} All the binaries that characterize the western texts in this talk such as Lao Tzu puts it, “Those who are ritually correct act, but if others do not respond, they roll up their sleeves and resort to force/And so, When the Way was lost there was Virtue/When Virtue was lost there was benevolence/When benevolence was lost there was righteousness/When righteousness was lost there were the rites/The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and trust, and the beginning of chaos.” \textit{DJ} 38.

For a comparison of Confucius’ emphasis on ritual as a means of self-cultivation and realizing \textit{ren} with Lao Tzu’s reliance on natural action as manifesting the \textit{dao} through \textit{de} (virtue), see Coombs (2005, pp. 17–21, 30–31); Li (1998, pp. 225–233). For Lao Tzu’s advice to depend on one’s “belly,” or instinct, rather than on one’s mind, or reason, see \textit{DJ} 3, 12.

For more on Daoist \textit{wu ming} as a corrective to Confucian \textit{zheng ming}, see Li (1998, pp. 233–238).

\textit{Daodejing of Laozi}, tr. Ivanhoe.

\textsuperscript{34} As Lao Tzu puts it, “Those who are ritually correct act, but if others do not respond, they roll up their sleeves and resort to force/And so, When the Way was lost there was Virtue/When Virtue was lost there was benevolence/When benevolence was lost there was righteousness/When righteousness was lost there were the rites/The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and trust, and the beginning of chaos.” \textit{DJ} 38.

\textsuperscript{35} For a comparison of Confucius’ emphasis on ritual as a means of self-cultivation and realizing \textit{ren} with Lao Tzu’s reliance on natural action as manifesting the \textit{dao} through \textit{de} (virtue), see Coombs (2005, pp. 17–21, 30–31); Li (1998, pp. 225–233). For Lao Tzu’s advice to depend on one’s “belly,” or instinct, rather than on one’s mind, or reason, see \textit{DJ} 3, 12.

\textsuperscript{36} For more on Daoist \textit{wu ming} as a corrective to Confucian \textit{zheng ming}, see Li (1998, pp. 233–238).

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Daodejing of Laozi}, tr. Ivanhoe.

\textsuperscript{38} The text repeatedly admonishes that those who know the Way do not talk about it, whereas those who talk about it do not know it. For more on the need for practice in lieu of words, see \textit{DJ} 2, 23, 41, 43, 56, 81. Both Confucians and Daoists posit that in a perfect state of being, there is no need for words: “Would that I did not have to speak! …What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does Heaven ever say?” \textit{Analects} 17.19. cf. An. 2.1, 12.3, 13.27, 15.5.
as Being vs. Non-Being, Nomos vs. Physis, and Reason vs. Passion dissolve in the yin yang symbol, which treats seeming opposites as interdependent complements: one (e.g. light) cannot exist without the other (dark). To manifest the Dao naturally, one need be like nameless, unhewn wood. If one carves up reality into words, like turning wood into a bookcase, let’s say, or a doorframe, then one has created unnatural divisions and has limited and thereby distorted meaning. The “closed fists” of Platonic dialectic, Confucian rectification, and Hobbesian standardization, all aim to remedy rhetorical instability by closing off meaning. In contrast, Daoists, like many postmodern theorists, favor the “open hand,” which allows for a free play of signs but only so long as the process is natural and spontaneous (wu-wei). Daoist semiotics are thus not open ended, as these shifting signs reflect the eternal flux of the Dao’s state of being and constant becoming.

Lao Tzu’s text manifests this flux, and the rhetorical figures of speech and thought known for changing words’ meanings that are favored by sophists like Gorgias and that so worry Western thinkers – for example, paradoxes, oxymorons, and metaphors, which Hobbes calls “fools’ fires” – pervade Lao Tzu’s poetical text, which itself demonstrates the paradox that art is a lie that tells the truth. This text’s reversal of norms inspires students to struggle to understand its meaning, and of all the ancient theories on semantic instability,
students respond most to Lao Tzu’s and deeply engage with his enigmatic words, which brings us finally to the student point of view.

All the ancient texts here, including the Daoists, share this thread in common: They consider language normative, constitutive for better or worse, and prescriptive, not descriptive, in nature. The fact that names constitute, rather than just present, our reality, may be a good thing or not depending on which thinker you consult, but all agree words matter and affect the here and now. A shift in language means a shift in self and society. This is what scholars have termed the “strong view” of rhetoric that Isocrates’ famous *laudatio eloquentiae* espouses:

…there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish…It is by this (speech) also that we confute the bad and extol the good…for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. With this faculty we both contend against others on matter which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are *unknown*…in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom…the kind of art which can implant honesty and justice in depraved natures has never existed and does not now exist…*But I do hold that people can become better and worthier if they conceive an ambition to speak well*…the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honourable name among his fellow citizens: for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud…? Therefore, the stronger a man’s desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honourable

Isocrates, *Antidosis* 254-7, 274-8; tr. Norlin

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Tzu’s opacity, see Lu (1998, p. 237). The paradoxical Beatitudes, the Messianic secret, and the idea that parables are meant to confound rather than illuminate (*Luke* 8:10) are similar methods whereby the New Testament encourages experiential learning of its teachings.

45 As White eloquently says about responding to semantic instability in general, “When we discover that we have in this world no earth or rock to stand or walk upon but only shifting sea and sky and wind, the mature response is not to lament the loss of fixity but to learn to sail.” (1984, p. 278).

46 Whereas the “strong defense” of rhetoric treats words as deeds that construct, rather than just describe, reality, the “weak defense” of rhetoric divorces form from content, substance from style. Cf. Lanham (1993, pp. 154-194); Leff (1998, pp. 61-88).
Isocrates’ words represent the extreme of the “strong view” that posits that our words make us; without words, there is no reason, morality, society, or humanity; words are the sine qua non of being human. Unlike Lao Tzu, Isocrates has been less appealing to students as each year passes, and due in part to the fact that they espouse the “weak view” of rhetoric, which treats a name as a convention, a mere instrument or tool controlled by its user. According to this view, a name can’t change one’s moral character; word is distinct from deed. To what extent we encode words rather than being encoded by them is a matter of scholarly debate, but my students for the most part assume that we have power over language not vice versa. To them, semantic instability is neutral, and not a problem at all since a word shifting its meaning (for example, a slang word like “cool”) does not necessarily result in a societal shift or social upheaval. Believing they have more control over their environments than the ancients did and more power to self-define thanks to technology, they don’t see rectifying names as a boon or a necessary evil. While the ancients view rectification as either an act of hope or fear, two sides of the same coin in Pandora’s box, these students don’t use the same currency. They value diversity of meaning and linguistic autonomy on the assumption that the sum of meanings will be greater than its parts.

As a postscript, in recent years there has been a revival of the “strong view” of rhetoric, albeit a less deterministic version than that posited by the ancients. From movies like 2016’s Arrival, which explores the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that shared language leads to shared perceptions of concepts like time, to politics, where the subject of rectification is at a fever pitch, to the world of science, where epigenetics is impoding the nature/nurture distinction and thereby the debate about language’s impact on thought, the debate about the extent to which words influence one’s respective worldview is very much alive. Whether it be Rudolph Giuliani contending that Barack Obama does not really “love” his country the way other Americans do, or Hillary Clinton, having previously attacked Obama’s “empty” rhetoric, ar-

47 Consider, for example, the debate about the role of nature versus nurture in language acquisition. While Chomsky emphasized the role of nature in forming vocabulary via an innate “language acquisition device,” Skinner stressed the importance of experiential learning. Cf. Chomsky (1959, pp. 26–58).

48 The consensus on this is, of course, not unanimous, and students often argue that the deliberate changing of a name (e.g. from “freedom fighter” to “terrorist”) does impact socio-political realities. Deliberate shifts notwithstanding, most student papers nevertheless argue that style cannot “make the man” since character is determined by other factors such as spirituality, family, and personal choice whereby one has the autonomy to choose one’s identity.

49 For more on how the relationship between nature and nurture is more cyclic than binary, see Pinker (1997, pp. 3–58).

50 At a Feb 8, 2015 event for Governor Scott Walker, Giuliani contended, “I do not believe, and I
guing against Trump that words do indeed matter; or Frank Bruni worrying that the current administration has cheapened rhetoric to the point of making words like “transparency” meaningless, America is in the midst of re-considering and re-calibrating her own attitudes towards the importance of naming. Our students are similarly re-evaluating their own views, and we can help them learn to navigate a semantically unstable global community by sharing with them the lesson the ancients teach us today: Knowing one’s linguistic limits also means knowing one’s opportunities.

know this is a horrible thing to say, but I do not believe that the president loves America. He doesn’t love you. And he doesn’t love me. He wasn’t brought up the way you were brought up and I was brought up through love of this country… with all our flaws we’re the most exceptional country in the world. I’m looking for a presidential candidate who can express that, do that and carry it out.”

Clinton, who repeatedly attacked Obama for relying on words rather than on actions, posited that the 2008 campaign was about “talk versus action, rhetoric versus reality” and that the “best words in the world aren’t enough unless you match them with action.” (Wisconsin Primary Speech, 2/19/08). The sophisticated divide of the mind from the tongue is a persistent theme of her campaign rhetoric: “I don’t want to just show up and give one of those whoop-dee-do speeches and get everybody whipped up. I want everyone thinking.” (Wynnewood, PA Speech, 4/19/08). In her 2016 response to Donald Trump’s campaign, Clinton then advocated the strong view of rhetoric: “Words matter, my friends, and if you are running to be president or you are president of the United States, words can have tremendous consequences.” (Des Moines, IA, 8/10/16).

For Bruni, Trump radically redefines the norms of political ‘transparency’: “It’s not merely that this emperor has no clothes. This emperor has no camouflage, at least none that’s consistent and effective. Syllable by syllable, he traffics in fantasy.” (2018, p. 3).
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PART ONE: THE AGORANOMOI OF THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Arriving in Thessaly on business, Lucius, Apuleius’ hero of the Metamorphoses, soon finds himself in Hypata and face-to-face with an overzealous magistrate. A trip to the city’s market culminates in a basket full of fresh fish and a pleased Lucius (thinking he has bargained cleverly with the fishmonger), until our protagonist crosses paths with his childhood friend Pythias, who proudly relates that he is now an aedile in charge of the marketplace. Ever the attentive magistrate, Pythias inquires about Lucius’ catch and his response prompts the aedile to haul him before the fishmonger who is subsequently berated for charging such an outrageous price for his fish. To make a show of his authority, Pythias orders the destruction of Lucius’ fish before the fishmonger, amusingly leaving his friend without his dinner and what he over-

53 I wish to extend my thanks to the classics and history faculty at Hunter College for their invaluable comments and suggestions when I presented the oral version of this paper at Hunter. I owe the greatest thanks to Chelsea O’Shea for her unwavering support.

paid for it. While written in Latin, the novel is set in the Greek city of Thessaly, making our pompous aedile an *agoranomos* (ἀγορανόμος, “market controller”), a magistrate charged with diligently supervising the marketplace.

The *agora* was the heart of the Greek polis and in his *Politics*, Aristotle characterized the office of *agoranomos* as one of the most important in a city, writing that “the first of the necessary offices … deals with the supervision of the market, where there must be some office to supervise contracts and maintain good order.”

The presence and importance of this office in Greek *poleis* is well attested in literary sources and inscriptions throughout the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. But while the *agoranomoi* of Greco-Roman Egypt are likewise well attested, a recent volume on the officials and their Roman counterparts, the aediles, failed to consider them. I argue in this paper that the office in Egypt should be understood in relation to wider developments in the Greco-Roman world.

In the Greek world, *agoranomoi* were tasked with market inspection, price control, superintending weights and measures, and seeing to the overall good order of the *agora*. In comparison, in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the *agoranomoi* appear in the documentation most dominantly as public notaries. Roman rule brought changes to the nature of the office and such changes correspond with those inflicted on the office in the wider Greco-Roman world. To trace the connections between these developments, it is necessary to trace the office back to its Greek origins.

1.2 THE CLASSICAL AGORANOMOS

*Agoranomoi* appeared frequently in Greek literature. The earliest attestations of the official in Athens are found in Aristophanes’ *Wasps* and *Acharnians*. In *Wasps*, Philocleon is threatened with the *agoranomoi* after offending a baker and in *Acharnians*, three men are appointed by lot as market controllers to keep away those Dicaeopolis deemed worthy of being barred from the marketplace. These *agoranomoi* are soon after called upon to settle a dispute. The fragmentary *Phaedo* of the Middle Comedy poet Alexis contains a dialogue in which one character hopes the other will become an *agoranomos* so that he may put an end to Callimedon’s reign of terror upon the fish market, to which the latter replies, “You’re describing a task for tyrants, not

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3 Capdetrey and Hasenohr (2012).
“agoranomoi,” as the politician’s taste for fish is not in fact breaking any laws. What is clear from these literary sources, however, is the recognized importance and authority of the agoranomos and how this importance and authority was perceived: Aristophanes’ characters immediately call on the authority and judgement of the agoranomoi to settle civil disputes. And while Alexis’ fragment shows how one overestimated the authority of these officials by assuming they can prohibit customers from purchasing too much fish (implying that the agoranomoi must act within the law and cannot punish illicitly at will), the character nonetheless harkens to the power of the agoranomoi to problem-solve.

From a theoretical prospective, philosophical sources from the classical period also allow us to examine the nature of the office. Plato’s ideal agoranomos, as recounted in his Laws, must physically punish misconduct in the agora (which includes whipping slaves or foreigners who bring damage upon the temples or fountains of the agora), supervise the orderliness of the marketplace, check on prices, keep a watchful eye out for fraud, and punish those found beating their parents.7 These agoranomoi are to be chosen partly by lot and partly by election.8 They are to draw up a list of rules indicating what sellers “ought to do or avoid doing, and shall post them up on a pillar in front of the steward’s office (=agoranomeion), to serve as written laws” after a violator has been beaten.9 And in a fragment of Theophrastus’ Laws, the philosopher maintained that the agoranomoi were to see to the honesty of the buyers as well as the sellers.10

Beyond the realm of philosophy, the Athenaion Politeia reveals the Athenians elected ten agoranomoi by lot, divided equally among Athens and the Piraeus. These officials are charged with overseeing all merchandise to effectively prevent the sale of “adulterated and spurious articles.”11 While the agoranomoi inspected the merchandise sold in the agora, the Athenian agoranomoi did not supervise the sale of grain—the σιτοφύλακες (sitophylakes, “grain-overseers”) saw to that.12 In a large city like Athens, certain functions were allotted to other magistrates, such as the metro-

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6 Alexis Fr. 247; Trans. in Wilkins (2000, p. 173).
7 Pl. Leg. 6.764b; 8.849; 11.917; 12.953.
8 Ibid. 759b.
9 Ibid. 917e.
10 Theophr. Laws XXIII.
12 Lys. 22.16.
nomoi, astynomoi or the sitophylakes, whereas in a smaller city, the agoranomoi might carry out all duties.13

1.3 EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

The duties of these officials are better known to us from inscriptions.14 These duties differed and depended on where the official was and when he was in office. The earliest inscription from Athens dates to the fourth century BCE.15 Unlike the literary and philosophical sources, the epigraphic evidence present the names and actions of these officials who were praised with inscribed honorary decrees for maintaining the honesty and good order of the agora.

These honorary decrees provide a look into the duties of the agoranomoi as well as the importance of the office as these officials were deemed worthy of praise. Among the praise, we often see specific examples of duties carried out by these officials during their tenure in office. A decree from the second century BCE from Paros honors a certain Cillus for services rendered to the city, chiefly during his time as agoranomos:

… previously when he was agoranomos he discharged his office [well] … he…made every effort to ensure that the people … [were] supplied with bread and barley … and as regards the wage laborers and their employers, he made sure that neither would be unfairly treated by compelling, in accordance with the laws, the laborers not to misbehave but to get down to work and the employers to pay their wages to the workers without having to be taken to court…  

IG XII 5 12916

Cillus is notably praised for successfully stepping in and resolving a conflict between employers and their employees, preventing the dispute from being taken to court. We are told he was thus gifted with a gold crown and honored with a marble statue (financed by his son) to be displayed in the agoranomeion. IG II² 3493 (late 30s or ear-

14 Krenkel maintained that “in Athens, prostitutes were controlled by the clerk of the market, who fixed the fee that they could charge for a single visit” (1988, p. 1294). Bremen makes a similar claim: “the context of the agoranomos’ office was the market place and everything associated with it, prostitutes included” (1996, p. 56). This is challenged by Cohen with his claim that the Athenian state was not much interested in the pricing of such services (2015, p. 157).
15 IG II² 380, 320/19 BCE.
ly 20s BCE) is likewise a similar inscription from Athens in which the *agoranomos* Pammenes is honored by the city’s merchants with a statue.  

Inscriptions likewise reveal the functions granted to these officials by law. *IGSK* 1 15 is an inscription from the fourth century BCE from Chios which mandates that anyone caught selling wool from one year old sheep are to be fined by the *agoranomos* a sum of two drachmas a day, revealing that the officials had the power to insure market goods were acceptable for purchase and to penalize when they were not. An inscription from Thasos, likewise from the fourth century BCE, records a law regulating the conditions one must meet in order to lease public property, in this case, a garden of Herakles. The responsibility of keeping the garden clean is placed on the lessees. Failing to do so is said to result in the lessee owing a sixth of a stater to the *agoranomos* and the priest of Asklepios for each day the garden is not clean. Another law from Thasos (ca. 350 BCE), concerned with honors awarded to fallen soldiers, maintains that the *agoranomos* in office must not neglect anything on the day of a soldier’s funeral. This law adds to the *agoranomos’* involvement in the city’s affairs as he is able to move beyond supervising the marketplace by being trusted with some sort of involvement in these important public funerals meant to honor the city’s dead. From Delos, we have a law (ca. 250–200 BCE) meant to regulate wood and charcoal trade: one may not disregard weights and measures nor sell any more or less than what was initially declared. The *agoranomoi* were tasked with registering complaints if there were suspicions that one violated the law. Within a month of the initial accusation, the *agoranomoi* were to take the accused before the court of the Thirty-One. In the event of a conviction, the *agoranomoi* had the power to pass the sentence within ten days and the accused were obligated to pay a fine of fifty drachmas.

From such inscriptions, we learn of the roles filled by certain *agoranomoi* in Greece, such as maintaining the soundness of purchasable merchandise and resolving civil disputes (as we have seen above with Aristophanes’ *Wasps* and *Acharnians*). Likewise, we see the power to penalize offenders allotted to them: the *agoranomoi* in Delos had the power to punish those who sold more or less than initially declared by hauling them to court and even passing their sentence, bringing to the *agoranomoi*  

20 *LSCG* Suppl. 64; Trans. Arnaoutoglou (2008, pp. 94-95).  
certain judicial powers. Notably, we learn of the power possessed by these officials and the importance attached to the office in maintaining not just the good order of the *agora*, but relations between citizens as well, as evidenced by Cillus’ actions.

1.4 THE AGORANOMOI IN ASIA MINOR

In Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor, we see a similar story. Take for example the Greek city Smyrna. The *agoranomoi* here are known to us primarily from inscriptions and inscribed weights found in the *agora*, the earliest dating to the fourth century BCE. The office was a liturgy, a public service rendered to the state by its wealthiest inhabitants, and as such, one could serve more than once.22 These *agoranomoi* also held other positions, with the career of a certain Claudius Paulinus well attested.23 Likewise, an anonymous patron from Aphrodisias is said to have held the positions of gymnasiarch, *stephanephoros* and the priesthood of Rome, in addition to that of *agoranomos*.24

The duties of the *agoranomoi* in Asia Minor correspond to those of the *agoranomoi* in Greece, though we see the former also fulfilling other functions within the bounds of their office. An inscription from the late third to early second century BCE from Ilion honors an *agoranomos* from Parion for his actions during the Panathenaia—actions that consequently earned praise for all the people of Parion as he had:

...honorably] and justly performed his duties as *agoranomos*...and has managed the supply [of corn, so that] the residents could buy it [as cheaply as possible], and has taken [every] care of the other merchandise, and [has provided] a doctor to treat those who fell ill at the festival; [therefore since] it is fitting [to commemorate] noble men with decrees, it is resolved by the councilors [to praise] the people of Parion...

SIG 596 = IMT Skam/NebTaler 191

This *agoranomos* moves past offering cheap grain and further involves himself with the festival by providing a doctor to tend to unwell attendees, indicating a degree of wealth that is needed to arrange for a doctor to drop by. We also see the personal

23 *I Smyrna* 644 (Hadrian's reign or later).
24 *I Aphr* 30 12.701.
attention given by the *agoranomos* to the smooth operation of the festival beyond the sale of merchandise.  

The *agoranomoi* of Phrygia also collected revenues from taxes on document registrations, sales, fines, and tax farming. These revenues were sent to the royal treasury of the Attalids until Eumenes II declared in the second century BCE that the revenues from Tyriaion’s *agoranomeion* were to temporarily be used for purchasing oil.25

1.5 ROMAN PALESTINE AND RABBINIC LITERATURE

In Roman Palestine, the evidence differs from what we have seen thus far as the Rabbinic literature offer a non-Greek perspective on the official and recount the rather menacing character of certain *agoranomoi*, something that is lacking in the evidence from other Greek cities in which we only have honorary decrees. The *agoranomoi* here provide a similar picture regarding the duties saw to by the official. The *agoranomoi* supervised weights and measures, set prices, and maintained the orderliness of the *agora* just as their counterparts elsewhere in the Greek world. But while Apuleius characterizes his *agoranomos* as one who is eager to assert his authority and aid his friends with the power granted him via his position, the Rabbinic literature demonstrate the possibility of corrupt market controllers. The *agoranomoi* here wielded the power to beat those who attempted to escape inspection and might have been corrupt, therefore scaring shopkeepers into closing their shops to evade inspection of their measures, even if they were sound.26 From the Rabbinic evidence we see that the *agoranomoi* here were no less instrumental to their city than their counterparts elsewhere. The *Leviticus Rabba* reads: “It is like unto a king who entered into a city. With whom does he speak first? Is it not with the city-*agronomon*? Why? Because he is engaged with the provisioning of the city.”27

1.6 SOCIAL STANDING AND EUERGETISM

Duties aside, who were these officials in the Greek world? From inscriptions that attest to euergetism, it appears that most of the *agoranomoi* in Greek cities from the Hellenistic period hailed from wealthy families — landowners or traders, for in-

27  *Leviticus Rabba* 1.8; Sperber (1997, p. 239).
stance — but it is difficult to ascertain if this was universal among all agoranomoi, as Migeotte has suggested, if we have the honors of one agoranomos and nothing from others serving alongside the honorand.\textsuperscript{28} Be that as it may, these honorific decrees that point to the personal wealth of certain agoranomoi serve as indicators of the social standing of at least some of these officials.

