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The Longest Night: Time, Plot, and Characterization in Plautus’s *Amphitruo*

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the *Amphitruo* Plautus stages an imaginary world of mischievous gods and bewildered mortals, a place where personal identities, literary sources, and genre expectations are all in flux and a magically long night is center stage and played for laughs. While a great deal of analysis has focused on this night’s mythological and astronomical aspects, its narrative function has received less attention.¹ The *Amphitruo* has, instead of the oft-discussed carnival day of Roman comedy, a carnival night.² The plot draws much of its energy from this extraordinary nocturnal setting—a fantasy world in which the line between mundane reality and divine intervention grows ever more blurred and even the common turning of day and night has become unreliable. The night is integral to the story; fully half the play takes place during

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¹ Grateful thanks are due to the many friends and colleagues who have given their valuable feedback for the improvement of this paper. These include Z. Philip Ambrose, Denis Feeney, Andrew Feldherr, Michael Fontaine, Tracy Jamison Wood, Mark Usher, the anonymous readers of *NECJ*, and proofreaders Janice Guion and Deepti Menon. All remaining errors are my own.


² Segal (1987).
it (1-550), and the other half consists of the characters’ reactions to that night in the morning after. Furthermore, the play’s distorted time defines the characters on stage. In their responses to this temporal anomaly, Sosia, Amphitruo, and Alcumena reveal their drastically different personalities; in turn this intensifies the mayhem that arises when these personalities meet and clash. The long night, like the pole star, is at the center of Amphitruo.

CHARACTERIZING THE GODS: MERCURY AND JUPITER

The presence of this unusual night first emphasizes the gulf between gods and mortals. The artificial distortion is entirely Jupiter’s handiwork; it is an instance of specific, purposeful divine intervention into the natural order. Gods appearing on earth to interact with mortals are a frequent occurrence in mythology, but actual interferences into the rhythms of day and night are less common.4 Tellingly, the intrusion in the Amphitruo is tied to the mingling of gods and men on the comic stage, itself a peculiar occurrence, as Mercury himself declares in the prologue (50-63). It is, in fact, unique in extant Roman comedy. Mercury even fabricates a new term for the play to come—not comedy per se, but tragicomedia (59) to accommodate gods, kings, and elements of tragedy on a comic stage.5 Then literally under the cover of darkness, Jupiter appears on that stage to play the adulterer, even senex amans.6 Mercury takes his place as his father’s henchman in that enterprise—a god as servus callidus and currens. The night is their vehicle and instrument; they appropriate it in order to inhabit their comic roles, and fittingly they take over Nature itself so they may play

3  Admittedly the play is incomplete. See Fantham for attempts to reconstruct the missing portions (1973).

4  See for instance Heraclitus fr. 94: “Helios will not go beyond the limits. If he does, the Erinyses, guardians of Dike, will find him out.” I owe this point to Philip Ambrose per litt. Other notable exceptions besides Jupiter’s here include Athena prolonging the night for the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope at the end of the Odyssey, Hera ordering the sun to set prematurely in Iliad 18 at the burial of Patroclus, and the reversal of the sun’s course during the conflict of Atreus and Thyestes.

5  See too Moore (1993), Dumont (1998), Bond (1999), Manuwald (1999), and Schmidt (2003) on tragicomoedia, genres, and tragic elements deployed in a comic manner. The Amphitruo has also been regarded as a parody of tragedy.

with the nature of Roman comedy.  
Additionally, the abnormally long night defines the gods’ relationship to mortal characters. As time itself becomes a plaything, so do the mortals who inhabit it. The gods’ knowledge of the truth is a sign of their superiority, and Mercury takes gleeful pleasure both in knowing what his father has done to time and in announcing it in his prologue: this night has been made longer, *haec...nox est facta longior* (113), he proclaims grandly to the audience. He includes the spectators in the joke from the very beginning and thus grants them the ability to appreciate the dramatic irony along with him and his father; in a sense, he transforms the spectators into little godlings for the duration of the play. Furthermore, deploying the conceit of night engages the imagination of the crowd. Roman plays were typically performed during the day, so the declaration of nighttime already invites the audience to suspend disbelief; this is compounded by the extension of the night. Fantasy has been unleashed as festive ludic pursuit for both gods on stage and playgoers in the stands.

The gods’ knowledge of the time distortion also underscores their awareness of larger natural patterns. When Jupiter finally allows the much-delayed day to dawn, he notes that, to compensate for the longer night, he will shorten the daylight hours accordingly: *atque quanto, nox, fuisti longior hac proxuma / tanto brevior dies ut fiat faciam, ut atque disparet* (548–9). Jupiter implies that objective reality exists with a “set” or “correct” length of a day; since night has been prolonged, the day must be shortened in order to keep that normal schedule. The gods seem to know several varieties of time: what it should be—and to what it should be returned when all the divine fun is over—and what they have done to it and for how long. This superior knowledge makes Jupiter’s later conversation with Alcumena all the more ironic and humorous; as he leaves, he tells her that he must go however unwillingly because it is time, *tempus est* (533), pretending he is a human controlled by time.

When the gods play with the flow of time, moreover, they reaffirm themselves as much as directors and producers as actors. Time as divine production is a fitting tactic in a play noted for its metatheatrical sensibilities. Jupiter as the ultimate

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7 In a sense this is Plautus being rather Ovidian before Ovid. The *Amphitruo* is also shot through with the idea of metamorphosis literal, physical, and metaphorical.

8 This and all translations are my own.

9 Other plays also incorporated the conceit of night on stage – such as the opening of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus – but the *Amphitruo* presents this conceit to a much greater extent.

10 See Pelliccia for a tradition of unwilling departure scenes (2010–11).

producer/director combines divine power and dramatic art from altering time to changing his own appearance in his desire to enjoy Alcumena. In terms of narrative, the gods’ manipulation of time is much more prominent in Plautus’s version of the myth than in other accounts as he exploits its comic stage potential. In the Amphitruo, Alcumena is already pregnant and very much so. This flies in the face of the mythological tradition that Jupiter visited Alcumena only once and that Hercules was conceived during that one divinely prolonged night; if here she is already carrying Hercules, then this is manifestly not the first time Jupiter has visited her. The mythological joke is that this is not the fabled night of Hercules’s conception after all. Mercury at lines 479-90 says that Alcumena is twice pregnant—ten months along with Amphitruo’s child, and seven with Jupiter’s. On this point, Christenson suggests, “Plautus may be broadening the sexual farce,” and that is clearly the case. Jupiter has evidently developed a taste both for visiting Alcumena’s bed and for cheerfully cuckolding Amphitruo. The idea of divinely lengthening the night to spend it cavorting yet again with a very pregnant Alcumena costumed in padding readily turns the tryst from a hero’s origin story into sexual farce.

Also important is why Jupiter chooses this particular night to engineer the time distortion. This is the last night before Amphitruo returns from war; once he is back, Jupiter’s window of opportunity to enjoy Alcumena while disguised as her

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13 Other accounts of the prolonged night focus on Jupiter’s fathering Hercules with Alcumena, not on its effect on Alcumena or Amphitruo, much less Sosia, a character who seems wholly the creation of Plautus. The first extant literary reference to the long night occurs in a fragment of Pherecydes, the 5th century BC Athenian mythographer in FGrH 3 F 13 b/c. Other references include the scholiast on Hom. Odyssey 11.266; Diod. 4.9; Hyginus, Fab. 29; Apollod. Bibli. 2.4.8; Ovid, Heroides 9.9-10; Seneca, Agamemnon 8o8-28 and Hercules Oetaeus 1864-6; Lucian, Dialogues of the Gods 10; and the Anth. Pal. 5.172. Scholars of later antiquity, including several church fathers, debated the actual length of time involved for Jupiter and Alcumena; temporal candidates ran from one to nine nights’ time. In terms of the comic stage, the Athenian New Comedy playwright Plato Comicus composed a Nyx Makra, now lost but for a few scattered fragments, frs. 89-94 K-A, PCG VII 469-471.

14 This is also implied in lines 107ff, 479ff, and 1122.

15 The Romans counted inclusively, so Alcumena’s ten months would be our nine.

16 Christenson (2000, ad 107-9).

17 See Segal: “… the principal characteristic of the classical myth of Amphitruo is that Jove paid a single visit to Alcumena and on this one occasion he lengthened the night. … But here we find the opposite: a sensual Roman who takes perverse pleasure in repeatedly cuckolding another.” (1987, p. 184).

18 See Christenson (2000-1).
husband would close. This also explains his eagerness for one last encounter with Alcumena the next morning (978-81), even while the actual Amphitruo is running about Thebes. Jupiter, it would seem, has a devilish sense of humor as well as an insatiable libido.

As the morning dawns, Jupiter’s and Mercury’s cool knowledge of the truth contrasts ever more sharply with the responses of the befuddled mortals. Thus far, the prolonged night of the Amphitruo has driven the plot and the characterization of Jupiter and Mercury. The night is also critical for the characterization of the mortals in the play. Amphitruo, Alcumena, and Sosia can neither ascertain the true nature of the night nor pinpoint its preternatural extension. Each one reacts to the night differently; the play presents a kind of Plautine theory of temporal relativity at work. Furthermore, those responses are indications of what kind of personality each one possesses — and a hint of his/her behavior in the chaos that erupts as the morning dawns.

CHARACTERIZING MORTALS: SOSIA

Sosia as the clever comic slave comes closest of all the mortals to grasping the actual nature of the night. It is no accident that he is the first mortal character to appear on stage and that his opening comment is a complaint about the time: *qui me alter est audacior homo aut qui confidentior, / iuventutis mores qui sciam, qui hoc noctis solus ambulem?* “What other guy’s a bolder, braver man than I am—I know the ways of the young—and I’m wandering out alone at this time of night!” (153-4). Possibly because he is already out in the night and “out of bounds” and thus in a liminal space, Sosia has a better chance of seeing what is actually transpiring as the gods take time itself “out of bounds.” Sosia, as a slave, also has a schedule that is always subject to the arbitrary whim of his master. He is out because Amphitruo has forced him (163-4), and he complains that he has been awake for three nights in a row already, *continuas has tris noctes pervigilavi* (314). If Sosia has been thus awake, then he may be

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19 In the nocturnal portion of the play Sosia repeatedly refers to *hoc noctis,* “this time of night,” e.g., 164, 292, 310.