An inscription from Aphrodisias, referred to above (dated to the late Republic by the editor), mentions an anonymous patron who “having been agoranomos at a time of most serious famine…provided corn at a fair price at his own expense.”\textsuperscript{29} Another such inscription found on a mosaic in the Roman colony of Patras speaks of “Neikostratos, oikonomos of the colony, twice the president of the games, having generously served as agoranomos…having laid the mosaic…of good cheer…”\textsuperscript{30} This former agoranomos is said to have held the position of president of the games, a position that required a considerable degree of wealth.\textsuperscript{31} A second century CE inscription from Chersonesos reads: “…Theagenes son of Diogenes, agoranomos, from his own resources built an opopolis while Dio…son of Philadephos was priest.”\textsuperscript{32} Likewise, the agoranomos Aristagoras financed the construction of an agoranomeion in Istron.\textsuperscript{33} The agoranomoi of Asia Minor committed their own funds to keep oil and grain prices low and an inscription from Roman Palmyra (266/7 CE) honors Septimius Worod for his time as a priest of Bel: “…who brilliantly served as strategos and as agoranomos of the same metrokoloneia, who spent great sums from his own personal fortune…”\textsuperscript{34} These inscriptions that demonstrate the euergetism practiced by some agoranomoi in their respective cities point to the high social position of at least some of these officials.

\section*{1.7 Changes in the Hellenistic and Imperial Periods}

The office was eventually subject to change and it is beneficial to once more look to Athens. Directly after laying down the duties of the agoranomoi, the Athenaion

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{28} Migeotte (2005).
\textsuperscript{29} I Aph 30 12.701.
\textsuperscript{30} SEG 45 418.
\textsuperscript{32} VDI 1947.2 245 = NEPKh II 129; Bekker-Nielsen (2007, p. 125).
\textsuperscript{34} Po288.
\end{flushleft}
Politeia mentions another official, the μετρονόμοι. These “controllers of measures” were likewise chosen by lot (five for Athens and five for the Piraeus) and were tasked with superintending weights and measures. However, by the end of the first century BCE, we see the agoranomoi concerned with this task. An inscription found in the Acropolis on a fragmentary stone dated to the imperial period (between the first to second century CE) shows an agoranomos had set up a balance and measures. Moreover, the metronomoi eventually vanish from the documentation. Interestingly enough, another inscription attributes this function to the ἀστυνόμοι (city magistrates) rather than the agoranomoi or metronomoi. Nevertheless, the aforementioned inscription that attests to an agoranomos setting up a balance and measures implies that the Athenian agoranomoi were concerned with supervising weights and measures at least by the first to second century CE.

Along with the expansion of the official’s duties, we see a decrease in the number of annual agoranomoi in Athens in the Hellenistic period. By the early imperial period, it appears as if only two agoranomoi are in office, as a dedication in the agora to one of the two serving agoranomoi indicates:

Julia the divine Augusta Pronoia | The Council of the Areopagus and the Council of 600 and the People, from his private funds, Dionysios son of Aulus of Marathon set (this) up, while himself Dionysios of Marathon and Quintus Naevius Rufus of Melite were serving as agoranomoi.

*IG II2 3238*

We see a shift from ten agoranomoi in the fourth century as recounted by the Athenaios Politeia to a significantly reduced number of two in the early imperial period. Oliver interprets these pairs of agoranomoi as suggesting that by the early imperial period, the position began to resemble that of the Roman aediles, who had similar

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36 SEG 47 196A and B.
37 IG II2 2886; Oliver (2012, p. 94).
38 Oliver (2012, p. 85).
39 IG II2 3939 and 2878. The suggested dates for this inscription are the late first century BCE or the early first century CE. Oliver considers the implications of the later date in regard to SEG 47 196 (late first century BCE): did the astynomoi temporarily take up the reigns? Were the agoranomoi not completely controlling weights and measures yet? (2012, p. 86).
40 Oliver (2012, p. 87).
41 Ibid. (p. 89).
42 Early imperial period, after 29 CE.
duties. This resemblance to the Roman aediles is noted by the Greek historian and rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the late first century BCE:

... [the plebeians] asked...that the senate should allow them to appoint every year two plebeians... to have the oversight of public places...and to see that the market was supplied with plenty of provisions... they are called in their own language... overseers of sacred places or aediles, and ... affairs of great importance are entrusted to them, and in most respects they resemble more or less the agoranomoi or “market-overseers” among the Greek. Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 6.90.2-3

However, it remains unclear whether these pairs of agoranomoi were a product of Roman influence or if we are merely dealing with a case of equivalency, as both the Greeks and the Romans possessed an official with similar functions to the other. The fact that we see this change in the imperial period perhaps implies the possibility of Roman influence, but the evidence to support this theory begins and ends here.

The Hellenistic period also sees a shift in the mode of selection for the agoranomoi with the position eventually turning into a liturgy.43 As revealed by the Athenain Politeia, the agoranomoi were originally chosen by lot. This is reiterated by Aristophanes’ Wasps and by the Athenian orator Demosthenes who detailed that no fit punishment exists for those who demand “a tenfold restitution” when “... poor, unskilled [men], without experience, and appointed to [their] office by lot” — with the agoranomoi named among them—have been found guilty of embezzlement.44 But by the third century BCE selection for this office was no longer random; rather, interested men could put their names forward for possible selection.45 This development can be seen in inscription from Istros (before 100 BCE) which honors the agoranomos Aristagoras who is said to have been re-elected by the people twice more, earning him “equal distinction.”46

From an inscription dated to the third century BCE we see the financial strain such a position could inflict: an agoranomos from Erythrae found himself unable to afford to carry out his duty of crowning the statue of Philitos during religious festivals and needed to be funded for the task.47 The agoranomos was thus sanctioned to

44 Dem. 24.112.
45 Oliver (2012, p. 89).
46 Dittenberger 708.
47 I Erythrai 503.
levy the crown’s price on the taxes. The office became increasingly expensive to hold and the position eventually evolved into “une forme d’évergétisme agoranomique institutionnalisé qui prit progressivement la forme d’une liturgie.” Rather than “poor, unskilled [men]”, the city’s wealthy elite held this position and utilized their wealth to carry out their duties, as demonstrated by the honorary decrees discussed above.

PART TWO: THE AGORANOMOI OF PTOLEMAIC AND ROMAN EGYPT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Compared to its counterparts elsewhere in the Greek world, the office of agoronomos in Egypt was most noticeably a notarial office. In 1911, P. Jouguet provided an overview of the office but distinguished between agoranomes-notaires and agoranomes-édiles rather than see the official as having both notarial and non-notarial functions. Jouguet questioned whether agoranomes-notaires existed alongside agoranomes-édiles, both of which possess the same name, and deemed it unlikely that the municipal agoranomos had a hand in drafting contracts. This distinction remains faulty as market controllers concerning themselves with contracts is not exactly peculiar, given that Aristotle attributed to the agoranomoi the duty of overseeing contracts. This essentially brings contractual duties to the agoranomoi without any distinctions between their duty to the agora and to contracts. Sixty years later, M. Raschke provided a cursory overview of the office, focusing on the identities and locations of various agoranomoi and their terms of office as well as their most visible role in the documentation, that of a public notary. While Raschke claimed that there was a change to the office in the Roman period, he does not elaborate.

The agoranomoi of Egypt appear in the documentation predominantly as public notaries mostly operating in the nome capitals. Given the nature of the papyrological evidence and the absence of inscriptions and works of literature that mention agoranomoi, we are unable to construct an idea of who an agoranomos in Egypt was in terms of his character. While Greek honorary inscriptions attest to the greatness of certain agoranomoi and the Rabbinic literature provide a moralizing perspective of the officials, the papyri provide us with a different sort of evidence given that the agoranomoi here were mostly notaries. The Egyptian agoranomoi are known to

48 Capdetrey and Hasenohr (2012, p. 34).
49 Jouguet (1911).
50 Raschke (1974).
us from their signatures and presence on contracts—documents that cannot offer a
look into any sort of honor this official could have received or how he was perceived
by the local community. Instead, the papyri lead us through changes the office saw
from the Ptolemaic to the Roman period and likewise demonstrate the role of the
agoranomoi in Egypt.

The office was established in the Ptolemaic period and these officials are attest-
ed as notaries from the mid third century BCE to the early fourth century CE, with
the second century BCE providing a better look at the official mostly through finds
from the Pathyrite nome.51 While the origins of the office in Egypt are unclear, the
agoranomoi may have been introduced by the early Ptolemies in order to expand this
well-known Greek practice into Egypt. In Thebes, the agoranomeion was in place in
174 BCE at the latest.52 From the Thebaid, the office of the agoranomos, the archeion (=agoranomeion), is attested in Krokodilopolis (the main office) from 141 BCE and
in Pathyris (the branch office) from 136 BCE. In these offices, contracts were drawn
up and deposited and loans were paid off. The office in Krokodilopolis also housed
the βιβλιοθήκη where a register of the copies of contracts was stored.53 Other ag-
oranomeia, such as the office in Latopolis, are not as well-known, as finds have not
yielded the amount of agoranomic documents found in the Pathyrite nome.54 These
documents allow for one to trace the duties and notarial functions of the Egyptian
agoranomoi.

2.2 NOTARIES AT WORK

As notaries, these officials wrote up and registered documents. Writing and regis-
tering land cessions, wills, slave sales/purchases/manumissions and labor contracts
were among the scope of the notarial functions the agoranomoi saw to.55 As a Greek
office, these contracts were drawn up and registered in Greek. For example, in first
century CE Oxyrhynchus, letters were sent to the agoranomoi informing them of or
instructing them to register slave manumissions, the cession of catoeic land, house
sales, or mortgages and other property, such as slave sales.56 An example of such a

51 P. Sorb. III 70 (270 BCE) is the earliest attestation of the official in Egypt.
52 Vandorpe (2011, p. 299).
54 Ibid. (p. 169).
55 P. Sijp. 45 (slave sale; 197–96 BCE); P. Corn. 4 (loan contract; 111–10 BCE); P. Oxy. II 334 (sale of a
house; 81–83 CE); P. Oxy. II 346 (notice regarding catoeic land; 100–01 CE).
notification is *P. Oxy.* II 346, a notice sent to the *agoranomoi* about catooecic land situated near the village of Sko that has been ceded from one woman, Ptolema, to another, Demetrous:

Dionysius alias Amois, superintendent and assistant of the katalochismoi registers of the Oxyrhynchite (nome), to the *agoranomi,* greetings. Demetrous, daughter of Ammonius, has had ceded to her by Ptolema, daughter of Dionysius, with her husband Harpocration, son of Ptolemaeus, as guardian, in accordance with the contract executed through the notarial office (*agoranomeion*) in the city of Oxyrhynchi, in the present month Phaophi, the fifty arouras of catooecic and bought (land) belonging to me (*sic*) around Sko from the allotment of Strabas. I communicate (this) so that you may know. Farewell.  

Greek summaries could also be provided by the *agoranomeion* for Demotic contracts that were notarized by the *agoranomoi.* Egyptians who were unfamiliar with Greek could find a way around their lack of understanding: K. Vandorpe’s study of two agoranomic loans revealed that the individual who held one of the contracts had a habit of adding Demotic summaries to his loan contracts, thereby revealing his Egyptian origins. One can see how Egyptians could have kept (and understood) their Greek contracts by adding Demotic summaries onto the verso of such documents. One could have a Demotic document registered with the *agoranomos* for an extra layer of security and in 146 BCE, these Demotic documents were required to have Greek summaries.  

In the case of wills, the *agoranomoi* could draw up and register these documents and if necessary, could revoke or annul them as per request of the testator. The Greek cavalry officer Dryton and his three wills is a good example of an individual who had more than one will drawn up. To revoke such a document in the Roman period (in Oxyrhynchus, at least), it would have to be taken from the same *agoranomeia* that drew it up in the event of a revocation so as to avoid any sort of clash. The requested document would then be returned under the same seals and the *agoranomeia* would not allow a testator to retrieve his will without an acknowledgement.

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60 *P. Oxy.* 106; *P. Oxy.* 2759; *P. Oxy.* 601.
61 *P. Dryton 1; P. Dryton 2; P. Dryton 3.*
that the same document was returned under seals. These wills would be kept in the agoranomeia until revoked, declared void, or opened upon the testator’s death. The agoranomoi eliminated the need for witnesses as the presence and signature of the Greek notary was enough to validate a document. But wills, unlike the contracts handled by the agoranomoi, did require witnesses and in order to have a valid will in the Roman period, an agoranomos had to be involved.

In addition to registering wills, the services of the agoranomoi were also utilized to free slaves from bondage. Those who wished to free their slaves could choose to do so in the presence of an agoranomos as manumission by notary was one of the ways in which slave-owners could readily manumit their slaves. P. Oxy. I 48 is a letter sent to the acting agoranomos (86 CE) giving instructions for the emancipation of a house-born slave and SB III 6293 is a contract from Arsinoë in which a slave’s former owner promises not to make any claims against her. P. Oxy. II 375 likewise demonstrates the role of the agoranomoi in manumissions during the Roman period; with her husband (a freedman) acting as her guardian, a certain Diogenis purchases a female slave along with her two children for a sum of over 1800 silver drachmas. Beyond individual cases of agoranomic manumission, the agoranomeia presumably saw more traffic after a decree in 176-175 BCE required for house-born slaves to be registered along with the rest of the population and for children to be registered with the agoranomoi.

Beyond their role as public notaries, the agoranomoi are still seen carrying out the functions typical of the officials elsewhere in the Greek world. P. Oxy. IV 836 (66-65 or 15-14 BCE), a wheat loan contract, stipulates that the wheat that is repaid must not be fraudulent and must be “mesuré à l’étalon de quatre chénices en vigueur chez les agoranomes.” From a written agreement likewise from Oxyrhynchus by municipal bakers to provide bread, we see the acting agoranomos at the time supplying these bakers with wheat. In a private letter dated to 200-250 CE, a certain Ptolemaios writes to his father about his newfound position of agoranomos for a banquet in Sarapis’ honor, which he took on so as to avoid the fee for the banquet. Consequently, Ptolemaios is duty-bound to provide wood for the banquet and it is

64  BGU V 1210 § 7.  
65  SB 6 8993 = P. Harr. I 61; Further examples of the presence of agoranomoi in manumissions include SB 6293, P. Oxy. II 380 and P. Oxy. II 332 (= P. Bingen 62).  
67  P. Oxy. XII 1454, 116 CE.
his father’s help he seeks. And in *W. Chr.* 296 (269 CE), the council of Hermopolis reports to the *agoranomos* Aurelius Demetrios of the profits of the city market due to the lease of stalls.

### 2.3 The Language of the Agoranomoi

Compared to the Egyptian notary scribes who were attached to the temple and wrote in the name of certain priests, the office of *agoranomos* provided services that were substantially different, the clearest being it was a Greek office that operated in Greek. In Thebes, these Egyptian temple notaries belonged to a single family and a father and a son (or two brothers) in office is a common feature of these notary offices. Egyptian notary scribes could, to cite Thebes again, keep this position in the family for up to a century whereas the tenure of the *agoranomoi* in Thebes barely exceeded five years. While the prominence and power of the Egyptian notary offices declined, partly due to the decree of 145 BCE and the use of Greek in agoranomic contracts, that of the *agoranomos* rose.

While the *agoranomeia* were Greek offices that were operated by officials with Greek names, P.W. Pestman and M. Vierros discovered that a few of these men were actually of Egyptian origin and of the same family, revealing that these officials were not exclusively Greek. This family of *agoranomoi*—Asklepiades, Areois, Ammonios and Hermias—operated in the Pathyrite nome. Asklepiades was a notary in Kroko-dilopolis (127–126 BCE), his son Hermias (who was attested as a mercenary cavalry soldier in 123 BCE) in Pathyris, his brother Areois in Pathyris, and his nephew Ammonios (who like his cousin Hermias, was attested as a mercenary cavalry soldier in 123 BCE and was also a witness to Dryton’s third will) was likewise a Greek notary in Pathyris. Most of the male family members possessed double names—one Greek and one Egyptian. Asklepiades’ father was a scribe of the temple who wrote in Demotic and one of Asklepiades’ brothers, Thrason, followed in his father’s footsteps. Asklepiades’ mother is said to have been “a woman of revenue/substance” and this title demonstrates that we are dealing with an elite family as this title existed

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69 Arlt (2011, p. 17).

70 Ibid. (p. 18).

71 Ibid. (p. 19, 25).


elsewhere in Pathyris only among Egyptian priestly families.\textsuperscript{74} From this family, we see how a local elite Egyptian family with a scribal tradition and ties to the temple managed to adapt to the Ptolemaic administration as they successfully assumed a prestigious Greek office.

\textbf{2.4 Tools of the Trade and Office Holding}

Not much is known about how the \textit{agoranomoi} learned their trade, although an interesting papyrus from Oxyrhynchus (55 or 66 CE) appears to be an agoranomic document copied by a pupil as a school exercise.\textsuperscript{75} The exercise may imply that once a student became literate, he was soon steered in the direction of a scribal career or that of a notary.

Evidence of apprenticeships are likewise another avenue one may explore to examine the sort of “training” the \textit{agoranomoi} received prior to assuming the office. Once more Pathyris serves as a useful example. Under the supervision of the acting \textit{agoranomos}, apprentices wrote and copied contracts. These apprentices later became notaries themselves: in 89/8 BCE, Hermias took hold of the office of \textit{agoranomos} after nineteen years as an apprentice.\textsuperscript{76} Vierros hypothesizes that as the penmanship among the notaries of the Pathyrite nome are similar, such notaries may have cultivated their writing skills in a temple school prior to assuming an apprenticeship.\textsuperscript{77} A few documents are written in two different hands (a practiced cursive hand visible on the protocol and an unpracticed hand on the document proper, for instance), perhaps showcasing an \textit{agoranomos} and his apprentice at work.\textsuperscript{78}

Office holding among the \textit{agoranomoi} in Ptolemaic Egypt may not have been as lengthy as those of the Egyptian scribal offices, but certain \textit{agoranomoi} held their positions for quite some time, such as Areois from Pathyris who was in office for twenty-eight years, or Hermias who served for twelve years.\textsuperscript{79} The average for office holding in the Theban area (usually only one notary was in charge of an office) was around three to ten years, though one could reach close to thirty years as Areois

\textsuperscript{74} Pestman (1978, p. 210).
\textsuperscript{75} P. Köln 15 613.
\textsuperscript{76} Raschke (1974, p. 351).
\textsuperscript{77} Vierros (2012, p. 104).
\textsuperscript{78} P. Grenf I 24 and P. Adl 1.
\textsuperscript{79} Vierros (2012, p. 81).
In Thebes these officials often were only in office for a year, barely ever surpassing a five year tenure.

2.5 THE EARLY PTOLEMIES AND THE COMING OF THE AGORANOMEIA

But why did the Ptolemies wish to introduce the *agoranomeia* in Egypt? Monson has argued that the *agoranomoi* were given notarial functions because of the Ptolemaic state’s effort to “reconcile Egyptian and Greek traditions and to facilitate transactions” as the need for temple notaries and witnesses were rendered redundant when one could—even in the villages—instead visit the *agoranomeion* or *grapheion* (the village writing office) and have contracts drawn up sans witnesses. Pestman, on the other hand, found that the *agoranomoi* were meant to undercut and diminish the importance of Egyptians with notarial traditions.

Rather than interpret the Ptolemaic introduction of the *agoranomoi* as an effort to subvert the local scribal elite, J. Manning proposed an alternative theory: these notaries were introduced by the Ptolemies on account of the desire to make contracting more centralized and orderly, rather than to tackle the prestige of the Egyptian scribes. Instead of undercutting and sabotaging, Greek notaries instead worked *alongside* Demotic temple scribes and were indeed sometimes in competition with them, but were likewise working alongside and in competition with those who drew up Greek six-witness contracts as well. This hypothesis weaves into Manning’s broader argument—a claim against the “strong state model” in Upper Egypt which argues for a centralized state and firmly places power in the hands of the Greek elite—which rests on the “bargained incorporation” model: the Ptolemies “[bargained] with several different ruling coalitions, including Egyptian priests and the scribal class” to institute their political legitimacy. Introducing the Greek office of *agoranomos* but allowing for local Egyptians with pre-existing scribal and notarial traditions to assume the office fits Manning’s theory of negotiation and incorporation.

While tempting, Pestman’s theory is ultimately rendered problematic with his

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80 Ibid. (p. 105).
81 Arlt (2011, p. 25).
82 Ibid. (p. 285).
84 Manning (2003, p. 187).
discovery of an Egyptian family who dominated the notarial office in Pathyris in the Ptolemaic period. Despite this proposed effort, Egyptian temple notary scribes were yet still employed when one did not have access to an *agoranomeion*. Is this a visible failure on the part of the state to effectively undercut native notarial tradition or was this perhaps not the intention of the Ptolemies to begin with? I am of the latter opinion. These Egyptian temple notaries disappeared not under the Ptolemies, but under the Romans, with the added responsibilities of the *grapheion*. These temple notaries were rendered unnecessary in the Roman period when one could consult the *agoranomeion* or the *grapheion* with ease, sans witnesses. Temple scribes from Soknopaiou Nesos serve as a valuable example of possible Roman efforts to undercut native notarial tradition: these scribes served only for a year, a clear change from the practice of hereditary office holding among Egyptian notary scribes under the previous regime. While some notary families disappear from the documentary record (after revolts, it is important to note, such as the Theban Revolt of 88 BCE which resulted in the dissolution of hereditary office holding among the Egyptian notaries of Thebes, who disappear from the record), the presence of an Egyptian family of *agoranomoi* in the Pathyrite nome does not bode well with the theory of the Ptolemies’ wishes to significantly reduce the power and prestige of local Egyptian notaries.