20 Sosia specifically states his fear of being arrested, jailed, and beaten by the *tresviri capitales or nocturni* (155-61), minor magistrates charged with keeping order in the City. Also compare Sosia’s “out of bounds” quality with Arcturus, the star “out of bounds” in the opening of the *Rudens.*

21 This may also be a joke referring to the tradition that Alcumena’s long night lasted three normal nights’ time.
more attuned to distorted time because he himself has not observed a “normal” 24-hour schedule. Such subjection and subjectivity may render him more amenable to perceiving time as being more or less arbitrary or vulnerable to the whim of another. Add Sosia’s status as a comic *servus callidus* who typically has wit and knowledge exceeding that of his master, and his encounter with the supernatural night holds the most potential for humor and mischief.

Almost immediately Sosia senses that something is fundamentally wrong with the passage of time. Soon after his first appearance he is already looking skyward, attempting to establish the hour. Significantly, this surprises Mercury, who comments as he watches, *sed quid illuc est? caelum aspectat. observabo quam rem agat.* “But what’s that? He’s looking at the sky! I’ll see what he’s doing.” (270). Aside from a hint of parodying traditional stellar fortunetelling, Mercury’s attention implies curiosity whether Sosia can actually stumble on the truth. In fact, Sosia’s next line is the extraordinary declaration that he knows something for a certainty: *certe edepol, si quicquamst aliud credam aut certo sciam / credo ego hac noctu Nocturnum obdormivisse ebrium*—“Certainly, by Pollux, if I believe or know anything for sure, I believe Nocturnus went to bed drunk tonight!” (271-2). No other mortal in the play makes such a declaration of knowledge, and Sosia’s joking statement is surprisingly close to the truth; the trickster slave almost uncovers the work of the trickster gods. Nocturnus as a divine figure who has left his post to indulge himself resonates strongly with the actions of Jupiter who has left Olympus to pursue his own gratification.

So far Sosia has more or less sensed or intuited the length of the night, but he goes farther still: he peers at the constellations and concludes that they and the moon have all stopped in their courses as time has stopped mid-stream (273-6). In a humorous bit of relativistic comparison, Sosia says he had never seen a longer night except for the one when he was left strung up as punishment (279-80). Even as he says this, though, he changes his mind: *eam quoque edepol etiam multo haec vicit longitudine*—“By Pollux, this [night] even beats that one by far.” (281). Sosia seems to be on the cusp of real discovery. Moreover, he soon declares that such a long night would be ideal for an extended lovers’ tryst (287-8) and so unwittingly articulates the true reason for the time distortion. Mercury himself agrees: judging by Sosia’s words—*pro huius verbis*—Jupiter is acting sensibly (289-90). For that brief moment, Sosia, remarkably and independently, becomes party to the gods’ escapades.

By coming so close to solving the mystery, Sosia displays his openness to

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22 Hannah concludes that time has been arrested at the start of the evening, at the rising of the full moon (2009, pp. 24-6).
things supernatural and illogical; there are more things in heaven and earth in his philosophy than in those of his fellow mortals. That mental flexibility will be his great characteristic, setting him apart from the others. It remains intact even after his boisterous encounter with Mercury, who comes disguised as Sosia himself and “steals” his identity in a memorable scene (341-462). After the first shock of seeing his double, Sosia swiftly accepts this “fact” and even cheerfully considers how it might be personally profitable: perhaps his master Amphitruo will fail to recognize him, and he will no longer be a slave (460-2)! This mental agility and ability to accept apparent impossibilities also escalate the comic animosity between him and his rigidly rational lord (e.g., 531-4, 561-70). On any Roman comic stage, the sometimes violent antagonism between master and slave is a commonplace, but here it has the additional clash of the mysterious and the mundane. Sosia can bend, adapt, and roll with the punches, even the most startlingly strange ones, and this sets him apart from the other mortals, beginning with his flustered, unhappy master.

CHARACTERIZING MORTALS: AMPHITRUSO

Amphitruo, in contrast to the nimble Sosia and the playful gods, is the aggravated, increasingly frustrated straight arrow of the play. As the dupe, he is not unlike a senex iratus or a blocking character; furthermore, the martial hero of myth here takes on some of the features of Roman comedy’s miles gloriosus. His reaction to the long night is what first delineates the sort of man he is, and it is significant that he sends Sosia out on the nocturnal errand that begins the dramatic action. The servus complains, haec eri immodea / coxit, me qui hoc noctis a portu ingratiis excitavit. / nonne idem hoc luci me mittere potuit? “It’s my master’s unreasonableness that forced me to this; he pushed me out of the harbor at this time of night, against my will! Couldn’t he have sent me during the day?” (163-5). Irascible Amphitruo cannot or will not wait for the dawn. Somehow he senses that the night is taking too long, though he cannot articulate it, and sends Sosia out anyway. He does so as if by forcibly conducting normal activities despite the obvious disjunction in time, he can push ahead.

23 On doubling in this play, see Dupont (2001).

24 Another slave in the play, Bromia, also has the ability to accept supernatural occurrences; see Bond (1999, pp. 218-9). Note also Bromia’s Dionysiac name.

a normal schedule. He attempts to regulate and control time according to his schedule, desires, and expectations. The inescapable corollary is that the spontaneous, the unfathomable, and the uncontrollable have no place in Amphitruo’s conception of the world. His frustration, furthermore, may well be compounded by another factor, his desire for his wife: according to one version of the myth, Alcumena refused to sleep with him until he had returned from battle. The night is blocking his goal, and arguably even a night of normal length would seem insufferably long to the impatient Amphitruo.

When he first appears onstage, he regards the night peevishly. Unable to make sense of it, he is on the verge of losing his temper. When Alcumena says that she saw him the night before, he retorts: *Quor igitur praedicas, / te heri me vidisse, qui hac noctu in portum adventi sumus? / ibi cenavi atque ibi quievi in navi noctem perpetem—* “Why are you saying that you saw me yesterday, when I reached port just last night? I ate dinner there and I spent the whole endless night there on board!” (730–2). He was waiting restlessly for a dawn that did not come fast enough; *noctem perpetem* evokes his sense that the night dragged on, and while it lasted, he was champing at the bit. This response paves the way for his later frustration as he grows increasingly confused and agitated, even violent, when nonsensical events unfold all around him.

As Sosia is the most sensitive to the mysterious, Amphitruo is the most resistant. Lines 420–2 describe Amphitruo’s signet ring bearing the image of the Sun rising in a four-horse chariot—*cum quadrigis Sol oriens.* Against the backdrop of the divinely lengthened night, this portrays Amphitruo as an anti-nocturnal figure, an opponent of divine play. In fact, Amphitruo resembles Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bacchae,* a play with which the *Amphitruo* has clear thematic affinities aside from the Theban setting and metatheatricality. Notably also Amphitruo uses his solar signet to lock up his war booty, the defeated Teleboan king Pterelas’s golden drinking bowl, in a chest (418–21)—a clear image of containment and control.

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26 In this sense, he is a small, impotent version of the actual Jupiter who is able to bend time to his own will. This adds a further facet of humor to Jupiter’s assumption of Amphitruo’s identity, as well as to Amphitruo’s general frustration. I owe this observation to Tracy Jamison Wood per litt.

27 An early version appears in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles.*

28 The sun image may also call to mind Pentheus famously seeing two suns and two cities of Thebes (*Bacchae* 918–9), with twin suns as a kind of time distortion and muddled perception under divine (there Dionysian) influence.


Given Amphitruo’s hard-headed inflexibility and this play’s resonance with the Bacchae, his treatment of the drinking bowl becomes an anti-Bacchic image. This further associates Amphitruo with Pentheus’ violent resistance to the Dionysiac mystery linked to inebriation and madness at night. Moreover, in Amphitruo’s initial encounter with Alcumena, he thinks her mad (delirat uxor! at 727) or possessed (larvarum plenast, 777), and Sosia (albeit in jest) refers to her as a raving Bacchante (Bacchae bacchanti, 703). Amphitruo, like Pentheus, will grow only more agitated as the story unfolds and reality continues to blur. His negative response to the nocturnal time distortion characterizes him as the disconcerted rationalist who will naturally become the butt of the cosmic joke in the morning after.

**CHARACTERIZING MORTALS: ALCUMENA**

Alcumena has a response to the long night that is wholly unlike either Sosia’s or Amphitruo’s. She not only does not notice its extension, but she declares that the night has been all too short. When the disguised Jupiter tells her at night’s end that he must leave, she asks plaintively why he is going so suddenly: *Quid istuc est, mi vir, negoti, quod tu tam subito domo abeas?* “What is it, husband, that you’re leaving home so soon?” (502). That Alcumena can say *tam subito* after such a long night seems incredible even as it prompts Jupiter’s attempt to mollify her. She attempts to keep him at home longer: *prius abis quam lectus ubi cubuisti concaluit locus. heri venisti media nocte, nunc abis. hocin placer?* “You’re leaving before your side of the bed is warm! You arrived at midnight yesterday and now you’re going! Do you think this is all right?” (513-4). By claiming that he came only at midnight and now is leaving right before dawn, Alcumena intimates that she has not even had an entire night with Jupiter-Amphitruo. This is clearly an exaggeration, but she is not as concerned with facts as with her perception of time. The parting lines between Alcumena and Jupiter highlight that subjectivity:

31 At line 509, Jupiter asks her *Satin habes, si feminarum nulla est quam aequae diligam?* Christenson ad loc sees a humorous twist to the *satin habes*: “It seems that Jupiter, unlike Alcumena, is for now sated after the long night of lovemaking.” Alcumena appears in a ludicrous light if her mortal appetites can outstrip a god’s, much less Jupiter’s. At the same time, Jupiter leaves himself a loophole by saying he loves no (mortal) woman more than Alcumena; he says nothing about goddesses or Juno, as Mercury is quick to point out (510-1) and joke about later (515-7).

32 Jupiter specifies that he wants to leave the city before daybreak: *exire ex urbe prius quam lucescat volo* (533).
Alcumena: Lacrimantem ex abitu concinnas tu tuam uxorem.
Jupiter: Tace, ne corrumpe oculos, redibo actutum.
Alcumena: Id actutum diu est.
Jupiter: Non ego te hic lubens relinquo neque abeo abs te.
Alcumena: Sentio, nam qua nocte ad me venisti, eadem abis. (529–532)

Alcumena: You’re making your wife cry because you’re leaving!
Jupiter: Shhhh. Don’t spoil your eyes; I’ll be back soon.
Alcumena: That “soon” is a very long time.
Jupiter: I’m not willingly going and leaving you here.
Alcumena: I know, since you’re going away the same night that you came to me.

Alcumena’s insistence of *id actutum diu est* reveals her as a figure fully engaged in the long night and its amorous purposes. Moreover, her time-sense presents her as a character who is both a complement to Jupiter and a foil to Amphitruo. In her fantastical view of time—and in her desire for more time with her lover—she is a fitting match for the indulgent Jupiter. In the same vein she is a counterpoint to her actual husband, the restlessly tetchy Amphitruo; their clash later becomes all the more comically strident. In that confrontation, the truly offended party is Alcumena rather than Amphitruo; he, having impatiently fretted through the night, now fears infidelity, but she, having savored that time, is bewildered by her husband’s sudden suspicious harshness. This intensifies after Jupiter-Amphitruo’s abrupt reappearance to reconcile with another round of lovemaking, a proposal to which she is readily amenable (891ff).

Alcumena’s perception of the long night as a short span has the additional effect of portraying her as a comic character in her own right. She has long been considered a remarkably noble, or even tragic, character within the world of Roman comedy. Nevertheless, her view of time, taken into account with several other

33 On the other hand, she is also displaying the stock behavior of a loving wife wishing to keep her man at home and out of war’s dangers, as Andromache does with Hector in *Iliad* 6.405ff. Alcumena and Jupiter-Amphitruo may even make a parody of Andromache and Hector, especially as her “husband” is not her actual husband at all.

34 See Sedgwick *ad loc*: “Whenever Alcumena appears, P. forgets his clowning and the tone changes to something not unworthy of tragedy, a high seriousness such as would befit a Roman matron. P. makes free with the gods and the general, but is overawed by the ideal wife and mother.” Gratwick considers her “presented powerfully as a tragic heroine.” (1982, pp. 109–110). Other critics have similarly characterized Alcu-
factors, depicts her as a comically sensual figure. First of all, one must remember that Alcumena was played by a man, as all female roles were. The Alcumena-actor would also have been padded (perhaps grotesquely for humor) to appear pregnant.\textsuperscript{35} Alcumena is the only speaking pregnant character in extant Greco-Roman drama, and in Plautine comedy pregnancy is common fodder for jokes.\textsuperscript{36} Driving home this fact, Mercury repeatedly refers to Alcumena’s condition before she ever appears on stage (e.g., 102-11 and 479-85), and when she does, Jupiter mentions her pregnancy yet again (500). The play highlights the humor of Jupiter’s using the night to enjoy Alcumena, not to father Hercules; the humor intensifies with the knowledge that they have been carrying on the affair despite her exaggerated condition.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, Alcumena’s view of the “short” night reveals a sexuality that deviates comically far from the Roman ideal of a noble \textit{matrona} as chaste, faithful, and dignified.\textsuperscript{38} Besides, sensual insatiability has long been a feature of comic females in the Greek tradition inherited by Rome.\textsuperscript{39}

Alcumena’s famous speech on \textit{voluptas} (632-53), long seen as a sign of her tragic stature, actually underscores her comic characterization via her time-sense. She says that she has had pleasure only for a little while—\textit{voluptas parumper datast}—and she has seen her husband for only one night—\textit{noctem unam modo} (639). She repeats yet again how suddenly he left before dawn—\textit{atque is repente abiit a me hinc ante lucem} (639). This aristocratic \textit{matrona}’s lofty speech, however, may also be interpreted as the lament of a voluptuary deprived of sexual gratification: \textit{voluptas}, aside from

\begin{itemize}
\item[36] Note \textit{Curculio} 221, where the fat pimp Cappadox says he must be pregnant with twins, or \textit{Stichus} 155-70, where the parasite Gelasimus declares that he has been pregnant with a huge hunger for a decade. When pregnancy is properly applied to a woman, the comic potential is still strong; Nelson: “On stage, the pregnant woman is an irresistibly comic figure; nature has caught her out.” (1990, pp. 58-9). See too \textit{Aulularia}’s pregnant character of Phaedria. In the comic tradition from Aristophanes, note \textit{Thesmophoriazusae}’s supposedly pregnant woman and \textit{Lysistrata}’s woman pretending to be pregnant in an attempt to leave the citadel to have illicit sex.
\item[37] Hirst sees this as the defining joke of the play: “It (the \textit{Amphitruo}) is an exception only in that it mixes gods and noble characters and comic servants, but since the two gods behave entirely as the coarsest of mortals (which is the comic point) the play is only remarkable because it asks us to believe that Jupiter and Alcmene are having a passionate affair (\textit{sic}) although she is nine months pregnant.” (1984, p. 8).
\item[38] See Treggiari (1991, pp. 229-61).
\item[39] See, for instance, Aristophanes, \textit{Eclesiazusae} 225-8 or \textit{Lysistrata} 21-5.
\end{itemize}
meaning “pleasure,” is also the technical term for sexual congress. Alcumena also says that she is morigera—obliging—to her husband (842). Being morigera is a traditional Roman virtue for a matrona, but given Alcumena’s appetites, morigera here takes on a clearly sexual dimension; this resonates with Mercury using similar terms to describe his father’s carnal indulgences. Morigera has become a loaded term, and Alcumena, despite her pregnancy and that preternaturally long night, is yet unsatisfied: the supposed tragic heroine reveals herself to be an amorous sexpot. This drives the comic animosity between Alcumena and the actual Amphitruo, for her confusion and indignation at his apparent sudden change of heart stem from her initial devotion. This escalates their conflict amid chaos, confusion, hurt feelings, and even the specter of divorce as she threatens to leave him (925ff).

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40 OLD 5. See too voluptas in Terence, Hecyra 69; Lucretius DRN 4.1263; and Adams (1982, pp. 197-8).
41 Adams notes that in later Latin, the phrases morem gerere and morigera are used explicitly of a woman’s sexual gratification of a man (1982, p. 164). For Mercury: pater nunc intus suo animo morem gerit (131); gere patri morem meo (277); or Jupiter speaking in 980-1: volo delude illunc, dum cum hac usuraria / uxore nunc mi morigero.
42 See also the humor of Alcumena talking about her sedatum cupiditatem (839ff).
43 Alcumena’s willingness to discuss physical details of her amorous night creates no end of distress for the actual Amphitruo. Segal highlights the similarity between this passage (lavisti … accubuisti … cenavisti mecum, ego accubui simul, “You washed … reclined … We dined together and reclined together.” 802-4) with those described by the indulgent Syracusan twin in the Menaechmi (Prandi, potavi, scortum accubui, “I’ve wined, I’ve dined, I’ve concubined” at 476; or Potavi atque accubui scortum, “I’ve wined and concubined” at 1142) (1987, p. 181).
44 See too Deblasi (2005).
45 On divorce in Plautus, see Rosenmeyer (1995) and Braund (2005). An Apulian bell krater from ca. 5th-4th century BC now in the British Museum apparently depicts Alcmena on the verge of being burnt on a pyre by Amphitryon for her adultery; this is perhaps a depiction of a tragedy, likely Euripides’s.
CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, the play has only one night—*noctem unam modo*, as Alcumena says so regretfully, but it is no ordinary night. Drawn from the long mythological tradition of Hercules’s conception and taken to the festive Roman stage, the long night becomes much more than a timeframe. It is the mechanism by which Plautus drives his comic plot and draws his cast of characters. The creation of a supernatural night delineates capricious gods and befuddled mortals; the norms of everyday (and everynight) life flip upside down, opening the story to the unfathomable world of the divine *ludus*. It is no accident that wonder is a theme for the play. Jupiter and Mercury wreak merry havoc with the mortal world, of which time is the most obvious limit and time-keeping a crucial measure of reality. While the night defines the gods as directors of the play and the ultimate timekeepers, it also defines each of the human characters and his or her comic potential. Their perceptions of the actual length of the night reveal Sosia as the mentally nimble slave ready for unfathomable events, Amphitruo as the humorless straight arrow bound to be the butt of the joke, and Alcumena as the warmly emotional and surprisingly amorous voluptuary. The personality of this extraordinary play and its characters owes much indeed to its supernatural night, a feature unique in extant ancient comedy.

46 Christenson notes the extensive use of *miror* and similar words, employed primarily by the mortal characters (2000, p. 29). Note occurrences in lines 29, 86–9, 116, 283, 319, 432, 594–6, 616, 750, 765, 772, 828–9, 858, 954, 1036, 1057, 1080, 1105, 1107, 1117.


Sailing to the Underworld on a Sea of Milk: Orphic Allusion and the Transition to the Underworld in Lucian’s *Verae Historiae*

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**INTRODUCTION**

A text is like a safe; all its treasure is locked away tight. The reader needs the proper combination to get in. Lucian gives us the combination to the lock of the *Verae Historiae* by telling us that he alludes to many other authors in his work: ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων ἐκαστὸν οὐκ ἀκωμῳδήτως πρός τινας ἔνικται τῶν παλαιῶν ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ φιλοσόφων...καὶ ὀνομαστὶ ἄν ἔγραφον, εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ σοι ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως φαίνεσθαι ἐμελοῦ “each thing I wrote contains some tacit illusion, not without humor, to ancient poets and historians and philosophers...and I would have mentioned them by name, if they themselves would not be known to you from the reading.” (*VHI*.21). Understanding this text is all about intertextuality,\(^1\) and even though Lucian tells us that he will not

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1 Luciani (1972, ch. 2).

2 Intertextuality, referencing another text either by quoting it directly or by creating a scene that should remind the reader of the other text, is a staple of the authors of the so called Second Sophistic. This was one of the means by which the Greek authors of the Roman period showed off their education. Along with using intertextual allusions, these authors would write in the Atticistic style, an artificially constructed dialect of Greek, the aim of which was to mimic the classical Greek of Athens. For further reading on the Second Sophistic, c.f. Whitmarsh (2001); Whitmarsh (2005); and Schmitz (1997).
mention the names of the authors he is alluding to, since his readers are so educated that they will recognize them on their own, we are presented with a list of examples of the authors he is not naming (VHI.3), along with these are πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ άλλοι, “many others.”

A strange adventure begins the Second Book of the Verae Historiae, the voyage through the Sea of Milk (VH II.3-4) searching for allusions, as Lucian tells us to, in order to discover who these πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ άλλοι are; this adventure seems to form part of the Underworld episode, and plays upon a religious phenomenon, the Underworld as understood in the world of the mystery cults, specifically as a play on the use of milk as described by the Gold Tablets of the Orphics.