Egypt’s scribal families, with their ties to the temple, were visibly powerful. They formed key social networks and presided over the production of private contracts, at times throughout generations. The early Ptolemies integrated the local elites of the scribal and priestly class into their new central structure and the capability of these elites to adapt was important to the development of the new regime. In Monson’s words, the Ptolemies “relied too much on Egyptian elites to remove them” as these scribal families legitimized their rule.

With their cooperation, Egyptian temples made the taxation and administration of the Ptolemaic state smoother and working with these families rather than against them would prove beneficial. These local families were already well-known and trusted by the locals, making the transition from Egyptian to Greek notary
offices relatively easy, as has been argued by Vandorpe. Desiring a more centralized state, the early Ptolemies bargained with the local Egyptian elite. This consequently led to their social assimilation and garnered their loyalty, with the latter being an important precautionary measure against insurrection, which always presented a dangerous threat to Ptolemaic authority. These families with scribal and notarial traditions were permitted to continue their trade, with the bargain contingent upon one insurmountable exception: one would simply have to learn Greek. By committing to the new regime, local Egyptians with scribal/notarial traditions could carry on their work, granted they adopt the language of the Ptolemies. Because of this, these scribal families were incorporated into the society of the new regime rather than ousted. To quote Manning, a “public state system, with Egyptian scribes involved, was encroaching on earlier private scribal traditions” as the Ptolemies sought to rule through Egyptian society rather than over it.

2.6 IMPERIAL RULE IN EGYPT: AN ALTERED OFFICE OF AGORANOMOS

By the Roman period considerable changes to the office are visible. While the Ptolemies worked with certain pre-existing institutions in Egypt and incorporated them into their new regime, the Romans, in certain respects, approached Egypt’s institutions differently. The Romans put forth a new system that favored a direct and centralized administration which in turn tackled the local power structures of the Ptolemaic regime. While we see elements of continuity in Ptolemaic administrative institutions between Ptolemaic and Roman rule, the Romans also modified pre-existing institutions. Many institutions from the Ptolemaic period were kept under Roman rule but were tweaked: some offices were preserved but were made compulsory public services and others, such as religious institutions, saw a loss in their power, as seen through the reduced power of the temple with the confiscation of its lands. The Romans also altered the notarial system of Egypt: the grapheia were given the added responsibility of writing Egyptian contracts rather than only registering them, rendering Egyptian temple notary-scribes unnecessary, and the office of agoranomos was kept and made into a liturgy with the introduction of the new liturgical system.

94 Vandorpe (2011, p. 300).
95 Manning (2012, p. 79).
96 Ibid. (pp. 193).
97 Bowman and Rathbone (1992, p. 125).
A liturgy or compulsory public service in Roman Egypt is used here to refer to unpaid mandatory service performed for the state for a limited duration. This limited duration could consist of one year for some positions and three for others or could be a half-term in which one would serve for six months. A considerable portion of the Egyptian populace would have found themselves performing some kind of compulsory service. By the second century CE these compulsory public services swept through Egypt's administrative offices and reached honorary municipal offices by the third century. While Lewis has distinguished between magistracies and liturgies, and the posts indeed differed as magistracies were clearly the more prestigious posts, by the late second century magistracies became “so burdensome as to be regarded in the same light as liturgies.”

For one to be considered for a liturgical position a certain level of property ownership (πόρος) must have been met. Just how much property depended on the importance of the position in question. This property was in turn used as collateral to insure liturgists did their duty without fleeing from their posts. Those who did not meet this requirement were classified as ἄποροι but these individuals were still obligated to perform public services, generally manual labor. In a country where “literacy coexisted with illiteracy,” some liturgical positions required literacy so as to avoid catastrophic errors but as the agoranomoi were selected from the bouleutic class, members of which were expected to be literate (unlike at the village level, where some village scribes carried out their duties despite being illiterate), it does not appear as if illiterate candidates posed an issue.

The strain of performing these liturgies can be seen in a letter from Oxyrhynchus (202 CE) in which a certain Aurelius Horion, in an effort to be “philanthropic and useful,” donates a sum of money to the villages of the Oxyrhynchite nome who have been overwhelmed with the “burdens of the annual liturgies of the fiscus.” This was meant to allow the villages to purchase some land, the revenue of which was meant to be reserved for the expenses characteristic of liturgical positions. Like-

103 Bagnall (1993, pp. 243, 246); Youtie (1966, pp. 132-133).
104 P. Oxy. 4 705.
wise, an official from Oxyrhynchus recorded in 147/8 CE of the confiscation of the property of 120 liturgists. These individuals abandoned and fled from the responsibilities tied to their assigned liturgical posts as they did not possess ample funds to see them through.\textsuperscript{105}

Appointment to these liturgies was contingent upon meeting the requisite wealth but a letter from Hermopolis (89–91 CE) from the prefect Mettius Rufus to the nome governors (στρατηγοί) reveals other conditions that must be met:

If you think that any of those in public service are unfit…you will send me three names for each one after examining them…You will take care that the three are not from a single household, but also not from the same place, and that they have not previously been in the same offices, that they have not been judged derelict in other offices, and that the officials in the same place are not related to them

\textit{SB 6 9050}\textsuperscript{106}

While the stress on the wealth assessment is clear, Monson cautions against assuming nomination to public offices were not still sought voluntarily and that they were financially draining.\textsuperscript{107} Rufus stresses the need to choose individuals of suitable personal conduct “that is necessary for those entrusted with authority to have.” These liturgical positions were thought to have held a degree of prestige, a prestige that had to be upheld not only by one who is merely wealthy, but worthy of exercising such power as evidenced by his personal conduct. Looking back to the wider Greek world, the prestige tied to these liturgies in Egypt is reminiscent of the honorary decrees discussed above. Such inscriptions harken to the honorable and dutiful way officials discharged their office and honor “noble men” who assumed the office — men who not only carried out their duties, but who were likewise honorable and just as indicated by their demeanor.\textsuperscript{108}

Once transformed into a liturgy around 200 CE, the tenure of an official serving in the office of agoranomos was significantly reduced as this position rotated among those eligible for one-year terms. Serving for ten or twenty-eight years, for instance, was no longer a possibility. A striking aspect of this liturgy is that astonishingly, minors were likewise eligible for this magistracy, possibly under the care of

\textsuperscript{105} Bowman (1996, p. 69).
\textsuperscript{106} 117–27 CE.
\textsuperscript{107} Monson (2012, p. 241).
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{SIG} 596 = \textit{IMT} Skam/NebTaeler 191.
a guardian.\(^{109}\) Once the Romans significantly reduced the power of the temple, ties to it were no longer remunerative or an attractive way of acquiring wealth and status; rather, owning land became desirable among Greek and Egyptian alike.\(^{110}\) These land-owning elites were in turn utilized by the Romans and compelled to perform these liturgies.

2.7 CONCLUSIONS

Among the agoranomeia of the Greek world we see changes in the nature of the office: initially selected by lot, the agoranomoi began to be elected in the Hellenistic period, we see pairs of agoranomoi akin to Roman aediles in the imperial period, and the position eventually evolved into a liturgy by the Roman period. Similar developments can be seen in Egypt. Ptolemaic agoranomoi in Pathyris could hold their positions for lengthy periods of time, had ties to the temple, and hailed from elite families with scribal traditions. But by the Roman period the office became a compulsory public service to be held by members of the landowning elite for one-year terms. The office was expensive to maintain in both Egypt and the rest of the Greek East and was eventually exclusively held by men of means. This change and the notarial functions possessed by the agoranomoi indicate that Egypt was not atypical in this respect: the office of agoranomos being made a liturgy corresponds with the agoranomeia in the rest of the Greek East that were likewise made liturgies, and the official’s notarial functions need not be seen as shocking, given the precedent set by Aristotle in the classical period. These developments therefore point to a wider trend in the Greek East of which Egypt was not exempt.

\(^{109}\) Lewis (1997, p. 11).

Works Cited


One afternoon in June of 2017, I was sitting in a small tutoring room next to a large south-facing window framing a view of blossoming trees. I was preparing for a tutoring session with a student in our intensive Ancient Greek course when I came across the following statement on slavery in the textbook *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek*: “In the country, the slaves of farmers usually lived and ate with their masters. Aristophanes’ comedies depict them as lively and cheeky characters, by no means downtrodden.”

I was struck by the characterization of enslaved people as “lively and cheeky characters, by no means downtrodden” and wondered why Aristophanes, a comic playwright in the late 5th and early 4th centuries BCE, who famously parodied philosophers and joked about bodily functions, was being used as a reliable source on the experiences and emotional life of enslaved people in the ancient world. I then began examining the relationship between slavery and comedy in Greek and Latin textbooks and in the process unveiled a complex web of

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111 Balme and Lawall (2017, p. 20). The paragraph ends with the statement “We have given Dicaeopolis one slave, named Xanthias, a typical slave name meaning “fair-haired.” The names Dicaeopolis and Xanthias in *Athenaze* come from the names of an enslaver and his captive in *Acharnians*, a comedy by Aristophanes (Balme and Lawall (2017, p. 8)). The borrowing of names is another way ancient comedy has influenced the content of beginning Greek and Latin textbooks.

112 I use ‘enslaved’ and ‘captive’ instead of ‘slave’ as well as ‘enslaver’ instead of ‘slave master’ or ‘slave owner’ and ‘human trafficker’ instead of ‘slave trader.’ For more information on this language choice and why it matters see Foreman et al. (2019).
cross-linguistic and cross-cultural discourses on slavery, comedy, and race in American education culminating in the “happy slave” narrative.\textsuperscript{113}

The “happy slave” narrative is the systemic portrayal of enslaved people as joyous recipients in the institution of slavery. This storyline is reproduced and disseminated across texts, images, performances, and any form of communication that characterizes enslaved people as lucky, content, and even willing participants in enslavement. The “happy slave” narrative often emphasizes the quality of provisions and lodgings for enslaved people along with their loyalty to and close friendship with their enslavers. This narrative can be found in textbooks, novels, children’s books, posters, theatre, film, television, and countless other media in America including recent publications and productions.

Alarmingly, the metanarrative of the “happy slave” pervades Greek and Latin textbooks. The purpose of this paper is to help Classics instructors and students identify, articulate, discuss, and combat issues related to the presentation of slavery and the “happy slave” narrative. The tools and classroom activities provided are based in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), an educational linguistics theory and methodology. I explore how Classics textbooks reinforce the longstanding grammar and function of the “happy slave” narrative in word choice, syntax, and visual materials. This analysis also draws attention to the many ways these textbooks, although ancient slavery was not race-based like American slavery, directly and indirectly engage with the racist language and imagery of 19th-century pro-slavery American literature, propaganda, and performance and, as a result, propagate racism.

SLAVERY AND ANCIENT COMEDY IN CLASSICAL LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

In Greek and Latin literature, slavery and comedy have a particular relationship with one another. Enslaved people are central characters in ancient comedy. They are often depicted as “clever” and, at the same time, frequently threatened with or experience violence.\textsuperscript{114} Both the threat of violence and violence itself are tools for eliciting laughter. Sometimes enslaved people are beaten on stage but many times

\textsuperscript{113} Aspects of this paper were presented at Boston College at ISFC 2018, University of Rhode Island at CANE 2018, University of Georgia at JOLLE 2018, and in San Diego at SCS 2019. My thanks to all attendees, colleagues, and friends for the helpful feedback. Special thanks to NECJ reviewers, Ruth Harman, and Denise McCoskey for their valuable suggestions.

\textsuperscript{114} Richlin (2017); Gold (2014).
the beatings are implied. In Plautus’ *Pseudolus*, Ballio hits one enslaved person more for showing pain during a beating; in *Poenulus*, Agorastocles attacks a person he enslaved for showing interest in the woman Agorastocles desired; in *Aulularia*, Euclio beats an elderly enslaved female in addition to others. Although beatings were likely a common part of the daily lives of many enslaved people, comic playwrights did not use characterizations of enslaved people to reflect the experiences of captives but rather to communicate ‘humorously’ to the audience messages about authority, power, and order in society. The violence and metaphoric intentions in ancient comedies make it all the more puzzling why textbook authors would cite playwrights like Aristophanes as objective sources on ‘happiness’ among captives.

Many first year Greek and Latin texts use adaptations of these ancient comedies to tell stories of enslavers beating the people they held captive, including the modified version of Plautus’ comedy *Aulularia* in the *Reading Latin* series. After Euclio discovers a treasure in his home, he calls for Staphyla and begins beating her:

**STAPHYLA** quare me verberas, domine?
Why are you beating me, master?

**EUCLIO** tace! te verbero quod mala es, Staphyla.
Silence! I beat you because you are awful, Staphyla.

**STAPHYLA** egone mala? cur mala sum? misera sum, sed non mala, domine.
I am awful? Why am I awful? I am unfortunate, but not awful, master.

(She thinks to herself) but you are insane!

Staphyla responds to being attacked by asking him why and, in an aside, she ‘thinks to herself’ that Euclio is insane. Her comment on her enslaver’s mental stability is meant to be funny. Humor swiftly following violence links these actions and is a

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1 For violence against enslaved people in Roman comedy, see Richlin (2017, pp. 90-104) and Stewart (2012). In Greek comedy, see Hunt (2016, pp. 136-158).
2 Richlin (2017).
3 McCarthy (2000).
4 Jones and Sidwell (2012, pp. 8-9).
common feature of ancient comedy. In addition, throughout the story small images of enslaved people often appear in humorous situations like the enslaved Xanthias stealing a cake.

Plautus’ *Aulularia* is the first story that students read in the *Reading Latin* series and the text offers no historical context for ancient slavery or the role of enslaved people in ancient comedy. Without historical context, the instructor is evermore responsible for supplementing the material. As Barbara Gold contends, discussing intense and sensitive topics like slavery in ancient contexts can be distancing and not seem “real” to students because of the millennia of time between those experiences and the modern day. She also argues that White students may detach further because they think “this is not about me.” To combat this disassociation, Gold plans to provide more historical background in the future and draw comparisons between Roman slavery and American slavery. However, even when such historical context is attempted, many efforts fall short as the next section demonstrates.

**American Slavery in Classical Language Textbooks**

In the first edition of *Athenaze*, the authors state:

> On the whole, it seems fair to say that slavery was less cruel and degrading in Greece than one would expect and that in an economy that did not have the benefit of machines society could hardly have functioned without it. One might also remember that there were over four million slaves in the United States in 1860, where slavery was not abolished until 1865.

The passage claims that ancient slavery was less brutal, a natural part of the economy, and did not impact as many lives for as long as American slavery. However, ancient slavery is no exception to the inhumanity and violence of the institutions of slavery.

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5 Jones and Sidwell (2012, pp. xiii–xv). Other texts that do not include historical context on ancient slavery are *Wheelock’s Latin*, *Lingua Latina*, and *Alpha to Omega*.


8 The paragraph was removed by the second edition published in 2003. However, the impact of the earlier edition may continue because many learners do not have upgraded textbooks. See the report on the rising costs of textbooks by the US Public Interest Research Group (2014).
past and present worldwide, especially for those who worked in the silver mines.\textsuperscript{9} Furthermore, these misleading statistics do not take into account the difference in population size from the ancient world to 19th-century America and the relative proportions of enslaved people compared to enslavers.

Another comparison between ancient and American slavery can be found in the historical context section titled “Connecting with the Ancient World: Slavery in Ancient Rome” in \textit{Latin for the New Millennium} which reads:

\begin{quote}
Ancient slavery was by no means identical to slavery in more recent periods and countries, such as colonial America. The Romans did not reduce a single race or culture to slavery; rather, slaves came from all over the ancient Mediterranean world and typically fell into servile status by capture in war.\textsuperscript{10}
\end{quote}

This comparison emphasizes that Roman slavery was not race-based but instead determined by political and military circumstances, and assumes that the students understand American slavery was race-based. Without that assumption, the purpose of the statement “The Romans did not reduce a single race or culture to slavery” would not be clear. The effort made to distinguish the American institution of slavery from the ancient implies a concern among educators that students by transference may erroneously think that slavery in the ancient world was race-based as well (a misguided presupposition witnessed in my own classroom). The passages above and others like it indicate that any discussion of slavery (particularly in an American classroom) bears with it a subtext of race and racism in slavery. A similar statement is found in the \textit{Cambridge Latin Course} which proclaims:

\begin{quote}
In the Roman empire, slavery was not based on racial prejudice, and color itself did not signify slavery or obstruct advancement. People usually became slaves as a result either of being taken prisoner in war or of being captured by pirates; the children of slaves were automatically born into slavery.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

Acknowledging that American students bring with them an understanding of the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{9} Richlin (2017); Hunt (2016); DuBois (2014); Konstan (2013).
\textsuperscript{10} Minkova (2008, p. 51). The period of colonial America lasted from 1492 until 1763. Limiting the comparison strictly to colonial America raises questions about how one views the distance in time and ideology between modern American society and slave-era America.
\textsuperscript{11} Pope et al. (2015, p. 78).
\end{flushright}
link between slavery and racism as they approach their studies is important. But without greater critical discussion of the reason for this association, authors and instructors who emphasize that ancient Greek and Roman slavery was not race-based risk sending the message that race and racism should be understood separately from slavery in general. However, the link between racism and slavery likely remains embedded in students’ minds because of their education and experiences in America and elsewhere. Students may then be left with a discordant understanding of the relationship between racism and slavery.

One way to address the potential confusion in understanding the relationship between racism and slavery is for textbook authors and educators to explain to students that the earliest known recorded instance of racism can be found in the 15th century biography of Infante Henrique (1394-1460). Henrique, known as Prince Henry the Navigator, was a Portuguese human trafficker and the first leading figure to exclusively enslave African people. To justify the targeting of Africans, his biographer, Gomez Eanes de Zurara (1410-1474), compared Black people from Africa to “beasts” and classified them as inferior to White Europeans. Slavery therefore was instituted first and the social construction of race and racism arose later out of a desire to justify the targeted capturing of Black people. After comprehending this socially constructed association between racism and slavery, students will be better equipped to absorb and engage with the complex similarities and differences between ancient and modern slavery.

TEACHING SLAVERY IN AMERICAN CLASSICS CLASSROOM

Some instructors of Classics already make a discussion of race a clear part of classroom activities by having students draw comparisons between ancient and American slavery. Page DuBois describes one such lesson in which her undergraduate and graduate students compare ancient texts on slavery to the narratives of Black enslaved people in America. DuBois states that she is attempting to “undo white students’ imaginary sense that their skin color protects them from slavery, convince students that in antiquity slaves were often Greeks, not the heroic founders of a new nation, but rather the tortured, beaten, short-lived victims of their masters.”

While having the voices of Black enslaved people in the classroom is powerful and should continue, one problem with her explanation for this approach to teaching

about slavery is that it centralizes the experiences and feelings of White people, an issue addressed in the Southern Poverty Law Center’s 2018 report on the teaching of slavery in America titled Teaching Hard History: American Slavery.¹⁴

Teaching Hard History: American Slavery details serious issues with the way slavery is taught in the American education system. This extensive report identifies seven key issues in the teaching of slavery in the American classroom including centralizing the White experience, not providing students with sufficient context, and the avoidance of connecting slavery to the underlying ideology, namely, White supremacy. Another key issue is the continued use of damaging pedagogy. For example, the study reveals disturbing common practices among educators including staging simulations.¹⁵ In her future courses on ancient comedy, in addition to providing more historical context, Barbara Gold considers having students reenact “scenes of beatings or threatened beatings” in order to make performances of enslavement vivid.¹⁶ However, as the Southern Poverty Law Center report explains, this teaching approach would be traumatizing for students and therefore should not be a part of Classics pedagogy.

Working toward improving Classics pedagogy in secondary education, there have been recent criticisms of the “happy slave” narrative in the form of op-eds on Medium and Eidolon.¹⁷ In his article, Erik Robinson brought to light a profound example of the “happy slave” narrative in the 5th edition of Cambridge Latin Course series where there is a drawing of two enslaved people smiling after beating away a dog that had violently attacked them. Below the image is the Latin phrase servi erant laeti “the slaves were happy.”¹⁸ As Robinson explains:

Students love the characters in the Cambridge Latin Course, most notably Grumio, the somnolent kitchen slave who is depicted living a perfectly happy life in the Roman villa; there is no hint that Grumio could ever be subject to arbitrary beating, crucifixion, or torture. Grumio has developed something of a cult following among those who learned Latin with the CLC, yet I have never heard anyone ask about or acknowledge the fact that he was not living a life of his own choosing. While it is true that the

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¹⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center (2018).
¹⁵ In 2019, a 5th grade teacher in New Jersey was investigated for holding a mock slavery auction in her classroom where White students purchased Black students (Haller 2019).
¹⁷ Bostick (2018); Robinson (2017).
¹⁸ Pope et al. (2015, p. 71).
CLC presents a brief historical sketch about slavery in the ancient world, it is little more than a sanitized cultural note, and does little to dispel the impressions created by the story itself.\textsuperscript{19}

The sanitation and normalization of slavery as exemplified by Grumio in the \textit{Cambridge Latin Course} has allowed slavery to become a comfortable topic and to escape critical analysis where it is needed most. Dani Bostick explains that the “sanitized view of slavery can inadvertently reinforce misguided beliefs that slavery was an acceptable part of life in other periods of history.” And she goes on to advocate: “What we teach about slavery has implications far beyond our classroom. We have a responsibility to teach the difficult truth.”\textsuperscript{20} In January of 2018, \textit{The Endless Knot} podcast hosted by Mark Sundaram and Aven McMaster aired a two part series titled, “Race and Racism in Ancient and Medieval Studies.” When interviewed about what classicists can do to address racism in the field, Rebecca Futo Kennedy stated, “When we do classical reception, we need to stop thinking about theatre productions, and we need to start thinking about American education, American science, the use of Classics as not just a gatekeeper but also as an actual tool for creating the structures of racism in our country.”\textsuperscript{21}

In answer to these calls for a change in Classics curriculum from an educational perspective, the rest of this paper will be a demonstration of how Classics instructors can use systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to examine the “happy slave” narrative in the classroom. My work is guided by the following research questions: 1) What are the common linguistic features of the “happy slave” narrative? 2) In what context do these features appear in Greek and Latin textbooks? and 3) How do these features, particularly in the historical context sections, contribute to meaning-making in the context of slavery discourses in America?

METHODOLOGY

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is a sociolinguistic and educational theory and methodology that examines the grammar and function of discourses.\textsuperscript{22} SFL is a fitting approach for examining the “happy slave” narrative in Classics pedagogy because it is an educational toolbox meant to articulate and combat social injustices

\textsuperscript{19} Robinson (2017).
\textsuperscript{20} Bostick (2018).
\textsuperscript{21} Sundaram and McMaster (2018).
\textsuperscript{22} Halliday (2009); Halliday (2006); Halliday (2004); Martin and Rose (2003); Eggins (1994).
through language. Although not commonly used in classical language pedagogy yet, SFL has been practiced by scholars for decades to address the visual and verbal content of textbooks in other related fields such as history and political science.\(^{23}\) Two principles of SFL are featured in this paper: transitivity and appraisal. Simply put, transitivity refers to action words and appraisal refers to descriptive phrases and adjectives. By examining transitivity and appraisal in “happy slave” contexts, patterns in the actions and adjectives that compose the narrative can be identified across texts and the power of word choice that authors have when construing history and society can be more clearly understood.

An inquiry into action and agency in SFL is known as a transitivity analysis. A transitivity analysis can help one understand how a text is contributing to the “happy slave” narrative by bringing to the forefront the ways in which the discourse is presenting a positive interpersonal relationship between slaves and their enslavers.\(^{24}\) In her study on the construction of history genres, Coffin explains how the “temporal ordering of experience brings history into relationship with a widespread cultural practice of story-making whereby social experience is given a beginning, middle and end structure. Such a structure is the basis of the traditional literary narrative.”\(^{25}\) A transitivity analysis of historical context sections on slavery takes into account the grammatical elements and values the text as a story telling of social interactions between enslaved people and their enslavers. This type of examination seeks to answer the questions: Who did what to whom? When? What was the impact? In the classroom, identifying and examining the action and agency of participants through a transitivity analysis can help students understand how participants are positioned in relationship to one another and consider the problematic aspects related to the framing of these interpersonal interactions.

An appraisal analysis is the linguistic examination of expressions of feeling and character.\(^{26}\) Since the “happy slave” narrative relies in part on the presentation of positive feelings and a joyful disposition of enslaved people, an appraisal analysis is fitting. Appraisal analyses can help students comprehend the word choices that authors have when writing history and “control of the [appraisal] system contributes significantly both to the construction of an interpretation of the past and to the

\(^{23}\) Westerlund (2018); Avila et al. (2017); Coffin (2005); Abdou (2016); Coffin (1996); Eggins (1993); Rubino (1990).

\(^{24}\) Miller and Bayley (2016); Eggins (1994).


\(^{26}\) Martin and Rose (2003); Eggins (1994).
positioning of a reader to accept the interpretation.” In other words, if students understand the genres of history writing and the choices that authors can make when construing history, they will be better equipped to critically analyze the texts before them and recognize issues in rhetoric.

DATA SET

The data in this paper is taken from five beginning Greek and Latin textbooks commonly used at secondary and higher education institutions in America today: *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek, Latin for the New Millennium, Ecce Romani, Cambridge Latin Course,* and *Reading Latin.* There is greater representation of Latin textbooks because Latin is more commonly taught than Greek at both the secondary and college level; emphasizing the instances of the “happy slave” narrative in Latin may be of greater use to most readers. This is not an exhaustive list of occurrences but rather a sample to demonstrate this pervasive narrative. The examples are thematically arranged: enslaved people as immigrants, enslaved people as imported goods, enslaved people as fed and sheltered, and enslaved people as happy and friendly.

ENSLAVED PEOPLE AS IMMIGRANTS

A simple transitivity analysis charting the agents and actions may bring to light and spark discussion of the embedded “happy slave” narrative in this statement from *Latin for the New Millennium:*

> Ancient slavery was by no means identical to slavery in more recent periods and countries, such as colonial America. The Romans did not reduce a single race or culture to slavery; rather, slaves came from all over the ancient Mediterranean world and typically fell into servile status by capture in war.

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28 Balme and Lawall (2017); Pope et al. (2015); Jones and Sidwell (2012); Lawall (2009); Minkova (2008).
Transitivity of Enslaved People and Enslavers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENSLAVED PEOPLE</th>
<th>ENSLAVERS</th>
<th>INANIMATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitivity (action):</td>
<td>came from all over</td>
<td>did NOT reduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>status</td>
<td>fell into servile status</td>
<td>a single race or culture to slavery</td>
</tr>
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The assertion that “slaves came from all over the Mediterranean” positions enslaved people as the agents of the action and suggests that they had a choice in moving to Rome. When enslaved people are labeled immigrants, those responsible for their enslavement are not held accountable. Ben Carson, the Housing and Urban Development Secretary of the United States weighed in on the immigration debate in America:

That’s what America is about, a land of dreams and opportunity. There were other immigrants who came here in the bottom of slave ships, worked even longer, even harder for less. But they too had a dream that one day their sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, great-grandsons, great-granddaughters, might pursue prosperity and happiness in this land.\(^3\)

Carson’s comments were widely criticized for labeling enslaved Africans as immigrants. In the same way, we should be critical of statements in Classics textbooks that suggest the enslaved characters immigrated or traveled or otherwise voluntarily chose their lot. Textbooks that position slaves as immigrants reinforce a false understanding of the experiences of enslaved people and feed into racist narratives in an American slavery context.

In *Latin for the New Millennium*, the statement ends by offering a bit of clarity and explaining that at least some enslaved people “fell into servile status by capture in war” and were not immigrants. However, this account sanitizes the experience by describing enslaved people as ‘falling’ into slavery. The responsible agent here is not expressly the Romans or the enslavers but rather the inanimate “capture.” In fact, the Romans are identified only for what they did NOT do, namely, they “did not reduce a single race or culture to slavery.” Therefore, war and the subsequent capture are responsible for enslavement and not the people doing the capturing.\(^3\)

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30 Stack (2017).
31 This example shows how the agent of an action does not have to be the subject of the sentence. If
section on slavery ends with: “The condition of slaves, however, improved somewhat as a result of laws passed during the early imperial period.” The description of slavery thus begins with what the Romans did not do in regard to slavery and ends with the measures they took to improve enslavement.

One reaction to these problematic statements might be to not assign these sections for students to read. This approach, however, may lead to students filling in the blanks themselves without an adequate understanding of slavery. Perhaps a particularly eager student will read the section on their own anyway and the “happy slave” narrative will be further entrenched. In other cases, the stereotypes students have read or seen elsewhere may carry on without contradiction. By not assigning the section in the hopes of avoiding pro-slavery sentiment, instructors are not combating the issue but rather betting on students to lack the initiative to read beyond what is expected of them (a detrimental gamble on multiple fronts). Instead of avoiding the problem, educators should lead classroom activities that engage students in discussion and bring about a better understanding of the issues.

In addition to charting, students may engage in critical thinking and conversation by working together or individually on coding a passage. For example, students could code the participants in bold to indicate the actions of the enslavers, underline the actions of enslaved people, and italicize objects that are agents: “The Romans did not reduce a single race or culture to slavery; rather, slaves came from all over the ancient Mediterranean world and typically fell into servile status by capture in war.” After coding the passage, students can discuss the impact of grammatical choice on their understanding of a situation. They can also consider other ways that interactions between human traffickers, enslavers, and the enslaved people could be framed. For example, this section could instead read:

Unlike American enslavement of Africans, enslaved people during the time of Roman rule were not subjugated based on the color of their skin. Romans captured men and women of many races (including both White and Black) whom they conquered in war. Romans forced captives into slavery, bringing them back to Rome and other provinces to serve Roman enslavers.

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In this version, word choice and syntax illustrate greater agency on the part of human traffickers and enslavers, and more accurately depict the capture and involuntary oppression of slavery while also distinguishing race-based from non-race-based systems.

**ENSLAVED PEOPLE AS IMPORTED GOODS**

In *Latin for the New Millennium*, Minkova states: “White chalk on the feet indicated that the slave was imported” and “A tag around the neck gave the slave’s name, nationality, and described his character, a guarantee for the buyer that he was making a good purchase.”

The language is that of economic exchange. Emphasizing the inanimate economic mechanism of slavery (and states’ rights in the case of the U.S.) is another common way of deflecting attention away the brutality of slavery. In the first book of the *Ecce Romani* series, one historical context section on ancient slavery is titled “The Slave Market.” Describing the experiences of enslaved Davus, the text states, “He felt pretty uncomfortable standing there like an exhibit at the cattle-market, but he put the best face on it, looking around challengingly at the bidders.” The authors make a direct comparison to animal food markets and, although they humanize Davus, they present him as a competitor on the stage desiring to be sought after.

There is also an emphasis on economy in discourses on slavery in America. In 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that only 8% of American students identify slavery as the cause of the Civil War. Instead, most students point to the economy and states’ rights as the causes of the war. However, the economy relied upon enslavement and Confederate generals themselves stated that the Civil War was fought over slavery. Linguistically diverting attention away from slavery by talking about the economy as a separate agent denies the violence against slaves and clouds the racism. This position also suggests that the economic systems such as capitalism which fueled the human trafficking are ideologically neutral. For a transitivity analysis of these types of passages, students can highlight each sentence that addresses the economy of slavery, identify the participants, and create a list, a chart, or simply discuss the agents and actions. To contextualize the economic language of slavery, a comparative analysis can be made between the textbook and other works like the speech of Alexander Stephens. A longer lesson, paper assignment, or class-

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33 Minkova (2008, p. 51).
35 Stephens (1861).
room activity could include a reading of multiple texts about ancient societies and their economies of enslavement compared to the U.S. and its institution.

ENSLAVED PEOPLE AS FED AND SHELTERED

The following passage from the Greek text 
*Athenaze*: “In the country, the slaves of farmers usually lived and ate with their masters. Aristophanes’ comedies depict them as lively and cheeky characters, by no means downtrodden” lends itself to both a transitivity and an appraisal analysis. The interpersonal interaction between the enslaved and their enslavers is that of eating and living together. The subsequent statement that enslaved people are “lively and cheeky…by no means downtrodden” are appraisals of the disposition the enslaved. Both the transitivity and appraisal work together to paint the “happy slave” narrative.

Food and shelter have often been cited as evidence of the comfort and contentment of enslaved people for centuries. In 2016, Bill O'Reilly responded to Michelle Obama’s comment about how her family now lives in a house built by enslaved Black people:

> Slaves that worked there were well-fed and had decent lodgings provided by the government, which stopped hiring slave labor in 1802. However, the feds did not forbid subcontractors from using slave labor. So, Michelle Obama is essentially correct in citing slaves as builders of the White House, but there were others working as well.

O'Reilly places emphasis on the positive support that enslaved people had by classifying them as being “well-fed” and having “decent lodgings provided by the government.” This positive presentation also occurs in depictions of enslaved people cooking food for others. A children’s book titled *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* by Ramin Ganeshram depicts enslaved people happily baking George Washington a birthday cake. The illustration on the cover is an older enslaved Black male and a younger enslaved female in the kitchen smiling, almost at the viewer, as they mix the batter. The message in text and image is that the enslaved people whom George Washington owned were happy, loyal, and enjoyed their experience in the kitchen.

Amid criticism, Scholastic stopped distribution of the text, citing the misrepresen-
Another relationship between food, lodging, and happiness often distinguishes between enslaved people in the house and the field. *Latin for the New Millennium* holds “slaves who worked in the fields and mines might have existences no better than those endured by beasts of burden.”\(^3\) However, this division between ‘house slaves’ and ‘field slaves’ has been challenged by scholars for simplifying and glossing over the experiences for all enslaved people, including the rapes and violence endured by those forced to work in the house. In his criticism of the house/field binary discourse in American slavery contexts, Hasan Kwame Jeffries explains how the ‘house slave’ and ‘field slave’ divide oversimplifies the system of slavery and does not take into account the breadth of experiences including the type of forced labor, crops, the size of the land, location, gender, age, and origin (e.g. born in Africa or in America). For Jeffries, “Reducing the manifold experiences of enslaved African Americans to a simple binary might be good for making political points. But it obscures far more than it reveals.”\(^4\) This same observation can be applied to the misrepresentation and simplification of enslaved people’s experiences in the ancient world.

**ENSLAVED PEOPLE AS HAPPY AND FRIENDLY**

Another “happy slave” narrative is the expression of close friendships between enslaved people and their enslavers. From a transitivity perspective, the enslavers are agents who treat the enslaved people in captivity as friends and who allow for warm-hearted relationships. In *Latin for the New Millennium*, Minkova claims, “slaves might be treated much like personal friends.” She provides as an example the comic playwright Terence and his former enslaver: “Terence himself was a freed slave, who apparently enjoyed close ties to his master.”\(^5\) In *Ecce Romani*, the authors explain that “Davus enjoys a high position among Cornelius’ slaves and takes pride in his responsibilities. Of course he has the good fortune to work for a master who is quite humane by Roman standards.”\(^6\) While the authors do address violence against enslaved people, Davus does not appear to suffer such brutality. Davus’ central role in the text coupled with his experience as an enslaved person with a “benevolent master” risks implying to students that his storyline is representative of most enslaved people’s experiences. The prioritizing of “positive” experiences for enslaved people

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41 Minkova (2008, p. 52).
42 Lawall (2009, p. 75).
in non-fictional and fictional stories such as Terence and Davus deemphasizes and mitigates the systemic reality and atrocity of slavery by shifting focus away from the corrupt system and onto the perceived kindness and happiness of individuals. This narrative also sends the message that any “kind master” has substantial power to assuage the oppression of slavery.

As written records attest, there are cases in history when a formerly enslaved person recounts their experiences themselves and shares that they were not as brutalized as others. However, these same victims of slavery often make it clear that there exists no form of enslavement that could be preferred over freedom. Henry “Box” Brown (ca. 1815-1897), a Black man formerly enslaved in Richmond, Virginia, states in the preface of his freedom narrative:

The tale of my own sufferings is not one of great interest to those who delight to read of hair-breadth adventures, of tragica occurrences, and scenes of blood:—my life, even in slavery, has been in many respects comparatively comfortable. I have experienced a continuance of such kindness, as slaveholders have to bestow; but though my body has escaped the lash of the whip, my mind has groaned under tortures which I believe will never be related, because, language is inadequate to express them…

Brown spends six chapters recounting beatings and abuse perpetrated by enslavers and human traffickers on others including the sale of his pregnant wife and three children whom he never saw again. He then reflects, “My master treated me kindly but he still retained me in a state of slavery. His kindness however did not keep me from feeling the smart of this awful deprivation.” Seven months after losing his family, Brown nearly died when friends helped ship him to freedom in a small box for twenty-seven hours by wagon, railroad, steamboat, and ferry from Richmond to Philadelphia. Lived experiences like Brown’s stand in contrast to enslavers’ efforts and the efforts of textbook authors to communicate a world of peaceful and fair co-existence with enslaved people even under “kindly” circumstances.

Although a transitivity analysis can illustrate this aspect of the “happy slave” narrative, overt depictions of joy are especially fitting for appraisal analysis. To conduct appraisal analysis, a text must express the feelings or character of a subject. For instance, earlier the Latin phrase servi erant laeti “the slaves were happy” appeared.

43 Brown (1851, pp. i-ii).
44 Brown (1851, p. 40).
45 Pope et al. (2015, p. 71).
Here the adjective “happy” is the element of appraisal as it expresses the emotion of the enslaved. Appraisal can also be found in “Aristophanes’ comedies depict them as lively and cheeky characters, by no means downtrodden.”\textsuperscript{46} In this case, the adverbs “lively,” “cheeky,” and the phrase “by no means downtrodden” are terms of appraisal because they describe the demeanor and character of enslaved people. In the classroom, students can chart or code appraisal elements and discuss their function and value much like the sample transitivity analysis.

Texts and images also work together to reinforce the “happy slave” narrative. In \textit{Latin for the New Millennium}, the section on slavery titled “Connecting with the Ancient World: Slavery in Ancient Rome” features images of enslaved people laboring including the following Carthaginian mosaic.

\textit{2nd-century C.E. mosaic, Carthage}

![Carthaginian mosaic](image)

On the page to the right of the open book is the beginning of the excerpt on Roman comedy titled “Exploring Roman Comedy: Roman Productions and Modern Renditions.” The section on comedy features the comic mask below.

\textsuperscript{46} Balme and Lawall (2017, p. 20).
The text accompanying the image includes the statement, “There were two holidays that gave ordinary people an opportunity for free entertainment at comedies, to laugh away their cares, and to identify with clever slaves who could outwit and out-talk their masters and bring a complex plot to a “happy ending.” The juxtaposition of the layout in this textbook reinforces a relationship between slavery and humor and is emblematic of the presentation of slavery in Classics textbooks. Without correct contextualization of their actual experiences in the previous section on slavery, summarizing the characterization of enslaved people here as a source of entertainment and morale boost for “ordinary people” further distances the audience and thus the textbook user from the system of slavery and its viciousness. Both the lived experience and the comic performance of an enslaved person are dehumanized and conflated into a singular inanimate metaphor for power and powerlessness. The understanding of a brutal system of oppressing other humans with real consequences, pain, and agency is lost.

CLASSICS TEXTBOOKS AND THE RACISM OF AMERICA

Similar to the texts and images in Classics course books, verbal and visual elements

in American slavery contexts have worked together to reinforce the “happy slave” narrative for centuries. On stage, the “happy slave” narrative of 19th-century America was fortified with blackface minstrel shows. Minstrelsy was marketed as comic entertainment and often featured White men in blackface portraying dim-witted enslaved people singing and dancing in buffoonish style. In comparing minstrelsy to ancient comedy, Kathleen McCarthy observes that in both types of performances, “slaves were so debased that these creature comforts and simple pleasures [e.g. eating, dancing, singing] meant more to them than their freedom.”48 Image IV features “Jim Crow,” one of the most well-known blackface caricatures.

Jim Crow was created and performed by a White man named Thomas D. “Daddy” Rice in the mid-1800s. Racist caricatures like Jim Crow were the windows through which White audiences watched what they understood to be in some capacity an authentic expression of Black people and culture. Although the nature of the performances as fictional may have been understood to some degree, the stereotyping of Black people as lazy, mentally deficient, and goofy by consumers and producers of these shows persisted outside the realm of theatre with very real consequences in education, housing, politics, and all aspects of society. For example, the discriminatory

“separate but equal” laws upheld by the 1896 Plessy vs Ferguson case were dubbed Jim Crow laws.⁴⁹ In the 2018 music video for his hit song “This is America,” hip-hop artist Childish Gambino embodies the infamous Jim Crow movements illustrated above as he criticizes entertainment, social media, distraction, gun violence, racism, and the continued exploitation of Black people.⁵⁰

Despite widespread awareness of the racism and offensive stereotypes minstrelsy and blackface perpetuates, nearly 200 years after their initial rise in popularity, minstrel shows continue to appear in American entertainment and media. The 2010 Broadway production of Scottsboro Boys directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman drew criticism for its offensive inclusion of minstrelsy.⁵¹ Like the beatings of enslaved people in ancient comedy, a product of pain and suffering had become the producer of laughter and happiness for the audience. In 2018, NBC cancelled the Megan Kelly Today show because Kelly defended blackface Halloween costumes.⁵² And in 2019, two White female students at the University of Oklahoma were expelled from their sorority after they posted a Snapchat video of themselves in blackface making explicitly racist comments.⁵³ With incidences like these still happening today, it is all the more imperative that the relationship between slavery, comedy, and race be thoroughly and appropriately contextualized in Classics classrooms. If not, textbook authors and instructors may reinforce racist discourse by relying on the equivalent of minstrel shows (i.e. ancient comedy) to teach students about the lived experiences of enslaved people in antiquity.

CONCLUSION

Over the centuries, permutations of “happy” enslaved people in texts, images, and performances fabricated a storyline with shared features that have transcended time and place. Although ancient slavery was not race-based like American slavery, the fact that Greek and Latin textbook authors are compelled to begin their historical explanation of slavery with statements that directly connect the two indicates that American slavery, race-based slavery, and thus race itself, particularly in an American classroom setting, are intricately woven together in students’ and teachers’ understanding of slavery as an institution no matter the context. If not responsibly

⁴⁹  Richardson (2018).
⁵⁰  Gambino (2018); Rao (2018).
⁵¹  Jones III (2012).
⁵³  Sacks (2019).
addressed, the socially constructed and damaging intersection between slavery, comedy, and race becomes further entrenched. On the complexity of racism in Classics, Yung In Chae states:

I’ve realized that the problems are bigger and thornier than I had ever imagined. I don’t know where the Gordian knot begins or ends. I certainly don’t know how to untie it. What I do know is this: whatever those solutions are, they’re going to be not progressive but radical. They’re going to fundamentally change what the field is and whom it’s for. Because the way to solve a Gordian knot is not by untying it but by severing it completely.54

For my part, I enact solidarity pedagogy by developing systemic functional linguistic-based lessons for students. I aim to inspire instructors, textbook authors, and learners of all subjects to critically consider the content and context of any material they read. Finally, I strongly advocate for the reform of Classics textbooks and the increased use of antiracist Classics pedagogy to fight against these narratives. As teachers and students engage in activities and discussions about troubling presentations of slavery through discourse analysis, the hope is that critical thinking skills grow and begin to dismantle the centuries of desensitization to the violence and inhumanity of enslaving another human being.