I do not wish to imply that Lucian is dealing with anything more than a superficial view of the Underworld, as held by the mystery cults. Lucian often uses this way of dealing with religion, pointing it out without dealing with it in any deep sense - we see this in The Passing of Peregrinus, in which a large section of the work deals with Christianity. Yet we hear very little of the actual beliefs of Christianity, other than Christ being the “Crucified Sophist.” Nor do I suggest that the entire Sea of Milk scene alludes only to the Orphic mystery cult. Instead I am following Wolfgang Iser’s concept of the ‘implied reader.’ Lucian does not give concrete allusions, but offers signals to the “‘… addressee’ it (the work) anticipates…” that, in this case, open the door to such an interpretation. This way of working often offers multiple interpretations for each scene in the text, giving Lucian the breathing room, so to speak, to offer the “tacit illusions” he promises in the preface.

We can find other possible allusions to a Sea of Milk, for example, following Fritz Graf’s interpretation of milk. Milk plays on the foreign quality of this scene, as milk was drunk by the barbarians, not by Greeks. This also serves to contrast

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3 How, however, does some of the important secondary literature deal with the Sea of Milk? In Georgiadou, and Larmour (1998, pp. 178-180), the commentators also interpret this scene in a religious sense, connecting the Sea of Milk back to the Milky Way and the milk sweat of the Moonmen in Lucian VH I.16 (c.f. 111 and 179), which they connect with the Pythagorean belief that the Milky Way was the place of the soul before and after birth. In von Möllendorf (2000, pp. 272-273), the commentator does not mention any Underworld connection in the Sea of Milk, he focuses on the persons of Galatea and Tyro the goddess and ruler of this island respectively (ibid). In Rütten (1997), the Sea of Milk is not discussed.

4 Lucian. The Passing of Peregrinus 11-16.

5 C.f. The Passing of Peregrinus 13.

6 As laid out in Eagleton (1983, p. 84).

7 Eagleton (1983, p. 84).

and, through this contrast, to connect the Island of Cheese with the Island of the Vine Women, on which the mariners find a more Greek beverage in a river of wine. The use of milk in descriptions of the paradisic golden age helps to foreshadow the bliss of the Island of the Blessed, and further helps to tie the Sea of Milk to the Underworld scene that follows it.

The recently published edition on the Getty Hexameters shows milk in used in another context - magical incantations:

ὅσσα κατὰ σκιαρών ὀρέων μελαναύγει χώρωι Φερσεφόνης ἐκ κῆπου ἁγει πρὸς ἅμολγον ἀνάγκη[ι] τὴν τετραβήμονα παῖς ἁγίην Δήμητρος ὀπηδόν, αἵ' ἀκαμαντορόα νασμοῦ θαλεροῖο γάλακτος βριθομένην· (GH 8-13)

“whenever he leads the sacred four footed attendant of the child of Demeter, by force, down from the dark mountains to the dark gleaming land of Persephone, out of the garden, in the dark of night, laden with the rich unwavering stream of milk from the goat.”

Although the mention of Persephone in this text seems to indicate an origin in the Orphic religion, the commentators on the text, while pointing out the relationship between the two bodies of religious literature, put the Getty Hexameters in their own category, as a body of magical incantations for various purposes, rather than specifically for the journey to the Underworld. Such a distinction, if even made in late antiquity, since the text does seem to become identified with Orpheus, may be a moot point, as Lucian is far more interested in creating interesting allusions than in maintaining such distinctions.

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9 See below for more on the contrast and connection of these two scenes.
10 Graf uses Ovid as an example (1980, p. 214).
11 As we see in the quotations from the Gold Tablets below.
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SEA OF MILK AND THE GOLD TABLETS

What, then, is the connection between the Orphic gold tablets and the Sea of Milk? Several times the tablets mention an animal leaping or falling into milk. For example, in a 4th century B.C. tablet from Pelinna we read:

You have just died and have just been born, thrice happy, on this day. Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you. A bull, you leapt into the milk. Swift, you leapt into the milk. A ram, you leapt into the milk. You have wine, a happy privilege and you will go under the earth, once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.15

Another 4th century tablet from Thurii states:

Yet when the soul leaves the light of the soul behind, you must go to the right thiasos, keeping everything well. Hail, after having had an experience such as you never had before. You have been born a god, from the man that you were. A kid, you fell into the milk. Hail, hail; take the path to the right toward the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.16

There are three main opinions as to what exactly these tablets mean.17 The deeper meaning behind these texts need concern us. A cursory reading fits into the paradigm of the ‘implied reader,’ laid out in the introduction. Lucian has no desire to deal with the actual theology of the Orphic religion, but to give his readers as many allusions as possible, testing their knowledge of literature to its limits. It is also

14 For a more comprehensive look at Orphism as well as the Orphic Gold Tablets, please see (among others): Guthrie (1993), Burkhert (1977), and Bernabe (2008).
17 The first possibility is that falling into the milk alludes to some sort of Orphic baptism, in which the initiate would be immersed in milk; this type of ritual is, however, nowhere attested. The second possibility links the animal falling into milk with the practice of sacrificing a goat and cooking it in milk as part of an initiation rite in some Oriental cults. This does not explain the other animals falling into the milk, since the Oriental cults only include the sacrifice of a goat. The third possibility, which is the one Bernabe and Jimenez san Cristobal give the most credence to, has the initiate drinking milk, putting him symbolically back into the condition of a child. Bernabe and Jimenez san Cristobal (2008, pp. 76–79).
unlikely that Lucian would be aware of any deeper meaning, unless he was an initiate in the mystery himself, which, given his willingness to satirize various religious forms, seems not to have been the case. If we make a cursory reading of these tablets we see that the journey to the Underworld is begun by falling into milk and only after this happens, can one go “under the earth” or into the “sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.” Falling into the milk seems to be the transition point for the initiate between life and death, perhaps the moment of death itself, and it is this function of milk as this transition that Lucian uses the Sea of Milk. The mariners go to the Underworld; this is impossible for someone who is still alive. Only the greatest heroes such as Hercules, Odysseus, and Orpheus can enter the Underworld while still alive and hope to return to the world of the living. Therefore the mariners must be dead, but how did they die? There was no scene of violence in which the entire crew was massacred. Instead Lucian plays upon the Orphic image of falling into the milk as the moment of death to give his mariners a metaphorical death, which has its counterpoint in their metaphorical resurrection on the Island of Dreams. The Sea of Milk as a metaphorical death is underscored by the fact that they do not fall into this milk, but rather sail across it, as if in the boat of Charon the ferryman.

FURTHER ALLUSIONS TO ORPHISM IN THE VERAE HISTORIAE

Thus far, we have been discussing the Sea of Milk episode in terms of the Orphic mystery cult. There are, however, other mystery cults in which milk plays an important part, and these may be alluded to by Lucian in this passage as well. Another mystery cult in which milk plays an important role is the cult of Isis. Milk has played an important role both in the ritual and in the iconographic/theological expression of the cult, in so far as these can be differentiated from each other. The ritualistic use

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18 For example in his work On Sacrifices.
19 The view of Lucian as driven by anti-religious sentiment is an antiquated one, however, it is uncontested that he constantly uses religion and philosophy as a focus of his satire; a strange attitude if he were convinced of their veracity.
20 This is the view of Edmonds, though he believes that it is also the moment of rebirth (2011, p. 325).
21 Entering the Underworld while still alive may itself be a reference to Orpheus.
22 Kristen Gentile, for example, interprets the Sea of Milk scene and the Orphic Gold Tablets as an allusion to the Dyonisiac mystery religion. Gentile (2008).
of milk is seen at the end of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. In a rare glimpse into the workings of a mystery cult, Apuleius describes his conversion to the cult and a procession. The use of milk as a libation in the ritual, especially since it is poured from a vessel shaped like a woman’s breast, connects the liturgical role of the milk to the iconographic/theological role that milk plays in this cult. Isis’ most important role is as a mother figure, not only as a mother to the initiates, but also to her son, Horus. There are numerous representations of Isis and Horus together, such as the one in the Louvre. These representations are nearly identical: Isis sits on a throne with Horus seated in her lap on the left side and Horus is depicted nursing from her breast.

Although there does not seem to be an immediate connection between the Cult of Mithras, an important soldiers’ cult of late antiquity whose underground sanctuaries dot the Roman Empire, and the use of milk, such as there was with the Isis cult, Cumont points out that milk, along with oil and honey, were offered in sacrifices by the Magi in Cappadocia and out of this tradition rose the mysteries of Mithras.\(^\text{23}\) That Lucian would be aware of these mysteries, and could play upon them in his writing is entirely possible: “Lucian of Samosata, in a passage apparently inspired by the practices he had witnessed in his own country, could still deride the repeated purifications, the interminable chants, and the long Medean robes of the secterians of Zoroaster. Furthermore, he taunted them with being ignorant even of Greek and with mumbling an incoherent and unintelligible gibberish.”\(^\text{24}\) Despite the use of milk in other mysteries and references to these mysteries in other works, the importance of Orpheus and the Orphics in other parts of the *Verae Historiae* brings them into focus here.

Perhaps the least contentious allusion to the Orphics lies in Lucian’s description of the idealized Island of Reward for the bodiless souls of the “Blessed.”\(^\text{25}\) This is, though, not the only similarity between this Underworld and the afterlife of Orphic eschatology.\(^\text{26}\) A terrible place of punishment for the “Condemned,” awaits the

\(^{23}\) Cumont (1903, p. 26).

\(^{24}\) Cumont, referencing Lucian *Menippus*, c. 6 and Lucian *Deorum Concilium*, c. 9 (1903, pp. 27-28).

\(^{25}\) See below.