54 Chae (2018).
Textbooks


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Teaching Homer’s *Odyssey* Through Charles Darwin’s *The Descent of Man*: An Ancient Version of Evolution

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When working with material in literature and history from the distant past, teachers are often challenged to show students the relevance of the courses to contemporary life, and Homer’s *Odyssey* is arguably the easiest to defend. Besides achievements in language and the oral tradition, Homer is the origin of Western literature, for he introduced a narrative structure and themes that are found throughout our literary history: the hero’s journey and return; the relation between gods and mortals; the roles of women in patriarchal cultures; familial relations; the contrast between militant and peaceful cultures; and so on. Moreover, Homer’s timeless vision and philosophy span the ages, and by examining the parallels between the *Odyssey* and Charles Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (1871), this paper will show that Homer actually introduced to the world Darwin’s ideas about human evolution.

In order to see the parallels between Homer’s vision of human development in the *Odyssey* and Darwin’s principles of progress in *The Descent of Man*, we must reorder the sequence of individuals and communities that the hero and his son encounter on their journeys. We can then recognize the similarities between Darwin’s biological, intellectual, material, and cultural evolution and the ladder of progress presented in Homer’s poem—from the most primitive form of caveman in the Stone Age to the most civilized society in the Bronze Age of the Trojan War.

Briefly stated, in *The Descent of Man* Darwin gives us ample evidence and ex-
amples of the “community of descent” from which Western humanity evolved, and he distinguishes the qualities from the lowest to the highest orders of man. He includes not only the use of tools for building, survival, protection, and creating art, but also the intellectual, moral, emotional, and social faculties in human beings as they become more civilized. When Darwin compared the most advanced primates with human beings, we see the same qualities in the Odyssey:

... man alone is capable of progressive development; that he alone makes use of tools or fire, domesticates other animals, possesses property, or employs language; that no other animal is self-conscious, comprehends itself, has the power of abstraction, or possesses general ideas; that man alone has a sense of beauty, is liable to caprice, has the feeling of gratitude, mystery, &c.; believes in God[s], or is endowed with a conscience.56

Over 2600 years earlier, the various characters, communities, and cultures in the Odyssey exhibit the same progression of “faculties” in those individuals and groups that can learn and develop in the ways Darwin describes in The Descent of Man.

Just as naturalists studied various people living at different stages of development in different parts of the world during Darwin’s time — and Darwin discusses the physiology and living conditions of such tribes in contrast to the “civilized” men in nineteenth-century England—so too Homer envisioned the simultaneity of different stages of development during his own time. Creatures from the Early Stone Age, for example, existed at the same time that people on the mainland in what is now Greece could be living opulent lives in Sparta and Scheria. Thus, like Darwin, Homer offers us a picture of the Mediterranean world in vastly different stages of human progress at the same time in history.

The most primitive humanoid form and behaviors in the Odyssey can be seen in Polyphemos, of the species called Cyclopes. While he is not technically mortal, being sired by Poseidon, god of the sea, and born to the sea nymph, Thoosa,57 the Cyclopes represent “a more primitive, bestial phase of existence.”58 Thus, they provide a good beginning for our study of human progress.

The Cyclopes are more advanced than the primates in using fire and basic

57 I do not suggest that Homer intended to say that sentient life emerged from the sea, as evolutionists do, but it is an intriguing coincidence that the primitive Cyclopes were born of the sea.
language, but they have only one eye, are cannibals and cave dwellers, and do not observe religious rituals or reveal other abstract thinking. With no tools for building, no knowledge of farming, and no sense of community, the Cyclopes lack the higher mental faculties, which Darwin calls “[a]rticulate language” as well as “observation, reason, invention, or imagination.” Homer suggests such limitation in giving them one eye for diminished vision, a metaphor for intellectual powers. Their language and sense of logic are primitive, so Odysseus easily tricks Polyphemos and reveals the vast difference between the hero and this Early Stone Age creature.

The next people on the ladder of evolution are the Laestrygonians in Book 10. While they have a town, roads, wagons, and houses, they are giant cannibals with limited communication skills, for according to Odysseus, they offer no hospitality or discussion before attacking. Using prehistoric weapons, these giants spear the Ithakans and throw huge boulders down on the ships to destroy them. Despite their advances, they are still living in the Stone Age, for they use what Darwin calls “stones and sticks” that the earliest people used for weapons.

We know little about the Kikones except that they are more advanced than the previous peoples. They live in a city by the sea, fight together for survival against a brutal enemy, the Greeks, and have domesticated animals for their use. Odysseus and his men — for no apparent reason but greed and lust — sack their city, kill the men, and rape the women. The Kikones who live inland respond to their people’s pleas for help, fighting on foot and on horses to defeat the Greeks, who seem to be the more primitive men here. In Homer’s movement from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age in this narrative, the Kikones have bronze-tipped spears, they have developed relatively sophisticated communications and defense, and they look like human beings with whom the Greeks desire to mate.

Ithaka would seem to be the obvious model of civilized behavior because it is the narrative focus of the epic, the home and goal of the epic’s hero, the site of the battle with the suitors, and the place where order is restored; however, Odysseus’ Ithaka is not advanced according to Homer’s — or Darwin’s — view of progress.

Odysseus and his companions on their way home from Troy reveal the brutality of warriors who participated in the Trojan War: while they have advanced weapons, they create nothing to show imagination and abstract thinking, and attack innocent communities for avaricious purposes and a misguided sense of glory. Moreover, they

60 Darwin (1981I, p. 51).
are equated with the animal kingdom when Kirke turns Odysseus’ men into pigs — according to their base instincts and behaviors — before she restores them to their human forms. Like Darwin, Homer shows that human beings are descended from animals when Kirke transforms men into pigs, wolves, and lions, the animals that they most resemble in their natures.

Odysseus and his Ithakan companions are also morally and emotionally deficient in Darwin’s terms. They are disloyal and distrustful to each other and brutal to others, and the warriors are clearly not the fittest for survival since only Odysseus reaches home. Since they are related to the families of the suitors, it is little wonder that the suitors also behave like less developed members of the human race. While there are men on Ithaka like Mentor and Laertes, who are kind and decent, the suitors are inferior intellectually, morally, and socially and can hardly be described as civilized. They lack conscience in showing no hospitality or respect to strangers, elders, or anyone else; they show no obeisance or gratitude to the gods; they turn the house of Odysseus and Telemachos into a pigsty; and they live slothful and gluttonous lives. They have no purpose except to enjoy themselves, create disorder, and marry the wife of the absent king in order to get the glory of her name and her dowry. In Kirke’s view of men, the suitors function like a pack of animals.

Thus, Ithaka is low on the evolutionary ladder. We see no sense of community or social order and no attempts to come to the aid of the besieged Penelope and her household. There is no evidence of abstract thinking while Penelope manipulates the suitors for four years, so they are not fit for survival, in the Darwinian sense.

However, Penelope, who is not Ithakan by birth, represents a higher intellectual and moral development: “knowing within her heart more than others, which Athene has given her”, or what Lattimore calls her “wisdom” and “cleverness.” Her contempt for the suitors, their behavior and their values, shows that what they are is not acceptable to her. While she appreciates beauty and art, there seems to be little beauty in this high dwelling with its stone walls devoid of artistic embellishment. Penelope is more civilized in the Darwinian sense not only for her intellect and creative accomplishments, but because she expresses love for her son and sympathy when she extends hospitality to strangers and beggars. She pays tribute to the gods whom she reveres and who protect her. Her self-reflection, her imagination and

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1 Lattimore (1975, 10.239).
3 Lattimore (1975, 2.116-8).
4 Lattimore (1975, 1.125ff. Even the gold cups and goblets and “polished tables” cannot be attributed to Ithakan creativity or appreciation of art, for they could have been part of Penelope’s dowry.
language skills, her sense of logic and strategy in deceiving the suitors, her role in assisting in the defeat of the suitors, and her clever challenge to Odysseus all place her in the higher range of Darwinian progress.

And yet, Homer shows that on Ithaka she is not appreciated, even by her son. Despite her significant role in the narrative framework of the epic and in aiding in the victory over the suitors, Penelope is not often seen or heard; for Odysseus returns to Ithaka to bring order to his home and his land, and reuniting with Penelope is a peripheral part of what awaits him. While other characters like Kalypso and even present-day commentators remark on his great love for his wife, Odysseus does not express such love. A comparison of the familial and social positions of Penelope and Arete of Scheria reveals Homer’s contrast between the two cultures and their different stage of evolutionary progress.

In Book 3, Telemachos introduces us to Nestor and his home at Pylos in southern Greece and thereby takes us to the next level of development. King Nestor, who fought beside Odysseus when they sacked the citadel of Troy, and his family of six sons and sons-in-law focus their lives around rituals to the gods. And the gods reward Nestor’s devotion by sending him straight home after the war and by giving him a family fit for the kingdom of Pylos. Nestor’s son expresses their philosophy of life when he says, “All men need the gods.” When Telemachos arrives, Nestor’s family is celebrating a festival to Poseidon, and they welcome Telemachos with hospitality and generosity that place them above Ithaka.

There are many indications of the Pylians’ cultural progress, besides their material wealth: the bull sacrificed at the festival has horns painted with silver, and the bull sacrificed later has horns painted in gold. Homer gives us in Nestor the Darwinian major differences between primitive and civilized cultures: articulate language skills, sophisticated tools that create material and utilitarian abundance, domesticated animals, expressions of hospitality, spiritual and abstract thinking, the intelligence and kindness of family, and reproductive power for the family to survive and pass on their best qualities to future generations. Yet, there is little sense of female or communal inclusion in Nestor’s life and celebrations, and these deficiencies keep Nestor’s family from being at the top of the ladder. When Homer gives women a greater role in society, that community is the most advanced.

Homer shows us the next step in cultural, moral, and intellectual progress in

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5 Lattimore (1975, 3.48).
6 Though Nestor sleeps beside his wife, Nestor’s wife, daughters, and daughters-in-law are seen but not heard as they contribute to the ritual but only by doing the difficult work in preparing the bull for sacrifice. In Pylos, apparently women work but do not participate in the celebratory pleasures.
Menelaos and Helen of Sparta. Both Telemachos and Nestor’s son Peisistratos “marvel as they admire the palace of the king”: a “divine house” with gleaming bronze, gold, amber, silver, and ivory throughout. But there is more than material riches in this palace, for Menelaos has grown beyond the avaricious, bragging qualities that we see in Odysseus (and the men of the Iliad). In response to the young men’s admiration, Menelaos attributes his wealth to the friendships and generosity of the people he visited during his seven years of travel to places like Libya, Aithiopia, Egypt, and Phoenikia. Menelaos does not credit his own superiority or his own people for such material and artistic advances; rather, he defers to the nobility of other kings whose hospitality could not be rivaled, except by Zeus. And he clearly learned much from those people, for Menelaos says that he would give up two thirds of his possessions if the men lost at Troy and on their travels home, particularly Odysseus, could return home alive and well. Such emotional sympathy, guilt, remorse, generosity, and the courtesy and hospitality shown to Telemachos are further advances in the development of mankind, according to Darwin.

Helen’s superior and inferior roles are intriguing in this epic. When she immediately recognizes in Telemachos the likeness of his father, she seems to have the female qualities of “rapid perception” and “intuition” that Darwin attributes to more advanced women in civilized societies; however, she also takes the blame for the Trojan War and what happened to the men in what she calls “reckless warfare.” Her attitude toward war reflects that of the advanced Phaeakians and the poet himself at the end of the epic. The Spartan kingdom is Helen’s inheritance, but she is not treated with much respect: she is ignored and sits in “a well-made chair,” rather than a chair worthy of royalty.

There is further conflict between misogyny and moral growth when the king says that he “would have settled a city in Argos for [Odysseus]” and brought “him from Ithaka with all his possessions, his son, all his people” to protect Odysseus from the dangers in his own country. Like Odysseus throughout the epic, Menelaos does not refer to Penelope or credit her loyalty in waiting for twenty years. In contrast to

7 Lattimore (1975, 4.43ff).
9 Lattimore (1975, 4.145-6); yet, according to Darwin, in “barbarous nations . . . the women are the constant cause of war . . . ” (1981II, p. 323).
10 Lattimore (1975, 4.123).
11 Lattimore (1975, 4.174-6). Presumably Menelaos expects the wife of Odysseus to be a danger, for his brother, King Agamemnon, was killed by his queen upon his return from Troy. This murder is mentioned repeatedly in the Odyssey.
the Phaeakians, he ignores the woman's value but otherwise shows levels of generosity, empathy, and concern for others that are not previously seen in other men in the Odyssey. Helen also has the capacity to develop, for her disloyalty to her husband and daughter long ago, though presumably caused by the gods, taught her the value of family and home. In Darwinian terms, such moral and emotional growth is the result of both intelligence and learned experiences in life. Thus, they are closer to the top on the ladder of progress but are not yet there.

Finally, in Books 6-8, Homer reveals his admiration for the Phaeakians, the highly intelligent, social, kind, generous, hospitable, creative, resourceful, and most civilized people in Homer’s age. They express Homer’s philosophy of evolutionary progress with their respect for women and the positive consequences of their peaceful way of life. The abundance of their material wealth, which they attribute to the gods but which they also create for themselves from their own intelligence, hard work, and creative skills, and the quality of their moral character are further evidence of their advances over all others in Homer’s time.

In the kingdom of King Alkinoös, Odysseus marvels at the ships and harbors, the acres of orchards, vineyards, groves of olive trees, and gardens that produce in all seasons and that reveal advanced knowledge of agriculture and irrigation. Their communal unity is symbolized in the spring where the townspeople come for their water and where they meet in social interaction. The lavish home of Alkinoös and Arete is immediately recognized, with its golden doors, silver lintels, amber friezes, and gold and silver statues of two dogs made by the god Hephaistos gracing the main door of the palace; and the people share these wonders, for the assembly room is where meetings of the leaders and feasts are held. As Darwin notes, men who develop the greatest “social instincts,” in turn “would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience …” We see evidence of such self-reflective conscience and moral sense on Scheria when men apologize for rudeness, or offer fifty-two of their best men to take a stranger home, in spite of a prophecy that they may not return.

Unlike Odysseus who brags about the men he slaughtered and the women he bedded and raped, the Phaeakians pay tribute to other values and behaviors and have no need for an army or military weapons. Instead, Alkinoös is proud of his wife and people for their skills and creativity and character. He points out that the men

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12 Lattimore (1975, 7.112-32).
13 Attributing the skill and beauty to the god would seem to suggest the level of ability in the artists and artisans of the kingdom.
14 Lattimore (1975, 7.43-102).
are expert ship builders, mariners, and runners (their games are not designed for the
glory of war but for physical prowess and clever strategy), and “their women/ are
skilled in weaving and dowered with wisdom bestowed by Athene,/ to be expert in
beautiful work, to have good character.”

Homer’s remarkable depiction of women in this society separates the Phaeakians from other people in the Odyssey. His attitude actually raises Homer above Charles Darwin, who over 2600 years later believed that women were innately inferior to men. Not so with the Phaeakian monarch. While King Alkinoös has the greatest power on the island, he has bestowed on his wife, Arete, enormous respect and authority and gave to her

such pride of place as no other woman on earth is given …
So she was held high in the heart and still she is so,
by her beloved children, by Alkinoös himself, and by
the people, who look toward her as to a god when they see her,
… For there is no good intelligence that she herself lacks.
She dissolves quarrels, even among men, when she favors them.

Thus, Odysseus’ return home depends upon Arete’s opinion and her authority.

I believe that Homer depicted various species and cultures, from the most primitive Cyclopes to the most civilized Phaeakians, to express his attitude toward war as well as women in human development. Through the communities that the hero and his son encounter, Homer reveals that the people who desire peace and reject war are not only the most admirable human beings, but also the ones who create the most desirable lives and communities for their people. Instead of expending their time and energies on male aggression and military objectives, the Phaeakians value the contributions of all of their people — male and female, leaders, athletes, workers, and artisans — in their pursuit of peace that leads to progress. For Homer, war limits the potential of each society that values (and participates in) war while the Phaeakians continue to develop and offer a model for the life that peace, social order, and mutual esteem can provide. Homer’s admiration for the Phaeakian phi-

18 Lattimore (1975, 7.67-74).
19 Odysseus’ values and behaviors are so antithetical to those of the Phaeakians that it is surprising that Arete and Alkinoös admire him. It is probably a tribute to his support from the gods and his poetic gift of language that the king offers their daughter, the beautiful and clever Nausikaa, to Odysseus in marriage.
losophy is further heightened at the end of his poem when, in Book 24, lines 528–48, the *Odyssey* reveals both the poet’s and the gods’ wish to end war. Thus, in extolling the virtues of these beautiful and civilized people who teach us the value of women and of peace, Homer has given us one of the greatest intellectual achievements in Western literature: he has seen into the future and anticipated by over 2600 years some of the major aspects of Charles Darwin’s renowned Theory of Evolution. \(^{20}\)

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**Works Cited**


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\(^{20}\) I gratefully acknowledge the assistance and encouragement of Professor Emerita Ann Suter and Professor Emeritus Gregory McNab in the completion of this project.
Matthew Wright,
*The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy, Vol. I: Neglected Authors.*


Matthew Wright,
*The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy, Vol. II: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.*


With these two volumes Matthew Wright performs a welcome service in presenting a clear and accessible guide to the fragmentary remains of ancient Greek tragedy. In addition to English translations of tragic fragments other than those written by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides (the first such collection), Wright provides critical overviews of the lost plays, situating each one with respect to the myth it enacts and with respect to other treatments. His thoughtful commentary along the way is often incisive and illuminating, making clear to the reader just why these fragments matter. Because there is very little of the Greek texts here, readers without Greek will be entirely at home, while those with the Greek texts at their sides will find that Wright’s adherence to the numbering of Kannicht, Snell, and Radt (*Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 1971-2004) makes cross-reference easy. His discussions contain useful references to secondary sources, and a substantial bibliography appears at the end of each volume. Note that the scope of both volumes is limited to tragedy: satyric fragments are ignored. Fragments either unattributed or unassigned to a particular play are also omitted.

Volume 1 grounds the project in the sobering recognition that we know remarkably little about Greek tragedy, which Wright calls a “lost genre” (xii). It therefore behooves us, he argues, to take the fragments seriously and to realize that our
understanding of the genre hinges on doing so. Indeed, Wright’s interest in drawing lessons about tragedy as a whole is one of this study’s chief virtues. Wright also reflects thoughtfully on the hows and whys of studying fragments, and in doing so he enunciates 10 principles that guide his work. Two of these I highlight because they are both provocative and telling of Wright’s methods. First, he advocates “micro-reading” which calls on us “to push the fragments to their limits and squeeze out every drop of meaning and nuance” (xxiv). Second, he claims that the study of fragments requires “creativity and imagination” because, like Roland Barthes’ written texts, fragments turn readers into authors (xxv). Wright is an able guide here, although it should be noted that he eschews plot reconstruction.

Brief summaries of the chapters follow, with examples of the lessons drawn by Wright.

Chapter 1 (“The Earliest Tragedies”) discusses Thespis, Choerilus, Pratinas, and Phrynichus in presenting a concise and appropriately skeptical survey of tragedy prior to 472, the date of the oldest surviving play, Aeschylus’ Persians. Among the noteworthy observations here is that Aristophanes’ parody of Phrynichus’ choreography (W asps 1476–1537) may suggest that Phrynichus’ plays were being re-performed in Aristophanes’ day (19).

Chapter 2 (“Some Fifth-Century Tragedians”) treats seven authors, including Ion of Chios. Wright notes that a number of non-Athenian poets, such as Ion, competed at the City Dionysia, and Athenaeus reports that, following his victory, Ion sent Chian wine to the Athenians. Wright suggests that this report prompts us to rethink tragedy as a political institution: might such an act have been seen as “an obtrusion of non-Athenian values into a quintessentially Athenian event” (31–32)? More broadly, what did it mean for a non-Athenian to compete (and win!) at the City Dionysia?

Chapter 3 is devoted to Agathon. Taking up the difficulties involved in making use of comic evidence, Wright offers no fewer than 15 ways to make sense of the portrait of Agathon in Aristophanes’ Thesmophoriazusae (67–69). He also notes that, according to Aristotle (Poetics 9), one of Agathon’s plays (Anthos or Antheus) invents both events and characters and thereby poses the question, “How far from generic norms can a tragedy go while remaining a tragedy?” (82).

Chapter 4 (“Tragic Family Trees”) studies more than a dozen poets from families with multi-generational involvement in tragedy: producing tragedies, it seems, was often “a family business” (91). Aeschylus’ family, for example, included eight tragedians over six generations. Aeschylus’ nephew Philocles wrote a tetralogy Pandionis, a fact that tells us not only that both he and Sophocles wrote plays about
Tereus, but also that “connected tetralogies with a single consecutive storyline were still being produced in the late fifth century” (99).

Chapter 5 (“Some Fourth-Century Tragedians”) surveys nine fourth-century tragic poets and concludes that “it is not possible to detect any significant changes or developments in the character of the tragic genre as a whole during the years up to 322 BCE” (120). This surprising conclusion supports Wright’s mission to show that the fragments can rectify misconceptions about tragedy. He does nonetheless concede that fourth-century tragedians might have differed from their fifth-century counterparts in having “a heightened sense of their own epigonal status” (120).

Chapter 6 (“The Very Lost”) reports what little is known about more than 30 playwrights whose work has completely disappeared. A handful of these poets are known only, or principally, from epigraphic sources.