\(^{26}\) Lucian’s Underworld also has an indirect reference to Orpheus himself. A lengthy scene in the Underworld is the Symposium of the Blessed, in which many famous personages make music for the souls of the blessed (c.f. *VH* II.15.) Among the various famous musicians mentioned in this section, Orpheus is conspicuously absent. We meet many historical and quasi-historical figures in the Underworld, it is strange that Orpheus is missing, especially since he would be the natural choice to sing the poems of Homer to the blessed souls. I believe that this can be explained by Orphic iconography found on vases in southern Italy.
unjust in the Orphic religion as well.\textsuperscript{27} The guards who capture the mariners as they wander across the Island of the Blessed remind one of the guardians of the Orphic Underworld whom the initiate had to appease with the passwords given to them.\textsuperscript{28} Lucian may also use the Orphic idea of the soul as air\textsuperscript{29} in his description of the souls on the Island of the Blessed.\textsuperscript{30} The Island of the Damned, however, gives a more interesting possible allusion specifically regarding who is being punished. Guthrie says: “The good state was for the Orphic represented by purity. This could not be attained without initiation… which as we have seen included moral goodness…”\textsuperscript{31} Punishment is meted out, not for major hubris against the gods, but against those who refuse to be initiates and who are not righteous. In Lucian the lack of morality seems to be basis for punishment: καὶ μεγίστας ἁπασῶν τιμωρίας ύπέμενον οἱ ψευσάμενοι τι παρά τὸν βίον καὶ οἱ μὴ τἀληθῆ συγγεγραφότες “those who lied during their life, and those who did not write the truth awaited the greatest and most fearsome punishments” (\textit{VH} II.31). Similar to Orphism, however, not merely a lack of morality causes the punishment, but also the refusal to follow certain religious obligations. In the case of the Orphics, we see the refusal to be initiated; in the case of Lucian, we see the refusal to tell the truth.\textsuperscript{32}

Rereading the first Book with this Orphic context in mind yields even more Orphic allusions. Lucian and his companions travel to the moon and to the sun. In the teachings of the Pythagorean School, the sun and moon were considered to be the Islands of the Blessed.\textsuperscript{33} The close association of the Pythagoreans and the Or-

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\textsuperscript{27} See the description of a dualistic Underworld above; though the Orphics also believed in the transmigration of souls, which does not come up in Lucian.

\textsuperscript{28} Guardians in the Underworld also come up in Plato’s myth of Er; c.f. Pl. \textit{Politeia}. 614b-614d.

\textsuperscript{29} See Guthrie (1993, p. 94). This may, though, be an allusion to the description of the souls of the dead in the Underworld of Homer (\textit{Odyssey} Book 11) or perhaps it is an allusion to both.

\textsuperscript{30} c.f. \textit{VH} II.12.

\textsuperscript{31} Guthrie (1993, p. 163).

\textsuperscript{32} It is on the Island of the Dreams that we see the religious aspect of the truth in Lucian (\textit{VH} II.33): πλησίον ναοί δύο, Ἀπάτης καὶ Ἀληθείας…” (“and nearby were two temples, to Lie and Truth…”). By turning truth into a godhead he creates a sort of truth cult, and those uninitiated, those who do not tell the truth, are punished in the Underworld.

\textsuperscript{33} c.f. Iamblichos. \textit{Vit. Pyth}. 82.
phics allow us to see an Orphic allusion here. The moon plays an important role in the Orphic religion proper as well; the moon and sun were created by Phanes, the progenitor of the gods, and are inhabited. Phanes fits in well with Lucian’s description of the moon men, because he was of both sexes, so that he could give birth to the gods; the people of the moon in Lucian also have to bring forth children without women, so each one has to function as both man and woman.

It is, then, the combination of the Sea of Milk as the moment of death and the use of Orphic allusion in other parts of the Verae Historiae that puts the intertextual connection here in the context of the Orphic Mysteries.

**FURTHER ALLUSIONS TO THE GOLD TABLETS**

Other instances in which Lucian alludes to the gold Tablets support the contention that Lucian uses the Sea of Milk as a reference to Orphic belief are. Although the authors were not themselves members of these cults, they could have had access to these texts is explored by Reinhold Merkelbach in his (not uncontested) work, Roman und Mysterien in der Antike. The very setup of the Island of the Blessed seems to be another allusion to the eschatology laid out in the Gold Tablets:

“...The Gold Tablets don’t say much about what ultimately awaits the initiate...What little they do say, however, aligns well with Hesiod’s paradisiacal vision: the initiates expect to dwell among meadows and groves (3.6, 27.4), to enjoy abundant wine (26 a.6 and b.6), to be happy and blessed – gods instead of humans (5.9), to dwell among the blessed (6.7, 7.7, 26a.7) or to live among the heroes, as a hero (2.11, perhaps 8.2).”

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34 There are even Orphic poems attributed to Pythagoras; c.f. Guthrie (1993, p. 217).
36 For the moon as a reference to the Orphics and the Pythagoreans, see Georgiadou and Larmour (1998, pp. 39, 84-85, 125, 129, 144).
37 Perhaps the Bacchic mysteries as well; c.f. Gentile (2008).
38 Merkelbach (1962).
On the Island of the Blessed, the inhabitants enjoy their eternal symposium: τῷ Ἡλυσίῳ καλομένῳ πεδίῳ λειμὼν δὲ ἐστιν κάλλιστος καὶ περὶ αὐτὸν ὑλή παντοία πυκνή “on the plain of Elesium, which is a most beautiful meadow, and round about it is a dense wood.” (VH II.14). Copious amounts of wine certainly play a major part in the Symposium of the Blessed in Lucian as well:

ἀλλ’ ἐστι δένδρα περὶ τὸ συμπόσιον ύάλινα μεγάλα τῆς διαφωτιστής ύαλύ, καὶ καρπός ἐστι τῶν δένδρων τούτων υφήρει παντοία παντοία καὶ τὰς κατασκευὰς καὶ τὰ μεγέθη. ἐπειδὰν οὖν παρίῃ τις ἐς τὸ συμπόσιον, τρυγήσας ἓν ἢ δύο τῶν ἐκπωμάτων παρατίθεται, τὰ δὲ αὐτίκα οἶνου πλήρη γίνεται. (VH II.14)

“But there are large trees around the symposium, made of translucent glass, the fruit of these trees are cups of various sizes and shapes. Whenever they go to the symposium, he plucks one or two of the fruits, which he places next to him, these fill up immediately with wine.”

It is not only the wine, though, that brings happiness to those on the Island of the Blessed: πηγαί εἰσι δύο παρὰ τὸ συμπόσιον, ἡ μὲν γέλωτος, ἡ δὲ ἡδονῆς “there are two springs by the symposium, one of laughter and the other of happiness.” (VH II.16). These springs keep those involved in the symposium in the constant state of happiness and blessedness promised to the initiate. Lucian encounters the heroes indicated in the Gold Tablets: Βούλομαι δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ τῶν ἡμιθεοὺς καὶ τῶν ἐπισήμων οὔστιν παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐθεασάμην οἷς ἐπὶ Ἰλιοῦ στρατεύσαντας “I wish to speak about the famous persons I saw among them; all of the demigods and those who fought at Troy.” (VH II.17). Lucian does not meet these personages though he is promised a place among the best of them after he returns. Not only is the Island of the Blessed is laid out just as in the Gold Tablet, but Lucian even receives the reward promised the initiate of the Orphic mystery in those tablets.

40 As discussed above.
As one reads the Sea of Milk scene, any connection to the mystery cults seems to be the furthest thing from Lucian’s mind. He seems, rather, by mentioning Galatea, to be operating in the realm of the ‘standard’ Greek myth. There is also nothing in the description of the Island of Cheese that points to the rituals of the paradisic afterlife of an initiate in a mystery cult. Using Iser’s theory, however, we must be on the lookout for even small indications that a reference is being made. If we look at the position of the Sea of Milk in the larger narrative, we see that the Sea of Milk serves as the introductory adventure for the Underworld episode because it serves as one end of a chiasmus formed between the first and third episodes.\(^{41}\)

Two islands, the Island of the Vine Women and the Island of Cheese, respectively introduce the first and third episodes. Both of these islands have extraordinary types of vines: those on the Island of the Vine Women provide ready made wine for the river; those on the Island of Cheese exude milk. On both islands we also see traces of divinity.\(^{42}\) On the Island of the Vine Women, there is the River of Wine:

\[ \text{τινα στήλην χαλκού πεποιημένην, Ἐλληνικοῖς γράμμασιν καταγεγραμμένην, ἀμυδροῖς δὲ καὶ ἐκτετριμμένοις, λέγουσαν Ἀχρὶ τούτων Ἡρακλῆς καὶ Διόνυσος ἀφίκοντο. ἦν δὲ καὶ ἴχνη δύο πλησίον ἐπὶ πέτρας, τὸ μὲν πλεθριαῖον, τὸ δὲ ἐλαττὸν ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, τὸ μὲν τοῦ Διονύσου, τὸ μικρότερον, θάτερον δὲ Ἡρακλέους. (VH I.7) } \]

Some \textit{stela} was there, made of bronze, inscribed with Greek letters, faint and rubbed out. It said: ‘Dionysus and Herakles reached up to here.’ Nearby there were two footprints in the rock, the one was a \textit{plethra} long, the other was smaller, it seemed to me, the smaller one was that of Dionysos, the other that of Herakles.

\(^{41}\) It is important to note that this is only one interpretation of the Sea of Milk; there are other interpretations, many of which have been discussed by Gregoriadou and Larmour, and Möllendorf, among others. In the complex and layered works of Lucian, there are multiple aspects to many of his allusions. I do not wish to contradict others who have offered interpretations of this passage, but to point out another possible “aha” moment offered by Lucian.

On the Island of Cheese, there is the milk, but here too the mariners come upon material proof of a godhead:

\[ \text{ιερὸν δὲ ἐν μέσῃ τῇ νῆσῳ ἀνωκοδόμητο Γαλατείας τῆς Νηρηΐδος, ὡς ἐδήλου τὸ ἐπίγραμμα} \quad \text{(VH II.3)} \]

There was a temple built in the middle of the island, dedicated to Galatea the Nymph, which the inscription showed.

On both of these islands, there is also a potential for interaction. On the Island of the Vine Women, this interaction occurs when two of the mariners in Lucian’s crew have sexual relations with the women and turn into vines themselves, and their companions abandon them in horror and return to the ship.\(^{43}\) On the Island of Cheese, a similar scene leads the reader to believe a similar interaction will take place. There is, however, no such moment: the mariners stay on the island for five days, but meet with no new creatures.\(^{44}\)

Both these episodes also conclude with two more islands. The first episode ends in Lampopolis and the third on The Island of Dreams. In Lampopolis the mariners are greeted with a strange sight: lamps that can move and can speak.\(^{45}\) But what would naturally come as a shock, living lamps, is made familiar by giving the lamps social status as in human society.\(^{46}\) The scene becomes even more familiar when the narrator happens to find his own lamp among those in the city, and the lamp is able to give him all the latest news from home.\(^{47}\) These lamps do not threaten the mariners, and even offer to take them up as guest-friends, but the mariners are terrified,

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\(^{43}\) c.f. \textit{VH} I.8.