The brief “Epilogue” draws some conclusions. Here Wright emphasizes the diversity of tragedy in the classical period, a genre characterized by the absence of “a single pattern, form or purpose” (199), as well as by continuity and stability. Wright also sees the fragments as putting into doubt some widely accepted beliefs about tragedy: the “substantial and growing presence of non-Athenian tragedians” testifies against the notion that tragedy was Athenocentric (200); trilogies and tetralogies may have been produced later than we think; sometimes a satyr-play was staged as the third play in a production, or a tragedy as the fourth. All of this may make us wonder, says Wright, “what the ‘normal’ competition rules were at any particular period” (201). The Epilogue concludes with a conspectus of classical plays and authors (including the canonical three), organized by title.

Four appendices contain translations of all attributed tragic fragments written by poets other than Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides; a glossary; a chronology of Greek theater history (534-322); and a guide to further reading.

Volume 2 devotes a chapter to each of the three canonical poets. Because this volume contains neither Greek nor English texts of the fragments, both readers with and those without Greek will want to have another edition such as the Loebs (Lloyd-Jones 1996; Collard and Cropp 2008; Sommerstein 2008) at hand. Although Wright’s discussions overlap substantially with those in the Loebs, his treatments of individual plays sometimes offer the reader more interpretive guidance and his narratives are generally more approachable for non-specialists.

This volume continues the project of drawing out the implications of the evidence. The Aeschylus of the fragments, for example, makes us rethink the poet we thought we knew: more than a dozen of his fragmentary plays are unlike any of his surviving works in that they contain “weird and grotesque subject-matter”
Wright also shows that the notion of the “Sophoclean hero” is challenged by the fragments (67), and he observes that the thematic range of Sophocles’ plays may have been wider than commonly assumed (91), as evidenced by Tyro’s “happy” ending (125) or the comedy and “undignified subject matter” of The Gathering of the Achaeans (84). Although the Euripidean fragments display distinctive features familiar from the surviving plays, these fragments put into doubt “any overarching narratives about Euripides’ creative development over time” (140). The “fluid and provocative use of myth,” for example, often taken to be characteristic of late Euripides, is evident in his Cretan Women of 438 BCE (180). Wright also suggests that fragments from all three authors, with their surprising material such as “death, divination, magic and reincarnation” (39), may require that we “expand our definition of tragedy” (101-102).

Chapter 4 (“Unfamiliar Faces”) argues that myths cannot have definitive versions: fragmentary evidence shows that Oedipus need not blind himself, Medea need not kill her children, and Antigone need not die childless (212). “We may think we know and understand Antigone well,” says Wright, “but the evidence of fragmentary tragedy should make us think otherwise” (227).

Chapter 5 (“Lost Tragedies in Performance”) outlines an approach to the performance criticism of fragments, arguing (against Taplin) that the text does not necessarily contain instructions for significant stage action. Rather, we must sometimes resort to information outside the text. Wright articulates seven working principles of such criticism which he then puts to work in 12 case studies. His emphasis here on the “the performance potential of the material” is particularly noteworthy, along with his call to ask “How might a play have worked on stage?” (243). Making use of a late sixth-century vase, for example, Wright suggests that the chorus in Aeschylus’ Daughters of Nereus may have appeared “as if on dolphin-back” (250). He also thinks that the transformation of Tereus into a hoopoe may have been staged in Sophocles’ Tereus (251-53).

These volumes should have broad appeal. All will find Wright’s narratives highly readable and lucid. Specialists will want to engage with Wright’s working principles, as well as with his claims about the implications for our understanding of the tragic genre. Classicists without expertise in tragedy will find this work a convenient and approachable guide, although they will need another edition for translations of many fragments. Readers without classical training will also find in these volumes an accessible introduction to the subject.

*NECJ* 46.1

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P. J. Finglass, ed., trans., comm.,
_Sophocles: Oedipus the King_.


P. J. Finglass provides an exhaustive and detailed commentary on one of Sophocles’ most celebrated plays, one that Aristotle favored. This commentary follows the author’s dramatic commentaries on Sophocles’ _Electra_ (2007) and _Ajax_ (2011). Finglass states that there has been no new critical edition of _OR_ with introduction and critical commentary since 1883, and aims to fill this daunting gap with his book. As has been shown in his previous commentaries, Finglass is as careful in his discussions as he is in his textual editing. Even in his disagreements of interpretation or textual choice he keeps an open mind and evaluates every interpretative or textual choice anew. Although he offers his views from every angle, he does not state them as categorical, but allows for the validity of competing opinions. His choice to provide a fairly literal translation for the sentences or phrases he discusses, which amounts in fact to the entire play, is welcome. This approach is helpful to the student who still needs help in understanding the text before embarking on interpretation. Unlike his previous commentaries, here the discussion of single words is included in the larger segment being examined. His consideration of language and style is closely interwoven with analysis of staging and production. Finglass’ goal in this commentary is to take us closer to the text of the play used in its first performance. Although we cannot know how close he comes, the journey is worthwhile.

The introduction to the commentary consists of five parts. In the first section, which addresses the date of the first performance, Finglass points out that _OR_ is probably the fourth of the seven complete extant plays: _Trachiniae, Antigone, Ajax, OR_. He prefers to date _OR_ in 430s, but would not be surprised if evidence were found placing it in the 440s or 420s. However, Finglass rejects using the plague described in the play as a guiding factor for dating the play to the 420s, as claimed by Dindorf and elaborated by Knox. In ‘Production and Staging,’ Finglass analyzes the assigning of second place to the trilogy which included _OR_ and was most likely performed at the City Dionysia. He states that the formal verdict might not necessarily have reflected public opinion. Although he gives a clear description of the setting
of the scene, a schematic illustration would have been a welcome addition to this section. An overview of entrances and exits made by the characters and chorus follows, as well as the division of the speaking parts between the three available actors.

‘Myth and Originality’ discusses the mythic traditions of the Theban cycle and Sophocles’ treatment of the myth. It examines the Theban cycle as it appears in the Homeric epics; Hesiod; the Epic Cycle; lyric poetry of sixth century BCE; fragments of the mythographers; archaic and classical art (although not well represented there other than Oedipus’ encounter with the Sphinx); Pindar; Aeschylus, who treated Oedipus’ legend in a tetralogy in 467 BCE: Laius, Oedipus Seven against Thebes, and a satyr-play Sphinx, of which only the last part of the trilogy survived; Sophocles, who treated the legend in two plays that survived besides OR, Antigone, and Oedipus at Colonus, performed on different dates; Euripides, who wrote three plays on the legend: Oedipus, written most probably after OR but before Oedipus at Colonus, surviving only in fragments, the extant Phoenician Women of probably 411-09 BCE, and the lost Chrisippus; and lastly the mythic variants of the Theban cycle in ‘Other later dramatic treatments.’

In discussing the originality of the Sophoclean treatment of the Theban cycle, Finglass sees the plague that begins the play and the following scene of supplication as Sophocles’ invention. He suggests that this beginning allows the action to fit into a single day and showcases the city and Oedipus’ place within it. By treating the parricide and incest as events occurring in the past, Sophocles is able to focus on the ideas of discovery and recognition. Although the incest must have been a familiar element in this saga, the way that Sophocles weaves it into the play is unique to him. Finglass posits that Sophocles’ Laius is not said to have transgressed a divine command. He was not ordered not to have a child, but simply told that if he had a child, that child would kill him, which was a divine prediction, not a command. Comparing other extant fragmentary dramatic treatments of the story of Oedipus, Finglass points out Sophocles’ originality.

In the fourth section, Finglass debates the nature of the play itself. Is OR a suppliant drama, a recognition play, a nostos tragedy, a foundling narrative, a work of theodicy, or a tragicomedy? He concludes that it is impossible to categorize the entire play under one rubric, but that the variant possibilities of classification “may suggest the richness of the play, the diversity of its themes and moods” (41). The fifth and last section of the Introduction considers the transmission of text and the play’s celebrity from the fourth century on.

As is customary, the commentary divides the text into the traditional performative parts: Prologue, Parodos, first episode, etc., with further divisions according
to content, when appropriate, giving an ample interpretative analysis or metrical analysis when relevant. The notes are a treasure trove of information on both ancient sources and secondary scholarship. The syntax is commented on in detail.

By Finglass’ admission his text differs substantially in 56 places from the 1992 revised text by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson. Many of those 56 places have major implications for sense and interpretation. He gives the following lines as examples: 162, 175/5, 230, 463/4, 510/11, 611-12, 624, 625, 677, 892-893/4, 906-907/8, 1196/7, 1453, [1524-30]. Here is an example in which I concur: Finglass’ decision to read ἐξ ἄλλης χθονὸς (“is a different person from a different land”) rather than Vauvilliers’s emendation ἢ ᾿ξ ἄλλης χθονὸς (“another of you, or a foreigner”) followed by Lloyd-Jones/Wilson is indeed preferable since Oedipus has already asked the Thebans to identify Laius’ killer from amongst them, and there is no need to repeat the request. I found no case with which I would necessarily be at odds with Finglass regarding the reading and the sense of his preferences.

NECJ 46.1

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John Lombardini,
The Politics of Socratic Humor.


Lombardini argues that “we can think about the depictions of Socratic humor we find in Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and the Cynics as part of a larger debate, one that encompasses both the nature of Socratic humor and its political significance, as well as the broader questions of the ethics and politics of humor during the classical and Hellenistic periods” (8). This Herculean task is made manageable by focusing primarily on whether these authors see something anti-democratic in Socrates’ humor. The material is well organized, intelligently argued, and clearly written. Lombardini’s views will have to be taken into account by anyone concerned with Socratic irony, or with the attitudes of these authors towards Socrates. I restrict my
critical comments to the first two chapters.

In Chapter 1 Lombardini argues that in the *Clouds*, “the Aristophanic Socrates deploys mockery in order to demonstrate his superiority over ordinary citizens in a way that suggests that those citizens ought not to wield the authority they do in democratic Athens” (45-6). I would add three things to Lombardini’s successful argument.

First, Lombardini does not confront the fact that Socrates’ mockery would be just as troubling from an oligarchic standpoint as from a democratic standpoint. Socrates’ mockery ridicules another’s lack of knowledge (37) or intellectual incompetence (38). If there is a political attitude evinced in such mockery, we should call it “epistemocracy,” which is just as troubling to an oligarchy based on economic class as to a democracy based on citizenship.

Second, Aristophanes is more of an “equal opportunity offender” than Lombardini presents him. Politics is dangerous ground for a comedian, especially if you are trying to win a competition in comedy. Socrates is the butt of Aristophanes’ humor because there is something about him that is ridiculous to supporters of oligarchy as well as democracy. What oligarchs and democrats can agree on is this: those egghead intellectuals are utterly ridiculous because they think that they’re smarter than everybody else, and that they can invent new nomoi that are superior to our shared traditional nomoi, but in fact they only spew absurdities and blasphemies.

Third, although Lombardini is correct to see epistemic elitism in Socrates’ humor, which is adopted briefly by Strepsiades, Lombardini misses something important. For example, at 1249-51 Strepsiades insults the grammatical intelligence of his first creditor by mocking his use of “kardopos” rather than “kardopê” to refer to a kneading trough. This is a version of the chicken joke at 659-66 where Socrates insists on the feminine alektruaina for a hen. What Lombardini has missed is that these jokes are on Strepsiades and Socrates respectively. The joke is not that alektruaina and kardopê are novel but that they are wrong and they sound wrong to any competent speaker of Greek (cf. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, section 199). With grammatical gender, “nomos pantôn basileus” (Custom is the king of all; Herodotus 3.38.4, attributed to Pindar). In other words, the joke isn’t about political authority, rather the joke is about those who would set themselves above traditional nomoi (including grammatical nomoi) by questioning them and thinking that they can improve on them. The audience laughs because they know that alektruaina and kardopê are pedantic and wrong, and that Strepsiades’ rationalizations for not paying his debts will fail when his creditors sue him in court.

In Chapter 2 Lombardini focuses on Socratic irony (and eirôneia) in Plato. The
problem for Lombardini's argument is that in the entire Platonic corpus, there isn't a single unambiguous example of either.

An unambiguous example of irony and eirôneia is Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 687-90, where Agamemnon tells Clytemnestra how painful it is for a father to send his daughter to another man's house. In the preceding 686 lines Euripides unambiguously established (1) Agamemnon's pretended meaning (he will marry Iphigeneia to Achilles), (2) Agamemnon's hidden meaning (he will sacrifice Iphigeneia, sending her to the house of Hades), and (3) Agamemnon's deliberate pretense to get Iphigeneia to Aulis. There is no Socratic statement in the entire Platonic corpus that unambiguously establishes all three elements like this.

Lombardini's main argument for Socratic irony relies on three passages. First, why does Socrates ask Anytus if he thinks that sophists like Protagoras are mad (*mainesthai, Meno 92a4*)? Perhaps (ironic interpretation) Socrates is pretending to affirm that they ought to send Meno to the sophists because they will make him a good man—although Socrates never actually says any such thing. But perhaps (non-ironic interpretation) Socrates is going along with (a) Anytus' earlier claim that if they wanted Meno to be a doctor, then they ought to send him to those who profess to be expert doctors, and who charge a fee for teaching others to be expert doctors (90d), and (b) the fact that the only ones who fit this bill for virtue are the sophists (91b). Socrates often sincerely follows a line of reasoning through to its conclusion: if reasonable assertions lead to an unreasonable conclusion, then it might be worth re-thinking those initially reasonable assertions.

Second, why does Socrates claim to be enthusiastic at *Phaedrus* 238c9-d3, 241e1-5, and 234d? Perhaps (ironic interpretation) Socrates is lying. But perhaps (non-ironic interpretation) Socrates is telling the truth because Plato wants to portray him as a role model. We may admire someone who is insensible to some of the forces that sway us, but we won't emulate them if we think they simply lack a vulnerability we possess. By admitting that he feels the passions we feel—though without being mastered by them — we can hope to approach his equanimity. Plato often adds these kinds of humanizing moments into his dialogues (e.g. *Charmides* 155d3-4; *Protagoras* 328d4-5, 339d10-e6; *Euthydemus* 301a2, 303a4-5, 303b7-c3; *Ion* 535d1-9). Of course, one might claim that all these passages are examples of irony, but then we have given up evidence-based interpretation for a priori dogma.

Finally, Lombardini appeals to Socrates' treatment of Euthyphro (84-85). Perhaps (ironic interpretation) Socrates presumptuously assumes that Euthyphro's avowals of knowledge are false, but insincerely praises him to laugh at him. But perhaps (non-ironic interpretation) Socrates' disavowal of knowledge entails that
he is in no position to contradict Euthyphro’s avowals of knowledge without giving him a fair opportunity to prove himself.

By interpreting Socrates ironically, Lombardini sees Socrates as indulging in “hierarchical positioning” (91). I think this is a profound misunderstanding. Plato’s Socrates develops a form of dialogue that allows non-experts to put self-avowed experts to a fair test. Socrates shows that this form of dialogue may be used on our political leaders (e.g. *Apology* 21b-d, *Meno* 93b-94e). Politically, Socrates favors epistemocracy, which is neutral with respect to oligarchy and democracy. If only a few are knowledgeable, then Socrates would say that they should rule; if the many are knowledgeable (which the gadfly analogy indicates he would prefer), then Socrates would support democracy.

NECJ 46.1

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Frank L. Holt,

*The Treasures of Alexander the Great: How One Man’s Wealth Shaped the World.*


How rich was Alexander III of Macedon? Did he have a financial plan to administer his empire? Did his release of massive numbers of gold and silver coins minted from the Persian bullion he captured fundamentally transform the economy of the ancient world? Was Alexander a kind of prototype CEO? These are some of the questions Frank Holt poses and answers in his fascinating, entertaining, and convincing book *The Treasures of Alexander the Great: How One Man’s Wealth Shaped the World* (Oxford 2016).

In Chapter 1 “Introduction,” Holt explains the problem of quantifying Alexander’s wealth. He rightly argues that Alexander’s wealth cannot be quantified simply on the basis of coins and bullion (as many scholars have done in the past). We
need to take into account slaves, livestock, real estate, etc. (8). The ancient sources present other problems. None of them were interested in comprehensive statistics, though they do provide useful numbers—even if these were usually rounded off, whether they referred to battle casualties or treasure. But we should not despair, Holt claims. Non-statistical inferences can be made that couple common sense and an awareness of the biases in the sample. In Appendices 2 and 3, Holt provides a thorough chronological summary of all the available data for Alexander’s assets and expenditures. What can that chronologically organized data tell us about Alexander’s finances and his reign?

First, as Holt shows in Chapter 2, “Alexander the Poor?,” Alexander was never really poor or bankrupt, either at the beginning of his reign or at any other time, as later sources such as Plutarch (Life of Alexander 15.2), Arrian (Anabasis 7.9.6), and Curtius Rufus (History of Alexander 10.2.23–24) report. Rather Alexander faced cyclical cash flow problems both at his succession and later on. Plutarch and other writers exaggerated Alexander’s poverty at the beginning of his reign as part of a rags to riches story meant to elevate Alexander’s achievements in contrast to those of both Philip II and (more interestingly) the Persian King Darius III, to make moral distinctions between the Greeks and the Persians (27–32). Alexander’s poverty was rhetorical not real.

Onesicritus’ claim (reported in Plutarch, Alexander 15.1; Moralia 327e) that Alexander owed 200 talents at the beginning of the war against Persia reflects short-term loans meant to cover Alexander’s imminent military advance and should be seen against the background of the clear evidence for the wealth of the ruling dynasty. That wealth is strikingly exemplified by the excavated royal Macedonian tombs, especially the (controversially-attributed) tomb of Philip II.

If Alexander was never really poor, how rich was he and how did he become the world’s wealthiest man? In Chapters 3 and 4, Holt follows Alexander on his conquests from his early post-accession wars in the Balkans in 336 BCE to his death in Babylon in 323 BCE. He tallies up all the wealth Alexander acquired, including loot, slaves, art work, tribute, voluntary contributions (syntaxis), plunder from captured camps, private wealth, livestock, (usefully detailed in Appendix 2, “Summary of Reported Assets”) and also expenses, such as the creation of bronze statues of the companions (hetairoi) who died at the Granicus River battle in 334 and welfare benefits given to the families of the fallen (Appendix 3, “Summary of Reported Debits”). Quantifying all of the “assets” Alexander acquired is impossible; as Holt writes, “no accurate accounting is possible of the human and ecological costs of Alexander’s conquests” (66).
We can, however, arrive at a more accurate estimate of the wealth Alexander got from the captured Persian treasuries. In Chapter 4, “Reciting the Sword’s Prayer,” Holt adds up the riches that Alexander took from the Persian repositories from Sardis to Persepolis and beyond. The evidence supports a low estimate of 180,000 talents or c. 1.08 billion drachma for the precious metals Alexander took from Darius’ stores (91). The estimate does not include all of the wealth plundered by Alexander and his army in the forms of lands, slaves, jewelry, gemstones, furnishings, dyed cloths, artwork, spices, and other luxury goods. There was in fact a pattern to Alexander’s acquisition of this great wealth. From 336-330 Alexander and his men absorbed the concentrated wealth of teeming cities and large vanquished armies, as well as rural populations. From 329 to 323 the spoils of war consisted of a greater proportion of perishable goods (slaves, cattle, horses, elephants) (94).

What did Alexander do with all of his immense wealth? To a large extent Alexander deployed his wealth as an extension of his power and personality (95). Lots of money was given to individuals. But much was also spent on athletic competitions (at least 23 during his reign), entertainment for Alexander and his court, expensive feasts, religious ceremonies, temples, burials and funerals, cities, resettlements, forts, and outposts, ships, pay, and bonuses for his armies. Cataloguing these priorities (as Holt does in Appendix 3) is illuminating. But establishing exactly how much Alexander paid out annually is impossible since there are too many variables among the costs. Some scholars have argued that by 323 Alexander was facing a looming financial crisis. But Holt argues convincingly that at his death Alexander’s financial coffers were still well stocked (117).

Before his death the problem was not that Alexander was running out of money. Rather the king was essentially either a poor financial manager or, more likely, in my view, really wasn’t very interested in financial management. Otherwise Alexander would not have been shocked (as he clearly was) to find out when he got back to Susa in 324 that his soldiers (mostly the veterans) were at least 9870 talents in debt.

Another indication of Alexander’s lack of interest in finances was letting his dishonest royal treasurer Harpalus run amuck in Babylon and then away to Athens when Alexander inconveniently returned from India. Harpalus’ replacement Antimenes was not as venal as Harpalus, but he did make a profit supplying people who had to travel along the empire’s roads. Another one of Alexander’s replacement treasurers, Cleomenes in Egypt, set himself up to profit from a number of businesses, including the supply of grain to a famine-prone Mediterranean world. Managing the managers of his resources was not a top priority for the Macedonian king (141), and Alexander’s successors, the would-be Alexanders, were left to fight each other
over ever diminishing pots of Alexander’s wealth.

If Alexander was not the ideal CEO of Alexander Inc. or the visionary venture capitalist that some recent writers have made him out to be, what was he? Was he anything more than a plunderer? Was Droysen nevertheless right that Alexander’s monetization of the plundered Persian treasures enriched his enemies by defeating them?

The numismatic evidence suggests that Alexander followed Philip’s monetary policies and only introduced his own signature coinage after the battle of Issus in 333. In fact, it appears that Alexander did not put into circulation (through minting coins) most of the bullion he captured from the Persian treasuries—in which case the argument for Alexander essentially transforming the economy of the ancient world disappears.

A profusion of coin hoards also cannot be used as proxy evidence for increased affluence; rather the hoards are indicators of dangerous times (170). Alexander and his successors did mint an incredible number of coins but not equal to the stockpiles of precious metals plundered in Persia. If Alexander affected the ancient economy it was largely by constraint, i.e., by plunder, tribute, taxation, and forced labor, not by encouraging the free market (176). To the extent that Alexander monetized his treasures it was to weaponize his wealth. “The man at the end of history’s most extraordinary money trail carried a sarissa and a copy of the Iliad, not a briefcase and The Wall Street Journal” (177).