\(^{44}\) c.f. Möllendorf (2000, pp. 273-274). No interaction occurs because there are no strange creatures that dwell on the island. The name Galatea, however, brings with it an implicit connection to the Cyclops Polyphemos; where one is we would expect to find the other. This expectation is not fulfilled, and the Cyclops is never seen.

\(^{45}\) c.f. \textit{VH} I.29.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) By telling Lucian about what is happening back home, the lamp also gives him proof that his story is true. Lucian can now return home knowing what went on in his absence, knowledge he could only gain from something that has access to his household (for the idea that lamps know what is happening in the household, c.f. Möllendorf (2000, pp. 198-199)).
so scared in fact that they can neither eat nor sleep. Here we have an example of potential interaction, as on the island of Tyroessa. The offer of guest-friendship by the lamps leads the reader to expect the mariners to have an adventure with them, while the fear expressed by the mariners leads us to believe something terrible will happen to them. This expectation, though, is not fulfilled, and the mariners can continue on their journey without any harm coming to them.

The concluding adventure of the third episode takes place on the Island of Dreams. Here the mariners find dreams that, just like the lamps, walk and talk, have social status, and take them in as guest friends. The mariners even find dreams that are familiar to them and learn tidings of their home from them. Again we would expect the mariners to be afraid; if they were so terrified of living lamps, how much more should they be afraid of living dreams? But the mariners are not, and allow themselves to be taken care of and fêted by the dreams. Here the potential interaction, passed up by the mariners in Lampopolis, occurs. The mariners stay with the dreams until they are ripped from their sleep by a loud clap of thunder and immediately supply their ship and disembark.

In this way the episodes are structured chiastically: the introductory adventure of the first episode culminates in interaction, which is missing in the third episode. In the concluding adventure, this is reversed: the first episode ends in the potential for interaction, while, in the third episode, this interaction takes place. This chi-asmus shows that all of these adventures should be examined in the context of the whole episode and not as individual, unrelated scenes.

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48 c.f. VH I.29.
49 c.f. VH II.34.
50 c.f. VH II.34.
51 c.f. VH II.35.
52 See figure 1.
Figure 1: The Chiastic Structure of Episodes I and III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode I: The Voyage to the Moon</th>
<th>Episode III. The Underworld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Adventure:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introductory Adventure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island of the Vinewomen</td>
<td>Sea of Milk and Island of Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Actual Interaction: Death of several mariners at the hands of the Vinewomen.</em></td>
<td><em>Potential Interaction: Expected interaction with inhabitants of the Island never occurs.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main body of Action:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Main body of Action:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Capture by the Moon men.</td>
<td>1. The Corkfooters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Welcome at the Court of Endymion.</td>
<td>2. Capture by the border guards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Battle against the Sun people.</td>
<td>3. Welcome by Rhadamanthys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Leavetaking.</td>
<td>5. Funeral games and invasion by the inhabitants of the Island of the Damned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Attempted escape by several members of Lucian’s crew and Helen.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Expulsion from the Island of the Blessed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Description of the Island of the Damned.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concluding Adventure:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concluding Adventure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lampopolis</td>
<td>The Island of Dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Potential Interaction: The Mariners are terrified, and therefore do not interact with the lamps.</em></td>
<td><em>Actual Interaction: The Mariners are accepted and feted by the dreams.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the implications if the chiastic adventures act as introduction and conclusion to their respective episodes? These adventures seem to act as a transition from the normal world to the extraordinary world in which the main action takes place. This idea of transition is supported by the isolation of the Underworld from the rest of the world. The battle between the souls of the heroes and the souls of the damned shows that these two areas are connected; the battle is only possible because the souls of the damned are able to sail from their island to the Island of the Blessed. We find out, however, that the souls are not able to sail anywhere, but must stay within the confines of the Underworld. When Helen and Kinyras decide to elope and flee the Island together, they nearly escape but, in fact, fail. They almost reach the Island of Cheese. If the Island of Cheese marks a point beyond which the souls of the heroes cannot sail, then that part of the Sea of Milk is within the bounds of the Underworld and part is not, thus making the Island a transition point from the land of the living to the land of the dead.

**Symbolic Death**

To cross the Sea of Milk, then, is to die. The mariners, though, are alive: τί παθόντες ἔτι ζῶντες ἱεροῦ χωρίου ἐπιβαίημεν “what have you suffered that we come, alive, to the holy land,” (VH II.10). This question of Rhadamanthys seems, at first, to be clear - the mariners are also to be punished for their curiosity, but only after they die, since they are alive and therefore out of the jurisdiction of Rhadamanthys. Lucian, however, as he admits in the preface, is constantly lying, and the living state of the mariners is soon put to question. Kinyras, one of the crew falls in love with Helen, and decides to flee with her. How, though, can these two interact? Kinyras is a living man and Helen is ἀναφεῖς καὶ ἄσαρκοι εἰσιν “they are untouchable and fleshless” (VH II.12). Thus, no physical interaction should be possible between these two lovers. However these two manage their love, they make their escape, but are quickly apprehended and brought back to face judgment. Kinyras (along with his confederates) is bound up, tortured, and dragged off for punishment on the Island of the Damned. If Kinyras was not under the authority of Rhadamanthys when they

53  c.f. VH II.23.
54  c.f. VH II.26.
55  c.f. VH II.25.
56  c.f. VH II.26.
arrived, why is he now? And if they were under his authority then, why were they not punished? The punishment foreseen by Rhadamanthys for the rest of the crew too, seems to have been abandoned:

αὐτοὶ μέντοι παρεμυθοῦντο λέγοντες οὐ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ἀφίξεσθαι πάλιν ὡς αὐτούς, καὶ μοι ἤδη εἰς τοῦπιόν θρόνον τε καὶ κλισίαν ἐπεδείκνυσαν πλησίον τῶν ἀρίστων. (VH II.27)

“They consoled me, saying that I would return to them before too many years went by, and they showed me the throne and couch, prepared for me near the best of them.”

Despite this uncertainty, Rhadamanthys’ question places our mariners in the tradition of heroes who undergo a *katabasis*. Certainly this can be interpreted as one of the many allusions to the *Odyssey* in the *Verae Historiae*. But this also puts Lucian and his men in the same tradition as other heroes such as Heracles and Orpheus. That Lucian stands in this tradition helps us in our interpretation. Heracles, before he journeys to the Underworld, becomes an initiate in the Eleusynian mysteries; and Orpheus is himself the pseudo-historical founder of a mystery religion. The connection with Orpheus is an important one, as Lucian seems to be using the position of the Sea of Milk to allude specifically to a certain aspect of the Orphic mystery cult.

CONCLUSION

Did Lucian use Orphic imagery for his ‘implied reader’? Since the introductory adventures of the episodes are transitional, bringing the mariners into the sphere where action takes place; and since this action takes place in the Underworld, then the Sea of Milk can be considered to be the Orphic symbol of the transition from life to death. Guthrie, who claims that the Tablets were quotations out of a longer eschatological literature which had a great impact on, for example, Plato, answers the question of how Lucian and other authors would have gotten access to these Tablets.\(^58\) This eschatological literature, then, provided Lucian with his allusions. It would be too much of a coincidence that the transition from life to death in Lucian would be marked by milk without some tacit illusion to the Orphic Gold Tablets, in which falling into the milk marks the moment of the initiates’ death.

\(^{58}\) Guthrie (1993).
Works Cited


Students file into the classroom and take their seats.¹ I ask, “Who is ready to recite the poem?” Most of their hands shoot up quickly, and the chosen student bounds happily to the front of the room, where he loads and plays a music file. Heads start to bounce, and the student begins reciting the poem. This is Hip-Hop Hexameter, a method I created three years ago to help students understand dactylic hexameter using looped beats. I teach at the Foote School, a K-9 independent school where all students take both Latin and a modern foreign language in grades 7-9. Each year, these students memorize at least one piece of poetry in both of their foreign languages classes and English class. I am able to spend six 42-minute periods teaching my students about Latin poetry and helping them memorize a piece of ten to fourteen lines. The project began with one group of 9th graders who were studying the opening of the Aeneid in an Honors Latin II class, and the results were so encouraging that I have also used this method to introduce 8th graders to dactylic hexameter for the past two years.

¹ A version of this paper was presented at the 108th CANE Annual Meeting in Manchester, NH, and I am grateful to all of those who gave me comments and feedback. I would also like to thank NECJ’s anonymous referee, Tina Hansen, Debra Riding, and John Turner for their insightful suggestions on an earlier draft of this article.
The first goal of the project is to help students not only to understand but also to experience the difference between the quantitative meters of Classical Latin and the accentual meters of English. I found that one traditional method of teaching Latin in meter, heavily emphasizing the metrical stress on the ictus, helped my students lengthen the long syllables but still left them with the impression that the placement of the stress accent was the defining feature of ancient verse. Therefore, I decided to try a new way of presenting Latin poetry to them. Because all of my students have a basic familiarity with musical notation, rendering long and short syllables as notes is a more effective way to present syllable quantity. It also helps them understand that Latin poetry is meant to be read aloud and performed.

The second goal of the project is to make memorizing Latin poetry both easier and more fun. Although the method described here could work for any type of musical accompaniment to ancient poetry, hip-hop, or rap music, is uniquely suited to this purpose. Hip-hop is characterized by spoken words over repeated rhythmic patterns. It has become a genre of pop, and students encounter it every day, both when listening to their own favorite songs and also in commercials. Connecting Latin poetry to music that students enjoy and know well gets them excited to recite the poetry. Not only are students deeply familiar with hip-hop, but it is also the most common type of formal poetry today. In fact, as Adam Bradley explains:

The beat in rap is poetic meter rendered audible. Rap follows a dual rhythmic relationship whereby the MC is liberated to pursue innovations of syncopation and stress that would sound chaotic without the regularity of the musical rhythm. The beat and the MC’s flow, or cadence, work together to satisfy the audience’s musical and poetic expectations: most notably, that rap establish and maintain rhythmic patterns while creatively disrupting those patterns, through syncopation and other pleasing forms of rhythmic surprise.

Ancient poetry also has a kind of dual rhythmic relationship. A Roman listening to the Aeneid would have understood and felt the basic rhythm of dactylic hexameter; he would have been able to appreciate the clever ways in which Vergil played with his expectations. A beginning Latin student, however, does not have an internal sense of hexameter rhythm. Playing a beat along with the recitation externalizes

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2 See Mahoney for a critique of this method, which she calls “scanning aloud” (2001, pp. 396–397).

this rhythm, helping anyone to hear and appreciate the artistry involved in both the composition and performance. The performances themselves become enjoyable opportunities for students to exhibit their own interests, talents, and creativity, as well as show their knowledge of ancient poetry.

The project itself begins with the students reading at home and discussing in class the introduction to Adam Bradley’s *Book of Rhymes: the Poetics of Hip Hop*, which helps them look at hip-hop music as formal poetry. Next, I present them with a text of the first eleven lines of the *Aeneid* that includes scansion. The students learn the rules for when syllables scan long or short, but the focus of the project is reading Latin aloud rather than scanning lines of poetry. To encourage them to read with the natural word stress rather than to stress the first syllable of every foot, I have marked the stress accent on their text, in blue when the natural stress falls on the first syllable of each foot and in red when the stress is not on the first syllable. I also give the students an alternate text with the rhythm of the poem in musical notation.

In musical notation, one foot of a dactylic hexameter verse becomes one measure or bar with a 4/4 time signature. A half note represents a long syllable, and a quarter note represents a short syllable. See figure 1 for a representation of a dactyl and a spondee in musical notation. Thus, a basic line of dactylic hexameter is six measures long.

![Figure 1 - Dactyl and Spondee](image)

Figure 2 shows the rhythm of the first line of the *Aeneid* with the words transcribed underneath. Representing each metrical foot as a measure requires playing the music at a fast tempo, but it makes the students’ musical compositions correspond more closely to the way I teach them to analyze hexameter.⁴

![Figure 2 - Aeneid L.1](image)

Note that Mahoney explains long and short syllables differently, as quarter and eighth notes. She also argues that one should not attempt to give Classical meters a time signature in musical notation. It is true that Latin meters besides dactylic hexameter cannot be divided into equal units of time, and a Roman probably would not take exactly the same amount of time to recite different lines of even those two meters. The aim of this project, however, is not to produce a perfectly authentic recitation but rather to make learning about
Presenting Latin poetry in this way also helps students follow the natural word stress. By identifying the downbeats and encouraging students to experiment with syncopation, or accenting the ‘off’ beat, I am able to show more effectively that some of the artistry of Latin poetry emerges from the interplay between metrical stress and natural word stress. In the first line of the Aeneid, for instance, the downbeats are \textit{ca-} in the second foot and \textit{Tro-} in the third. Thus, the students’ knowledge of modern musical techniques helps them understand accentuation as well as syllable quantity in Latin poetry. Furthermore, telling students that they themselves must resolve the tension between metrical and natural stress gives them ownership of the performance process and helps them move beyond singsong or chant-like recitations. To help my students understand the importance of reciting with the natural word stress this year, I invited them to try the scanning aloud technique with Frederick Ahl’s hexameter translation of the Aeneid. Early Latin learners do not always appreciate how strange Latin verse sounds with heavy stress on the first syllable of every foot, but the problem with this placement of the stress accent in a line of English hexameter is easy even for beginning students to hear.

After learning about dactylic hexameter in the first class period devoted to the project, the students begin using Apple’s GarageBand to make a beat in the second class. I demonstrate how to make the beat for a single foot, and then the students experiment with creating their own music.\textsuperscript{5} Students have one or two classes to work on their compositions before performing the poem over their own beat. For this initial performance, students are allowed to read from a text of the poem. We stage a ‘Roman Rap Battle,’ and students vote for a winning beat and ‘rapper.’ In the first year, I observed and the students confirmed that even reading the poem aloud helped them memorize it, so I now give them multiple opportunities to practice the whole poem in front of the class with a text. Later, students are responsible for reciting the poem over their beats from memory. Finally, students submit an audio recording of themselves reciting the poem over their beat, and I use some of these recordings as examples for the next group of students.

I measured the effectiveness of the first iteration of the project by checking the accuracy of students’ recall of \textit{Aeneid} I.1-11 and by having students do an anonymous quantitative meter accessible and enjoyable for beginning Latin students. Trying to apply a musical time signature to Latin poetry would not be appropriate for more advanced students, who are studying meters other than dactylic hexameter, but it has worked well as an introduction to epic meter (2001, p. 397).

\textsuperscript{5} Visit \textcolor{blue}{http://blogs.footeschool.org/latin/hip-hop-hexameter/} for sample GarageBand files and a PowerPoint with detailed instructions for creating a beat.
evaluation after they submitted their final pieces. Of the fifteen students who participated in the project, fourteen completed the evaluation form. All of these students had previously studied Latin meter and memorized a piece of Latin poetry twice, once with me and once with another teacher. Every student successfully recited the poem, and the evaluation results showed evidence that most students were meeting the learning goals. Responses indicated that 71% of respondents believed they understood hexameter better after the project, and 71% were able to explain the meter of a hexameter line clearly and succinctly. Additionally, 64% said this approach made studying Latin poetry more enjoyable or much more enjoyable, and 57% said that memorizing the poetry was easier or much easier.

The recordings made by the first group of students were not suitable for use as teaching tools because they were made with headset microphones. Two summers ago, I won an ING Unsung Heroes Award for the project, and I used the proceeds to purchase high quality recording equipment. Recordings made by 9th graders last year and this year became an important part of my lessons on dactylic hexameter for the 8th graders, who were also very enthusiastic about the process. I have never seen teenagers so excited to recite poetry in front of their peers. Some even searched YouTube for instrumental versions of their favorite songs and asked for more chances to recite poetry in class. This project helps Latin poetry come alive for students, and they understand the difference between quantitative meter and accentual meter better with this method than with others that I have tried. Although the final pieces are undoubtedly different from an ancient Roman’s recitation of the same poetry, the benefits of approaching Latin hexameter in this way are significant for modern students.


H. Paul Brown,

*Twenty Greek Stories (Designed to Accompany Hansen and Quinn’s Greek: An Intensive Course).*


Pp. xiii + 222. Paper


Hansen and Quinn’s *Greek: An Intensive Course*, long a favorite Greek textbook of many college students and autodidacts for its thorough grammatical exposition and bountiful drill and exercise sentences, has at last found a companion reader worthy of its intensity in H. Paul Brown’s *Twenty Greek Stories*. While it was composed on the model of the *38 Latin Stories* reader, which accompanies *Wheelock’s Latin*, Brown’s new work easily outstrips its Latin exemplar with its fifty-seven reading passages plus appendices. Indeed the sheer number and rich variety of passages render this new reader a useful accompaniment to many other Greek textbooks. The number of stories per unit (generally three) is in keeping with the spirit of Hansen and Quinn (hereafter H&Q), while the annotations and running vocabulary are similarly generous throughout. H&Q, it should be noted, also include short ‘Readings’ with running vocabulary for most of their book, but the majority of the selections in the first half of their work, apart from Menander’s *Monostichoi*, are poetic. Thus Brown’s effort immediately justifies itself. A closer look reveals a number of features that add to this impression.

Running line-by-line vocabulary features copiously throughout all the selections and achieves the author’s stated aim of “minimizing the need for ‘page flipping’” (ix). The depth and frequency of the annotations are the most striking pedagogical element throughout, as Brown guides the reader along in an engaging style that simultaneously reviews (“Review,” p. 128 and “H&Q §118,” p. 441), interrogates (“what number and gender must δεξιὰ be here?”, p. 2) and challenges (“Σθενώ: one of the three Gorgons. Use the other names to determine what case this name is,” p. 100) the learner. Thirteen of the twenty units include an appended ‘Review’ page, while all units are prefaced by a ‘Grammar Assumed’ section. Students who appreciate H&Q’s learned ‘Vocabulary Notes’ will undoubtedly value the annotator’s
strenuous and anticipatory didaxis. What of the texts themselves?

Brown's choice of passages is a sound one and begins with three select fables of Aesop (Unit 1) and the prose theogony from Apollodoros' *Library of Greek Mythology* (Units 2–3). These initial stories are particularly welcome to beginners, as the ‘Readings’ sections in H&Q commence only at the end of Unit 4. Units 4–6 will not fail to appeal to today’s learner with their focus on magic (‘The Pella Curse Tablet’ and ‘Orphic Instructions for the Afterlife’) and the wonders of the mythical city of Atlantis, for which Brown draws from those famous portions of Plato’s *Timaus* and *Critias*. Hardly less enchanting are his selections from Lucian, the *Dialogues* and *The True History*, (Units 7–9). Lucian's dialogues are substantially easier than most of Plato’s, which make them ideal choices for an introductory reader, while Zeus and Prometheus are perhaps more universally recognizable interlocutors than, say, Socrates and Ion. The *True History* selections (Units 8–9) likewise prove an excellent choice, as they include epic *Odyssey/Argonautica*-like adventures and elements of ancient science-fiction (‘The War in the Sky’), all in minimally altered ancient prose. As most students of introductory Greek are familiar with mythology and Homer’s *Odyssey*, these passages will provide some useful exposure to ancient literary genres and reception. The author is to be commended here for his judicious choice of Lucian, full of fantasy and a rich parodic style, over an altered version of Odysseus’ wanderings.

Brown shifts to poetry for the first time with Units 10 and 11, which feature the resolution of the conflict in *Iliad* 1 (including sacrifice and prayer scenes) and the *Hymn to Apollo* respectively. While these passages require substantially more editorial effort to ‘Atticize’ the epic poetic dialect (by adding temporal augments, Attic forms: ‘κλῦθί μου’ instead of epic ‘κλῦθί μευ’, etc.), the overall effect is salutary. As the complete omission Homer from this reader would have been highly lamentable, the editor’s extra efforts are to be applauded. Similar claims for inclusion may be made for the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* with its establishment of the Delphic oracle. The narratives of ‘Hera’s Anger’ and Apollo’s slaying of the dragon are at the core of Greek culture and modern scholarship on historical linguistics. In terms of thematic continuity (one of Brown’s stated aims), the figure of Apollo ties both sets of narratives together nicely. Apollodorus’ *Library* provides material for the Perseus narratives in Units 12 and 13, before Brown returns to Hesiod’s *Theogony* for more Prometheus material. Given the earlier treatment of Prometheus and Zeus in Lucian’s dialogue, one might have expected something thematically different here.