So Alexander was not the world’s greatest CEO or a diligent bean counter. Though he had vision for the future of his world empire—harmony and fellowship of rule between the Greeks and the Persians—at heart Alexander was a warrior. He conquered to live. Wealth was not the objective of his conquests; it was a by-product. The goal was conquest itself. It was what he did; it was who he was.

It is hard to find anything new to say or write about Alexander. Frank Holt has managed to do so in a book that is a delight to read. Scholars will mint articles from his appendices; everyone will treasure the book’s brisk pace and abundance of wit. Of course, there will be debate and counter-attacks, as there always are when the subject is history’s greatest warrior. Alexander the CEO is dead. Long live the new king, whoever he may be.

NECJ 46.1

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It is difficult to overstate the enormous influence and readership that the *Aeneid* has enjoyed across time and space. Yet from the beginning certain parts of the poem have had more readers than others: witness Ovid’s assertion that the Dido episode was the *Aeneid’s* most read section (*Tr.* 2.533–6). In many present-day Latin classrooms, Dido’s reign of popularity persists. More generally, the first half of the *Aeneid* often gets the lion’s share of the attention. If the current AP Latin curriculum and the numerous student commentaries on parts or all of the first half of the poem are any indication, many students barely make it out of the underworld of Book 6, if they even make it that far.

Into this situation comes James O’Hara’s terrific commentary on *Aeneid* 8 for the Focus Vergil *Aeneid* Commentaries series (2008–). One of the many virtues of the series is that, when complete, its twelve single-book commentaries will provide new options across the entire epic for readers and instructors. These single-book commentaries will be complemented by a two-volume set on *Aeneid* 1–6 (2013) and *Aeneid* 7–12 (planned) aimed at advanced students, all available at reasonable list prices. O’Hara’s is the first volume on the second half of the poem to reach publication. Like the other single-book commentaries in the series, it is intended “for use at the intermediate level of Latin or higher, though it may have something to offer to anyone” (vii). This is O’Hara’s second contribution to the series, following his excellent commentary on Book 4 (2011). O’Hara’s commentary on Book 8 is equally strong. As one would expect, L. M. Fratantuono and R. A. Smith’s scholarly commentary on *Aeneid* 8 for Brill, likewise published in 2018, often offers more extensive analyses within its 812 pages. Yet O’Hara’s slender volume also provides learned discussion and up-to-date references that will prove useful for students and specialists alike.

The commentary begins with a general introduction to Vergil and the *Aeneid* by series co-editor Randall Ganiban, whose plentiful footnotes point to a great deal
of fundamental Vergilian scholarship. As reviewers of other volumes in the series have observed, these references, as well as those throughout the commentary, largely ignore scholarship that is not in English; presumably this choice reflects that the series’ primary audience is anglophone students. Next O’Hara offers an introduction to Book 8, advocating for it as the “most Roman book” and the book most concerned with history and with the city of Rome (12). His engaging essay summarizes Book 8, situates it in the context of the epic as a whole, and points to its major intertextual relationships, including with Homer, Apollonius of Rhodes, Ennius, and the early books of Livy. Two maps follow. The map of Rome on page 18 is nicely annotated, but it is on a topographical layer that unfortunately lacks definition and clarity. The text of Aeneid 8 is based with a few exceptions on F. A. Hirtzel’s OCT (1900). In keeping with the rest of the series, the Latin text and commentary are presented on the same page. Appendices on “Vergil’s Meter” and on “Stylistic Terms”, a bibliography, and a vocabulary adapted from J. Tetlow’s 1893 commentary on Book 8 follow.

The reader has a masterful companion to Aeneid 8 in O’Hara’s notes, which build upon T. E. Page (1900). A representative example of O’Hara’s expert guidance is his comment introducing verses 18–35, Aeneas’ first appearance in Book 8, in which the hero suffers from doubt and sleeplessness. After a brief summary of the passage, O’Hara points to a variety of inter- and intratextual parallels: Dido in Book 4, Aeneas’ hesitation before killing Turnus at the close of the Aeneid, Ariadne in Catullus 64, and Medea in Apollonius’ Argonautica as well as possibly in Varro of Atax’s translation of the latter work. In addition, he cites relevant discussions in R. O. A. M. Lyne’s Further Voices in Vergil’s Aeneid (1987) and J. Reed’s Virgil’s Gaze (2007), all in a brief paragraph. O’Hara’s discussion of verses 18–35 is typical of how his style strikes the right balance by supporting students with summary and context, while also offering information useful for a variety of readers.

Balance is likewise an apt term for O’Hara’s treatments of the most famous episodes in Book 8: Hercules and Cacus, Aeneas’ tour of the future site of Rome, and the shield of Aeneas. For these sections O’Hara offers extended introductory notes, with the longest running nearly three pages, that point readers to literary and historical links and review various divergent scholarly interpretations without taking an explicit position. In these notes and throughout the commentary, O’Hara directs readers to a great deal of important scholarship published as recently as 2018. O’Hara’s notes also reflect his own scholarly interests with their frequent discussion of etymologies, prophecies, and narrative inconsistencies. But the topics of the commentary are wide-ranging, as a reference to Harry Potter demonstrates (102).

Another feature that characterizes O’Hara’s approach is his rather sparing use
of English translation in his notes. He instead often favors explaining the structure of Vergil’s Latin. For example, in his note on Evander’s description of the ruins of Cacus’ cave at verses 190–2, O’Hara acknowledges that it is “challenging Latin” (46) before clearly laying out the construction of the sentence with limited English glosses. O’Hara’s method contrasts with Page, who provides a translation of most of the passage. It also differs from K. Maclennan’s 2017 commentary on Aeneid 8 for Bloomsbury Academic, likewise aimed at students, which gives a full translation of all three lines. Instructors who prefer their students to spend more time thinking with the Latin will likely find O’Hara’s method quite attractive.

Although I have not yet had the opportunity to teach with O’Hara’s commentary, I read verses 608–25, in which Venus brings Aeneas’ armor, with a group of volunteer undergraduates. These students had all taken an Aeneid course in the past and were at least in their fifth semester of Latin. The students expressed appreciation for the running commentary format and found O’Hara’s notes thorough without being overwhelming. They also responded to the dashes of humor, especially the comment on Venus’ amplexus at 615: “Aeneas finally gets a hug.” It is worth emphasizing that O’Hara’s notes do not provide as much hand-holding as some commentaries aimed at intermediate students. In the preface O’Hara mentions that he taught drafts of the commentary in a fifth-semester course (ix). The fifth semester strikes me as the level at which this commentary would be perfect, although it certainly would also work in more advanced courses. In addition, I can see it succeeding in an earlier intermediate course, as long as the experiences and abilities of a given group of students is considered. Indeed, many high-achieving intermediate students will surely be inspired by O’Hara’s erudite notes in a way that few student commentaries can achieve. In sum, O’Hara has produced an excellent commentary, one that not just students, but everyone interested in Vergil will find valuable.

NECJ 46.1

Micah Myers
Kenyon College
Peter Heather,  
*Rome Resurgent: War and Empire in the Age of Justinian.*


Peter Heather has distinguished himself as the rare scholar capable of writing works that are both accessible to general audiences and original scholarly contributions. Having previously analyzed the fall of the western Roman empire and the history of Europe in the first millennium in this fashion, Heather’s latest dual-audience volume turns to the military history of the reign of the emperor Justinian. Heather’s central question is the character of Justinian and his reign, and he aims to place the emperor on a spectrum between “romantic visionary” and disastrous adventurist (7–9). In the process, Heather foregrounds two questions: did Justinian have a master plan for reconquering the west, and were his conquests ultimately worthwhile from an imperial-economic perspective?

The introduction quickly establishes these questions before moving on to assess our principal source for Justinian’s reign, Prokopios of Kaisareia. A student of imperial panegyric, Heather is refreshingly dismissive of the supposed problems surrounding the differing tones of Prokopios’ three works, especially between the invective of the *Secret History* and the panegyric of the *Buildings.*

The first chapter surveys the ideological background of Roman imperialism in late antiquity. Heather argues that, after Constantine, the Roman state viewed itself as a divinely sanctioned civilizing force, whose mandate to rule was predicated on its religious and cultural superiority to neighboring peoples and states. This self-understanding was closely linked to the divine status of the emperor, whose legitimacy was conceived of in almost entirely religious terms and reified through the fulfillment of his “civilizing mission” (Heather’s phrase) by means of military victory.

The second chapter explores the tactical and administrative implications of the late Roman state’s rapid and significant militarization beginning in the tetrarchic period. The chapter is broken into two parts: a survey of the evolving structures, equipment, and strategies of the new-model Roman armies of late antiquity, and an assessment of the implications of these changes for the administrative apparatus of the Roman state. In particular, Heather argues that the fiscal and administrative
evolution of the late Roman state reoriented the careers of local elites away from town councils towards the central administration.

Chapter Three turns to the question of imperial politics in New Rome from Zeno to Justinian. Heather here puts elements of the previous two chapters into motion to reconstruct the realities of imperial governance. For Heather, the emperor’s position was always precarious and all major decisions, especially decisions related to dynasty and succession, could only be taken at moments when the regime possessed an excess of political capital. Hence the failure of Anastasius to name any of his nephews as his heir was the result of the unpopularity of his religious policies and his weakness in the face of Vitalian’s revolt. Heather never develops a systematic model for imperial politics in the capital, though the people and administration are clearly marked as unimportant, while the military and, to a much lesser extent, the Church are given the most prominence. His reconstruction, moreover, fails to bridge the gap between the theory of the divinely sanctioned emperor presented in Chapter One and the political weakness of individual emperors in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four sets the stage for the reconquests of Justinian by discussing the emperor’s early attempts to win legitimacy through religious policies, legal reform, and, above all, military victory against Persia. It was the failure of this last that Heather argues was primarily responsible for the Nika Revolt. In many ways, Heather sees the Nika Revolt as the defining moment in Justinian’s reign; it was the nadir of his imperial legitimacy and primary motivation for the North African campaign and thus the campaigns that followed.

Chapters Five through Nine are given over to a survey of Justinian’s wars and are the strongest chapters in the volume. Heather shines as a military historian, reframing Prokopios’ information to clarify the strategic and tactical implications of Belisarios’ generalship, while offering compelling analyses of why the Romans were able to win their impressive and improbable victories over the Vandals and Goths, which he convincingly argues were the result of ad hoc decision-making rather than a grand strategy.

Even readers intimately familiar with Prokopios’ narrative will find much to appreciate here. Heather begins his accounts of the Vandal and Gothic wars with surveys of their fifth-century histories. This background informs the main narrative, explaining phenomena as diverse as the brittleness of the Vandal military and the strategic logic underpinning Belisarios’ advance from Rome to Ravenna. In the same vein, Heather demonstrates the critical role that elite field army units played in Justinian’s campaigns, keeping a close eye not just on the quantity, but also the quality of soldiers deployed. The result makes clear sense of the sometimes jumbled
picture that emerges from Prokopios’ narrative. Finally, Heather rehabilitates Justinian’s response to the end of the Eternal Peace in 540, demonstrating the logic behind allowing Khusrow to wear himself out in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus, rather than risking a single climactic battle.

Chapter Ten completes the narrative of Justinian’s reign and briefly surveys the subsequent history of the reconquered territories. The final chapter continues the narrative down to the Islamic conquest and assesses the implications of Justinian’s reign for the fate of the eastern Roman empire in the seventh century. Heather concludes that the reconquests were a net gain for the eastern empire, persisting long enough to allow Constantinople to recoup its initial investment, and too far separated from the seventh century to be blamed for the loss of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria to the Persians and then the Arabs.

Ultimately, Rome Resurgent is a mixed bag. Noticeably shorter than Heather’s other works, the volume sits uncomfortably between its intended audiences. Moments of potential insight, such as reading the failure of peace negotiations with Persia in 525 as Justinian’s attempt to undermine Anastasius’ nephew Hypatios, are left underdeveloped. Meanwhile the notes rely too heavily on the Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, which is neither sufficient to satisfy scholars nor accessible to a popular audience. There are also some surprising gaps in the bibliography, ranging from Philip Rance’s work on the Battle of Taginae to Peter Bell’s monograph on conflict and ideology in the Justinianic empire. Heather moreover fails to advance a coherent interpretation of Prokopios’ agenda, and makes no meaningful attempt at source-criticism for authors such as Agathias and Corippus, who come to prominence in the later chapters after the end of Prokopios’ narrative. Finally, there is a fundamental disconnect at the heart of Heather’s reconstruction of imperial politics; he places tremendous emphasis on a narrowly defined concept of legitimacy resting on the twin pillars of victory and religion, but never makes clear who assessed imperial legitimacy. This reductive view of imperial politics is exacerbated by his depiction of the populace of Constantinople as a chorus-for-hire, existing only to be stage-managed by the chariot factions in return for palace bribes.

These unresolved issues, however, should not obscure the fact that Heather’s is now the most coherent and complete overview of Justinian’s wars and an essential companion to Prokopios’ treatment of the same topic.

NECJ 46.1

Marion Kruse
University of Cincinnati
Jesse Weiner, Benjamin Eldon Stevens, and Brett M. Rogers, eds., *Frankenstein and Its Classics: The Modern Prometheus from Antiquity to Science Fiction.*


*Frankenstein and Its Classics* comprises the first essay collection devoted entirely to classical receptions in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s novel. As the editors note in their refreshingly jargon-free Introduction, in addition to drawing on the myth of Prometheus, *Frankenstein* engages with ancient authors such as Lucretius, Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, and Apuleius, while Plutarch’s *Lives* provides “the single most direct classical influence on the Creature himself” (5). The collection aims to investigate both the nature of what it means to be human and the importance of ethics in our modern technological world, especially as sophisticated and potentially unfriendly AI increasingly become a reality.

The editors divide the collection into two well-balanced parts, each comprising six essays. Part One, “Promethean Heat,” explores the novel’s “engagement with the past,” particularly how Shelley drew from Greco-Roman antiquity (14). Genevieve Lively, in “Patchwork Paratexts and Monstrous Metapoetics,” argues that George Sandys’s 1632 edition of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, a crucial and highly influential “paratext” with a mixture of translation, commentary, and illustration, helped shape Shelley’s reception of Ovid. Lively suggests that Shelley drew on Sandys’ versions of Prometheus’ creation of humankind and of the earth-born giants, as well as on the illustrations of these episodes, in developing her particular description of the Creature with his “giant size and ghastly appearance” (39).

Of particular interest in Part One may be Martin Priestman’s contribution, “Prometheus and Dr. Darwin’s Vermicelli,” which he begins by noting the differences in how the Edison Studios’ and James Whale’s *Frankenstein* films depict the “spark of being”: the former with “alchemical fluids” and the latter with electricity (43), neither of which has a clear basis in Shelley, although she was indisputably familiar with galvinism. Priestman then investigates the possible origins for Shelley’s animating “spark,” in a discussion ranging across Hesiodic, Aeschylean, and Ovidian versions of Prometheus, their influence on scientist Erasmus Darwin, and Darwin’s
influence on *Frankenstein*. Shelley, familiar with Darwin’s works, refers to his “vermicelli experiment,” writing that he “preserved a piece of vermicelli [worm] in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion” (50). Whether Shelley recollected the experiment accurately or not, the account of spontaneous generation has antecedents in Lucretius and Ovid, and Shelley, like Darwin, adopted the concepts of “heat” and “moisture” as essential to creation (54).

In “The Politics of Revivification in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and *Frankenstein*,” Andrew M. McClellan takes another viewpoint on “the spark that generates life,” examining Lucan’s extensive necromancy scene (6.413-830) in relation to Victor Frankenstein’s creation of life. McClellan argues that Shelley’s novel, like Lucan’s poem, is set against the backdrop of revolution—in this case, the French Revolution—and that the reanimated corpses in each case may be taken as allegories for the states destroyed and reborn out of civil war. Suzanne L. Barnett’s “Romantic Prometheis and the Molding of *Frankenstein*” discusses Promethean allusions in other Romantic-era authors who influenced or were influenced by Shelley, including John Frank Newton, Percy Bysshe Shelley, the aforementioned Erasmus Darwin, Goethe, and William Godwin.

Also in Part One, David A. Gapp’s “Why the ‘Year without a Summer’?” provides a scientific look at what caused the “dramatic atmospheric backdrop” for the creation of Shelley’s story, reminding us that the cataclysmic, record-breaking, climate-altering eruption of Indonesia’s Mt. Tambora in April of 1915 resulted in an exceptionally cold, dreary, and stormy year in Western Europe (91). Switzerland, where Shelley and her companions were gathered, suffered incessant rain that confined them to the house for days at a time, while ruined crops resulted in “famine-plagued, displaced, and diseased humanity” in the surrounding areas (99). Closing out Part One, Matthew Gumpert’s “The Sublime Monster: *Frankenstein*, or The Modern Pandora” draws an extensive comparison between Victor Frankenstein’s process and Hesiod’s account of Pandora’s creation, suggesting that the Creature could be viewed in some ways not as blasphemous but as miraculous.

Part Two, “Hideous Progeny,” focuses on *Frankenstein*’s role in “mediating the reception” of classical literature in subsequent works of art and literature, including cinema (16). Opening this section, Benjamin Eldon Stevens’ “Cupid and Psyche in *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley’s Apuleian Science Fiction?” argues that Shelley draws on and modifies Apuleius’s “Cupid and Psyche” to “emphasize darker themes of fragmented personhood and frustrated love” (16). Focusing on what he calls the ‘bedroom tableau’in reference to the scene in which Victor discovers on his wedding night that the Creature has murdered his new bride, Elizabeth, Stevens suggests
that this and other bedroom tableaux in *Frankenstein* draw on a tradition of such scenes reaching back to classical antiquity, especially the episode in Apuleius’ “Cupid and Psyche” when Psyche approaches her as-yet-unseen, sleeping husband with the intent to kill him. Some of Steven’s comparisons in this essay seem stretched, but his speculations are engrossing and, as he admits, his “readings are provisional and raise further questions” (138).

In “Frankenstein, Aristotle, and the Wisdom of Lucretius,” Carl A. Rubino briefly discusses how *Frankenstein* engages with the ethical philosophy of Aristotle and the atomic philosophy of Lucretius. Nese Devenot’s “Timothy Leary and the Psychodynamics of Stealing Fire,” which focuses on Leary’s autobiography *High Priest*, explains that “psychedelic activist” Leary, who identified as a modern-day Promethean figure, believed himself to be disseminating “a mind-altering technology to humanity for the democratic purpose of restoring individual agency and self-determination” (153-4). Leary therefore “blamed the ‘Frankenstein myth’ for reinforcing a resistance to novel experimentation within the wider culture” (154).

Working to fight against this reading of *Frankenstein*, Leary, aligning himself with Victor, “felt sure of his unique significance within the history of science” as he intentionally thwarted the conservative, conventional status quo (157).

The rest of Part Two turns toward cinematic receptions of Shelley’s novel. Jesse Weiner’s “Frankenfilm: Classical Monstrosity in Bill Morrison’s *Spark of Being*” does not require the reader to have seen Morrison’s 2010 film adaptation of the novel in order to understand and appreciate it. Splicing together frames from archival film stock including Frank Hurley’s original footage of Shackleton’s Antarctic expedition, Morrison’s final product forms a close adaptation of *Frankenstein* while being itself a “discordant assemblage of parts” like the Creature itself (171), allowing for a meditation on hybridity and constructions of monstrosity that draws on classical sources including Empedocles, Lucretius, and Isidore. In “Alex Garland’s *Ex Machina* or The Modern Epimetheus,” Emma Hammond demonstrates that Garland’s film, so readily compared to *Frankenstein* from the moment of its 2015 release, owes at least as great a debt to Hesiod’s Pandora stories. Here, rather than pointing to yet another Prometheus-figure, Hammond suggests that *Ex Machina*’s AI creator, Nathan, despite explicitly referring to “his own creation process as Promethean” (193), more resembles Epimetheus in his lack of foresight as to the ramifications of having Ava, his gynoid AI, pass the Turing test. Moreover, whereas the Creature’s “inhuman appearance” allows him to only partially pass an equivalent of the Turing test (193), both Pandora and Ava pass theirs, to the detriment of mankind.

The final essay, Brett M. Rogers’ “The Postmodern Prometheus and Posthuman
Reproductions in Science Fiction,” poses a number of questions regarding the ongoing shifts in humankind’s relationship with technology, principally the question of how biological reproduction can be complicated by technoscience, requiring significant shifts in determining the definitions and boundaries of what is ‘human.’ Rogers takes as examples Ridley Scott’s *Prometheus* and the comics series *Ody-C*, both of which present disturbing technoscientific takes on pregnancy: the former with its hybrid human-alien semen introduced into an unwitting female crew member, the latter with the annihilation of males and the creation of an entirely new sex.

*Frankenstein and Its Classics* should appeal not only to classicists and other academics but to members of the general public interested in learning more about the reception of classical literature in Shelley’s novel as well as about the continuing influence of *Frankenstein* and its classical antecedents on later works. The volume’s essays complement each other extremely well, forming a highly coherent discussion about the nature of the ‘human.’ Throughout the collection, the authors draw comparisons with other ‘artificial’ beings from classical literature, such as Pandora, Talos, and Pygmalion’s statue. (This book came out prior to Adrienne Mayor’s 2018 *Gods and Robots*, which focuses on artificial life as envisioned in antiquity.) As the editors say, “For two centuries now, *Frankenstein* has served as an important link between antiquity and modernity, suggesting that ongoing discussions of contemporary issues in science, society, technology, and more will continue to be enriched by ancient materials” (14). As in their previous collaborations, the editors have produced an insightful and engaging volume highlighting the importance of Greco-Roman antiquity to later art and literature.

*NECJ* 46.1

Debbie Felton

University of Massachusetts Amherst
This aptly titled volume contains seventeen essays by a variety of authors, plus a brief introduction and conclusion by the editors, and a foreword by Mary Beard: all discuss the state of Classics in education in settings located mostly in the United Kingdom, but also in Brazil, mainland Europe, South Africa, and Australia. One essay describes and assesses the role of communicative approaches to teaching Latin in schools in the United States. As the editors point out in their conclusion, the purpose of this book is to demonstrate that exciting approaches to classical subjects are resulting in welcome reception of the discipline among students and the wider public, and not a moment too soon; the precipitous decline in the numbers of students taking Latin and ancient Greek in the UK (46,000 in 1968; 10,000 in 2016) is a call for action that has been answered by these approaches, though the crisis has not yet ended.

The essays fall into broad categories denoted by the sections of the book: (1) how education policy affected the provision of Classics in schools; (2) how focus upon delivery of the subject to all students changes the discipline; and (3) how the future of Classics is taking form. In the first section Steven Hunt, one of the foremost writers on Latin pedagogy in the UK, contributes two essays, one at the beginning that provides the history of UK educational policy and its conflicting views of Classics, both as a discipline that can help students achieve academically, and as a discipline that is out of step with academic subjects that encourage diversity and globalism. The ever-shifting nature of politics makes it difficult to predict where governmental policy will position our field, but he demonstrates the tug-of-war playing out in the last few decades between these two perspectives. At the end of this section on social policies, Hunt provides his observation of what he saw at a Paideia Living Latin Conference in New York in 2016 and at ACL workshops in 2015 and 2017. He provides a brief summary of the Comprehensible Input approach and describes his own attempts to try it. He asks the questions which many observers echo regarding the extent to which CI methods move students toward reading clas-
sical authors. He raises questions about the materials used in the CI classroom, such as the *novella* that is growing in popularity (103): “is it teaching students how to read Latin … or is it giving just the pretence of reading?” Despite any reservations, however, he concludes that such engaging communicative methods may invigorate the discipline, a consensus that is growing particularly among Latin teachers in many parts of the United States. The other four pieces in this section address the variety of ways that Classics can attract students if methods and approaches are engagingly directed to a local population, as has happened in the UK, Australia, mainland Europe, and Brazil.

In the second section writers delve into the ways that resources and approaches have increased the interest in Latin. Barbara Bell, author of *Minimus*, the popular Latin reader for younger students, discusses the impact her book has had, and other authors also reflect on how that book, in addition to other academic and outreach efforts, have increased Latin enrollments in many places within the UK. Among the recommended approaches in these essays are workshops for teachers to learn more about the field and to exchange ideas, parental involvement in the discipline, Latin clubs for after-school hours, educational trips to interesting sites in the community, non-linguistic classes on civilization for younger students, and opportunities for student creativity to be performed for the larger community. One essay, by Corrie Schumann and Lana Theron, discusses teaching Latin in South African schools and prisons, demonstrating that through the dedication of a few regional organizations, many South Africans have enjoyed taking Latin and classical civilization courses and credit those courses with helping them learn scientific terminologies and prepare other aspects of their professional training.

The third section of the book, “Classics in the Future,” examines the ways that new developments in education and technology are changing the way Classics is learned. Online resources and technology, as James Robson and Emma-Jayne Graham discuss, make possible a variety of open educational platforms where students can engage in self-guided tutorials, pursue a course from beginning to end, watch clever videos about a topic, play games, and analyze information on databases covering everything from literary resources to geography and topography. This reviewer has used many such resources, but had not heard of *Hadrian: The Roamin' Emperor*, and this piece encouraged me to give it a try (my review: a cute and engaging journey viewing Roman sites, learning about Hadrian and his empire, and collecting objects). The next essay by Arlene Homes-Henderson and Kathryn Tempest discusses how Classics is a field that helps students form the skills they need to compete and achieve in the always evolving, global workplace. An interesting suggestion that
emerges from this essay is that university-level Classics departments might consider granting credits for experience in the workplace, a way to apply greater value to the application of the skills we insist our students develop.

Edith Hall, noted and prolific Professor at King’s College London, authors the last essay, “Classics in our Ancestors’ Communities,” and offers a fascinating study of the element of social “class” in our discipline and provides evidence of the social prejudices that have long shaped it. In doing so, Hall provides many illuminating examples of “proletarian” (as they were frequently described) autodidacts and determined scholars who, though often ridiculed by the academic elite, inspired countless others throughout the UK to read, view performances of, and study classical literature. She traces the use of the word “Classics” to show its elitist associations from the beginning, and follows that with copious examples of people who overcame tremendous disadvantages to study ancient literature. Lastly, Hall laments the chasm that has developed between those who promote linguistic knowledge as the defining element of Classics, and those who view studies in translation a viable track within the discipline. She closes the essay with this admonition (259): “As we move forward with Classics today, the battle-lines…which made language acquisition and reading in translation…antithetical rather than intersecting and mutually complementary, need to vanish from our horizons altogether.” We in the United States, with our own causes for concern about the future of our discipline, can gain some valuable insights from this volume.

NECJ 46.1

Teresa Ramsby
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Dear Members of CANE:

When things do not happen in threes, as the saying goes, they seem to happen *en masse*.

In the autumn of 2018, I was rather too aware of the struggles, illnesses, and losses with which so many family, friends, and acquaintances had been endeavoring to cope. But now, in the spring of 2019, while disturbing news of the wider world continues apace, closer to home the theme that keeps emerging is that of unexpected moments of attention and care that change the whole course of a life. And the common thread running through these stories that seem to be collecting into a low-key Woodstock or Lollapalooza of my mind is teaching.

In meetings, I hear of lives set on a never-before-considered path because of a teacher who noticed them, intuited a talent and need for a bit of a nudge, and set them on a course that they are living out to this day. These are not my stories to tell, but here are a couple of other examples.

I like to read during my commute every day (full disclosure: I take the bus). Recently, I have been reading *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex, and the Mind* by the writer, Siri Hustvedt (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016). Lots of heady stuff about the brain. Very good. But it is an essay describing her experience teaching writing at the Payne Whitney Clinic in New York to psychiatric inpatients that set off that musical festival in my own mind again. Hustvedt tells the story of one of her students whose response to a writing assignment she very much admired. “Afterward,” she writes, “I spoke to the student in the hallway and asked him if he had ever thought of becoming a writer. He looked a little surprised. We chatted a bit
about books. He was released, and I didn’t see him again.”

Hardly a moment worthy of recreating for the Hallmark Channel (does that still exist?). But, as Iris Murdoch noted, it is much harder to create interesting good characters than fascinating bad ones.

Nonetheless, five years later, “after I had stopped my work at the hospital,” Hustvedt continues, “I received a package in the mail, opened it, and found a book inside: Street Freak: Money and Madness at Lehman Brothers by Jared Dillian. I opened the volume and read the dedication the writer had scrawled on the title page: ‘To Siri – Thank you for saving my life and helping me to become a writer. Jared’” (115).

Which just goes to show, you never know.

You never know where a rather insignificant-sounding conversation, an impulsive compliment, a kind gesture that demonstrates to someone who didn’t even know they were in need of it that they are seen, are heard, exist, will lead.

A brief moment between an established writer/teacher and a young man in the hospital being treated for bipolar illness can change two lives and through their work many, many more. You never know. One can in no way describe that moment as a relationship in the traditional sense of student and teacher or mentor and mentee, and yet...you just never know.

And, because I am a bit slow, it wasn’t until several days later that I remembered my own story: when I was in high school and struggling, it was my high school Latin teacher that literally saved my life.

I am not nearly as generous as the people around me when it comes to sharing my own story nor is it especially interesting, but it is also not hyperbole that I am employing for rhetorical effect here (hail, Cicero!) simply to make a point. The person who saw me, heard me, and seemed to recognize my existence and my difficulty was my high school Latin teacher. I liked her, but did not feel especially close...you just never know.

And I most definitely did not set out to become a Latin teacher in turn, but here I am.

You just never know.
So, what is Curry rambling on about all this for? Because I am thinking about how much Good there is in so much of what you do that goes unacknowledged and that it is an insult to be asked to quantify or to find a way of fitting into a superficial evaluation system. I am thinking about the potential for Good that exists within all of your classrooms. I am thinking about simple moments between student and teacher that can change the course of a life and for which there will never be a box (please gods, no!) in which to describe them for purposes of promotion, in part because you are unlikely to even know they have occurred and, if you do find out, that knowledge may not come until many years later, and, most importantly, because it really isn't anybody else's business.

And these moments are also very hard to describe in words, if they ever even come to an individual's awareness. I know with all of my being that my Latin teacher saved my life, but I forget. How can I forget something like that? Well, life goes on and you think of other things and you do. You forget. You can't find the words ever or anymore, you forget, but the moment occurred and a life was transformed.

To steal from Leonard Cohen, there is magic afoot in your classrooms, or at least the potential for magic and I would bet that many of you do not even know how much Good you have done. Perhaps the recipients of that Good are, too, unaware, and yet their lives have been transformed.

So, in this season of rebirth and growth, I want to celebrate and thank you for all the intangible Good you do. How do you explain such moments to school boards, deans, and university presidents who want to cut Latin programs and shrink Classics departments? How can the intangible Good you do be called as witness to the value of your work now so carefully measured in test scores, student evaluations, enrollments, and retention? (I am not an expert on Plato, but I don't recall a precise system of measurement for the Platonic Good.) I do not know. But that doesn't mean these moments don't exist. And it doesn't mean that they aren't the absolutely most important thing you do, no matter who knows it.
I know all kinds of teachers transform lives, but it seems I keep hearing about *Latin* teachers transforming lives.

Thank you, E. Scott, for saving mine.

And, thank you, for all the intangible Good you do.

In the face of threats to close programs, to shrink departments, to implement new and more quantitative systems of evaluation that will never be able to “measure” all the growth that can and does occur within the classroom, keep the magic afoot.

Sue Curry, CANE President
Senior Lecturer in Classics
University of New Hampshire
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The Classical Association of New England Summer Institute  
July 8-13, 2019 / Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

E Pluribus Unum

The organizers of the 2019 CANE Summer Institute invite you to join us for a weeklong examination of peoples and cultures that comprised the Classical Greek and Roman worlds. We will not only look at the various components of the ancient world, but we will also consider what it meant for those components to be *unum*. The institute’s events and discussions will also consider modern and contemporary reflections of nationhood.

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

PUBLIC LECTURES

**Monday, July 8, 7:00 p.m.**  
The Gloria Duclos Lecture  
“Divided by a Common Language? The Case of the Roman Empire”  
Kathleen Coleman, Harvard University

**Tuesday, July 9, 10:30 a.m.**  
The Phyllis Katz Lecture  
“Modeling (Im)mortality: Hero Cult in Pindar’s Victory Odes”  
Hanne Eisenfeld, Boston College

**Tuesday, July 9, 7:00 p.m.**  
The Edward Bradley Lecture  
“I’ve Looked at War From Both Sides Now: The Epics of Homer and Vergil”  
Mary Ebbott, College of the Holy Cross
Wednesday, July 10, 10:30 a.m.
“Clemency and Kindness: The Forgotten ‘Virtues’ of Roman Political Life”
Susan Curry, University of New Hampshire

Wednesday, July 10, 7:00 p.m.
“E Pluribus Plures: Identities in a Multiethnic Ancient Mediterranean”
Rebecca Futo Kennedy, Denison College
Onassis Lecturer

Thursday, July 11, 10:30 a.m.
“The Particular and the Universal in the Hellenistic Period”
Robin Greene, Providence College

Thursday, July 11, 3:00 p.m.
The Matthew Wiencke Lecture
“Creating Unity out of Plurality and Diversity: Reflections on a Modern Ideal and Ancient Realities”
Kurt Raaflaub, Brown University

Friday, July 12, 10:30 a.m.
“Rejecting Greekness:” Classical Athens’ Anti-Immigrant Policies and Practices”
Rebecca Futo Kennedy
Onassis Lecturer

Friday, July 12, 3:00 p.m.
“Vergil’s Many Romes: Identity and Imagination in the Aeneid”
Aaron Seider, College of the Holy Cross

Saturday, July 13, 10:30 a.m.
“Ancient Identities/Modern Politics”
Rebecca Futo Kennedy, Denison College
Onassis Lecturer
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, 3-4 pm
Best Practices in Teaching, Ruth Breindel, Moses Brown School, Emerita

Thursday 3-4 pm
Best Practices in Teaching Latin, Ruth Breindel, Moses Brown School, Emerita

Thursday 7-8 pm
Private Tour of the RISD Museum, Dr. Peter Nulton, RISD

SPONSORED BY

The Classical Association of New England
The Department of Classics, Brown University
The University Seminars Program of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA)
Courses

Morning courses (9-10:15 a.m.)

1. Historia de Duobus Amantibus
   Anne Mahoney, Tufts University

The Historia de Duobus Amantibus of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini was one of the best-sellers of the fifteenth century. It is a story of love, adultery, and deception in lively, clear Latin. We will begin by discussing the text itself, then situate it in the two contexts of the early Italian Renaissance and of neo-Latin prose narratives. We’ll also discuss how to find neo-Latin texts and where to go for the basic background for reading them. The main reading will be the Historia itself, in Latin.

2. Julius Caesar: Contemporary Perspectives and Receptions, 44 BC - 2019
   Jeri DeBrohun, Brown University

We will begin with contemporary writings that elucidated the living Caesar in his roles not only as military leader and politician but also as persuasive orator, linguist, cultural reformer, and personality. We will then turn to reception, focusing especially on four aspects: the praise or blame of writers in the generations just after his death; the impact of the rediscovery, in the Renaissance, of new texts by or about Caesar; Caesar as a central figure or theme of drama (including and beyond Shakespeare); and his reception in art and popular culture from antiquity through the 21st century.

3. Demystifying the Etruscans
   Peter Nulton, Rhode Island School of Design

The Etruscan civilization that dominated northern-central Italy before and during the rise of Rome is often billed as “mysterious.” This epithet does a disservice to the growing breadth of knowledge accumulated by Etruscologists over the last four centuries. Organized into city-states that were conquered, looted, and eventually
assimilated by the Romans, the Etruscans provided many of the cultural cues that would guide the development of their eventual conquerors. This exploration of their civilization, rooted in art and archaeology as well as text, will familiarize the Etruscans, and, as a necessary by-product, shed light on Roman culture as well.

4. Multiculturalism in the Roman Empire
Mark Thatcher, Boston College

How did the Romans come together as one people: e pluribus unum? Or did they? We’ll explore the various peoples and provinces of the empire, from Germany to Greece and from Britain to Egypt, with a particular eye towards Roman perceptions of them: both negative stereotypes and positive thinking. How did contrasts with “others” shape what it meant to be Roman, and how did the different cultures included within the empire transform who “the Romans” were? We’ll use a combination of written sources, archaeological evidence, and visual art to explore these questions and the ever-expanding melting pot of the Roman world.

5. The Stranger in the House: Gender and Ethnicity in Fifth-Century Athens
Thalia Pandiri, Smith College

Socrates said he was thankful to have been born “a human being and not an animal, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a foreigner.” Euripides’ Medea will serve as a focal point in our study of how gender and ethnicity are constructed and viewed in the classical Athenian polis. Medea is a woman, a barbarian, and, as a filicide, compared unfavorably to savage beasts. Collateral readings will include selections from other Greek texts. We will also read and discuss selected scholarship on the legal status of women and metics (resident aliens), and on changing attitudes towards the “other” in the polis.

Afternoon Reading Groups (M-Th)
Latin, 4-5 pm led by Erin Cummins (Ursuline Academy)
Greek, 5-6 pm led by Marianthe Colakis (Townsend Harris HS)
6. Usu potius quam Praeceptis - Practical Techniques in Active Latin Pedagogy
   Thomas J. Howell, Northampton Public Schools

Have you been interested in a more active approach to Latin pedagogy but aren’t sure where to start? Speaking and listening helps students learn vocabulary and understand stories without translation. It also deepens understanding of grammatical constructions. Participants will learn useful, practical techniques that work even if they have little or no speaking experience. Together we will practice skills in a safe environment in order to build the confidence to use them in class and leave with ready-to-use materials for teaching several different fables from Phaedrus.

7. Hercules: One and Many
   Hanne Eisenfeld, Boston College

The name of Hercules evokes a multiplicity of heroes: a bringer of civilization, a brash fighter, a self-indulgent drunkard, a madman, a god. How can a single figure contain such multitudes? In this course we will examine how the idea of Hercules evolved in response to the changing cultural and intellectual landscapes of the ancient Mediterranean. Our investigation will include Mesopotamian mythology, Greek history, Roman politics, and the uses we continue to make of Herakles in our own world.

8. Our First Parents Encounter Sin:
   Another Introduction to Paradise Lost
   Bill Morse, College of the Holy Cross

As we entered Paradise Lost through the themes of Satan’s Hell in our 2018 seminar, so both new and returning readers can enter it through the poem’s vision of Eden and the edenic. This seminar will read Books 4 and 9, pursuing Milton’s great theme of human relationships.
Meredith Safran, Trinity College

Ancient Rome provides an influential historical precedent for modern societies, including the USA, that aspire to assimilate individuals of various racial and ethnic backgrounds into one expanding citizen body—while remaining hierarchical, with those who inherited their privileged status invested in keeping it. We will discuss how these dynamic plays out in Hollywood films that draw upon the American romance with Rome as our adopted ancestor —Spartacus (1960), The History of the World, Part I (1981), Gladiator (2000), and The Hunger Games (2012) — by examining the portrayal of “non-white” characters and their role in narratives that revolve around “white” protagonists.

10. Sustaining Ancient Rome: Environment, Innovation, Disaster!
Susan Curry, University of New Hampshire

Traces of the Roman Empire from England to the Middle East continue to impress visitors from all over the world, but where did the materials for those buildings come from, who extracted them, and what was left of the natural environment afterwards? The “one” of the Roman Empire was a remarkable achievement, but, in this course, we will examine the costs of that achievement to the “many” and to the natural world itself. Might we also take from the Romans a better understanding of how to work with our own natural environment?

New reading group this year
Learn to Read Latin led by Ruth Breindel  M-Th 4:00 p.m. If you never took Latin and want to understand what others are talking about, or took Latin so long ago you can’t remember it, this group is for you. We’ll take a very calm (!) look at the grammar, and read some stories (yes, on the first day).
Registration deadline: May 15, 2019.

Please register as early as possible to ensure your space in the Summer Institute. Courses are filled on a first-come, first-choice basis. The postmark deadline for regular price registration is May 15, 2019. Registration between May 15 and June 1 is subject to an additional $25 fee. For registration after the June 1 deadline, please inquire whether space is still available.

Registration details

1. The Basic Program price of $250 includes tuition for 2 courses, plus participation in reading groups, workshops, and receptions.
2. Room and Board costs of $490 includes 5 nights’ accommodation, linen service, lunches, dinners, receptions, and 1 ticket to the Friday banquet.
3. Those who are not members of CANE will be required to join the organization at the regular annual membership rate of $50.
4. Lectures are free and open to the public.
5. Registrants must be at least 18 years old by July 8, 2019.

Deposit A $100 deposit (non-refundable) is due along with the registration form. The remaining balance must be paid in full by May 15, 2020.

Participants may register using this form or through paperless online registration, which is available as an alternative means of registration. For online registration, full payment at the time of registration is required. For this option, please use the following link through the CANE website: http://caneweb.org/csi

Housing for boarders is in single and double-occupant, air-conditioned dormitory rooms on the Brown University campus.

Parking passes are available at the cost of $15/day ($90 for the duration of the institute). There is no overnight street parking in Providence. You must purchase your parking pass in advance on the Registration form. For commuters, free daytime street parking is available near campus.
Registrants who wish to arrive on Sunday evening should indicate this on the registration form; there will be an additional charge of $55 per night (plus an additional $15 for those who require parking). Regular campus check-in begins the morning of Monday, July 8, and the first class meetings start at 1:15 p.m.

Professional Development and Continuing Education Credits All teachers will receive official certificates and letters acknowledging their participation, plus documentation of hours of received instruction suitable for use toward certification and professional development requirements in their respective states. Please use the forms provided at Check-In.

Special Needs All CSI facilities are handicapped accessible. Individuals who may need additional accommodations, auxiliary communication aids, or other forms of assistance should indicate their needs in a note enclosed with the registration form or in an e-mail sent directly to the CSI Director (summerinst@caneweb.org).

Have questions or need more information? Please contact:

CSI Director Amanda Loud by e-mail (summerinst@caneweb.org)

or by regular mail:

Amanda Loud, Director
C.A.N.E. Summer Institute
P.O. Box 724
Holderness, NH 03245

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LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED, SPRING 2019

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


NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

1. *New England Classical Journal* publishes articles, notes and reviews on all aspects of classical antiquity of interest to its readership of secondary and college teachers of the Classics, and of other students of the ancient world.

2. Contributions to the “Articles & Notes” section of *NECJ* are evaluated by blind refereeing and should therefore contain no indication of who their authors are.

3. Manuscripts should be submitted in the first instance as an attachment to email. Paper submissions are also accepted, but authors must be prepared to supply a word-processed document. The preferred word-processing program is MS Word. All Greek must be typed using APA Greekkeys. The editors may request a paper copy of the submission before final printing.

4. Submissions should be doubled-spaced throughout, including between paragraphs, and typed in single font size throughout (thus e.g. no large capitals or small print). Italics should be used instead of underlining. Boldface type should be avoided in favor of italics.

5. All text should be left-justified (ragged-right). Hard returns should be used only at the ends of verses and paragraphs, and not at the ends of continuous prose lines. Similarly, tabs and/or indents should be used instead of resetting margins in the course of the manuscript. For difficult matters of citation, contributors should consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*. A specific *NECJ* style sheet is also available upon request from the Editor-in-Chief.

6. Materials for the various sections of *NECJ* should be sent directly to the appropriate section editors. (See inside front cover as well as at the head of each section.)

7. Manuscripts and other materials will normally be returned only if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed with the submission.