The most unusual choices in *Twenty Greek Stories* are certainly the two which are excerpted from Appian’s *Roman History* and narrate Hannibal’s military tactics
in Italy during the Second Punic War (Units 16 and 17). Grammatically appropriate and dramatically satisfying though these episodes may be, one wonders why Brown did not choose an historical text featuring Hellenes as protagonists (from Xenophon, Polybius or Arrian) or at least as keenly interested observers. Indeed Appian’s other works (Mithradatic Wars, Syrian Wars) provide fertile sources of intense dramatic Greco-Roman conflict set in the wider Hellenistic world.

Twenty Greek Stories finishes strongly, in any case, as the final four units (17-20) are divided evenly between poetry (Sappho’s lyrics and the epic ‘Battle of the Frogs and the Mice’, 17 and 20) and history (Herodotus’ Kandaules and Gyges tale, 18 and 19). The two Sappho poems, which include ‘The Hymn to Aphrodite’ and ‘The Lover’s Lament’ are especially well done, as Brown has included full versions of both the Aeolic original (including boldface Aeolic forms) and Catullus’ Latin adaptation with an English translation. The final mock-epic passage from the Frogs and Mice provides a solid ending and serves, like the aforementioned passage from Lucian, as a rich entry into the worlds of literary reception and satire.

Beyond the texts and review materials, the four illustrations are well placed and integrated into their respective texts. Of these I single out only the first, which features a golden Orphic prayer leaf. The image is quite clear for grayscale and is accompanied by a complete transliteration along with some interesting orthographic notes and questions. The charms of magic are always an attractive element and Brown has wisely positioned these ‘Two Magical Texts’ and illustration at a strategicaly early place in the reader.

Some final indications of the quality of this reader are the Appendices, of which Appendix B contains a full list of proper names (people and places), the likes of which one finds in the back of gems like Woodhouse’s English-Greek Dictionary. The 38-page Greek to English Vocabulary is a final piece of compelling evidence of the great care which the author has invested in every page of this work.

In the end, one gains an inescapable impression—from the depth of engaged annotation as much as by the thoughtful choice of passages—that H. Paul Brown knows intimately the needs and interests of today’s Greek student and has striven very hard to meet them. Thus I consider this 222-page reader a giant pedagogical effort, full of that old πόνος so prized by the Greeks and worth much more than the modest price suggests.

NECJ 42.2

Brian T. Walsh
The University of Vermont
Ian Worthington,
By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire.


The study of Philip II and Alexander the Great is often separated despite both ancient interests in comparing the two Macedonian kings and the inextricable connection between them in terms of the rapid growth of the Macedonian empire in the fourth century BC. This division is especially significant in books written for general audiences and has left Philip, and Macedonian state building more broadly, off the radar of many readers. By the Spear, which specifically serves as a study of both rulers in a single volume, is the latest offering in the “Ancient Warfare and Civilization” series that seeks to provide new narratives of military history accessible to a broad audience. To that end, the book adheres closely to the narrative form and relies primarily on literary sources to help structure that narrative. While the political and military history is likely familiar to most academic readers, it is presented in a lively and accessible manner and should be easily followed by those less familiar with the period more broadly. More interesting for all, however, is the comparative study of the two rulers and Worthington’s emphasis on Philip and his state-building activities in contrast with Alexander’s failure to provide stability for his newly conquered empire.

The reign of Philip II, which comprises the first half of the book, is presented in terms of the rapid speed with which Philip transformed Macedonia from a collapsing backwater upon his accession to the throne in 359 BC into the leading power in the Greek world at his death in 336. Accordingly, the volume opens with the Persian Wars and by framing the rise of Macedonia in the wider context of the drive of the Greek poleis for autonomia and eleutheria. Worthington does an excellent job navigating the complex waters of Philip’s military campaigns as he expanded and secured his power in northern Greece and then seized control as the leading member of the Delphic Amphictyonic League. Throughout these campaigns, Philip consistently emerges as the victor as a result of reforms to the Macedonian state that emphasized new military tactics and equipment, professionalization of the army, and a keen attention to arguably new institutions, such as that of the royal pages, that served to bind the contentious Macedonian aristocracy to the persona of the King. Following the battle of Chaeronea, the creation of the League of Corinth is
described a “brilliant and revolutionary” (p. 100) move that managed to solve the problems created by the various hegemonic powers of the fourth century and their desire for autonomy as a putative stalemate between the rival Greek states enforced by each other and by Macedonian military power above all. Throughout these chapters, Worthington does an effective job of demonstrating how Philip secured stability by binding local institutions, both of the Macedonian state and of the conquered poleis, to himself and to the institution of Macedonian kingship.

If Philip’s legacy is to be found in the triumph of the League of Corinth, Worthington argues that the legacy of Alexander is found in his failure to consolidate his kingdom and in the chaos that followed his death in 323 BC. Throughout the second half of the book, Worthington consistently emphasizes Alexander’s tactical and military brilliance with particular note in the three major battles at Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela. In contrast with his conquests on the battlefield, Worthington also stresses Alexander’s failure to manage the strain among his troops after the conquest of Babylon, exemplified by such episodes as the murder of Cleitus the Black and the Opis Mutiny, and follows Arrian in attributing this to Alexander’s increasing orientalism. Importantly, Worthington allows that this tendency towards eastern models of power and kingship may have been part of a wider strategy in governing the multi-cultural empire. Although Macedonians were installed as satraps over conquered territories in the west, Alexander made increasing use of local aristocrats for this role in the east. This strategy, which is extremely well described in Chapter Ten, was built on Achaemenid precedents and was clearly intended to produce stability, but also served to distance Alexander’s Macedonian companions from the operations and rewards of power. Although this connection might have been made slightly more directly in the text, it remains an important suggestion with particular resonance when thinking about the struggle for power and wealth of the Wars of the Successors, argued here to be Alexander’s ultimate legacy.

The most interesting aspect of this work is found in the comparison of the two rulers at the end of the chapters on Philip and in the conclusion. Worthington here leans heavily on an interesting passage of Justin comparing the two figures with a certain preference for Philip as the better king for Macedonia in comparison with Alexander’s role as a conquering military leader. As Worthington argues throughout, there is some evidence that the Macedonian homeland did not wholly embrace Alexander while he was alive. Most significantly, Macedonian mints stopped producing Alexander’s coinage after the Battle of Issus and monuments in honor of Alexander’s campaigns are found only in the east during his lifetime. Under this interpretation, the popularity of Alexander as a conqueror is to be found in the
Greek world only after his death in direct contrast with his contemporary legacy in the east. This is an interesting and important note, though some quibbles might be had, and raises significant issues on who exactly viewed Alexander as “Great,” when, and on what basis. Alexander may well have conquered the world, but the resultant instability did little good for Macedonia in contrast with the stability achieved by Philip. This argument is particularly successful inasmuch as it moves beyond the simple fact of the dissolution of Alexander’s conquests—which, after all, had required him to govern an almost impossibly vast space far greater than the demands placed on Philip—into a larger examination of the values of Kingship thought desirable by surviving sources.

By examining the rise of the Macedonian Empire under both Philip II and Alexander together, Worthington encourages readers to think not just in terms of the biographies of great leaders but also about the ways in which they built, or attempted to build, new political and military structures. More importantly, by putting his vast knowledge of the source material for this period on display, Worthington has also successfully managed to give a broad readership an opportunity to see how history works through the careful reading and analysis of the perspectives and aims of surviving sources. This book deserves a wide audience and, one hopes, will serve well to encourage readers to think carefully about what characteristics are most desirable in a leader and how perceptions of such leaders may change over time.

NECJ 42.2

Paul Keen
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Aaron M. Seider,  
*Memory in Vergil’s Aeneid: Creating the Past.*  
(ISBN 978-1-107-03180-7) $95.00

Seider’s book is a welcome addition to the recent scholarly work on the *Aeneid* and makes a convincing case for the importance of analyzing the concept of memory as shaping history and identity in the poem. The book’s overall argument, that Aeneas’ Trojan past figures into the Roman future in important ways, is well worth considering, while many of Seider’s layered readings of famous episodes offer interesting insights in the ways in which memory serves as a means to construct social and national identity.

In the introduction, the author lays out the book’s main claim, that memory is the result of a dynamic process carried out by the poem’s protagonist, the narrator, and various other characters. Seider argues that the poem demonstrates that there is no uniform way to construct memory but that it is the result of a process that involves a variety of different and even clashing perspectives. Seider traces vocabulary that relates to the acts of remembering and commemoration and draws on both memory studies (in social sciences) and narratology. Seider uses theory sparingly and his analysis is relatively jargon-free, focusing primarily on the text itself.

The author identifies three types of memory relevant to his argument: individual memory (a person remembers his past), social memory (memory spoken aloud by a group member and influenced by the member’s place within it), and oikotype (a standardized version of the past adopted by the community).

In chapter one, Seider discusses how memory is manipulated in various episodes of the *Aeneid* so as to link the Trojans’ past to their Roman future. Beginning with the Trojans’ eating of the tables when they arrive in Italy, the author argues that Aeneas’ recollection of the prophecy as given by Anchises is not a mistake but an example of oikotype. By consigning Celaeno to oblivion, Aeneas demonstrates that forgetting is an important aspect of creating a foundation story. By contrast, an analysis of various other episodes shows that Vergil employs viewpoints with different and contradicting evaluations of the past. Through a discussion of many interesting episodes (the killing of Lausus, Evander’s description of proto-Rome, Anchises’ words to Aeneas in the underworld, among others), Seider convincingly argues that the Trojans understand their present and future through manipulating memory, by trying to create a past that will do justice both to their present and future.
Although most of Seider’s readings are valuable and convincing, some reservations remain about considering prophecy and memory as analogous concepts. While it is true that Aeneas in Book 8 remembers a prophecy given to him in Book 3, the Sibyl’s prophecy and that of Anchises in the underworld are profoundly different in nature. Ambiguity is one of prophecy’s constitutive characteristics: mortals are called on to provide an interpretation, a precarious endeavor. Even though prophecy can be used to affect collective memory, it rather emphasizes the instability of interpretation and its repercussions on humans.

Chapter two discusses Aeneas’ struggle to create a new remembering community that will both honor the Trojans’ memory of Troy and carry them into the future. The author begins by analyzing Juno’s wrath (memorem ... iram, 1.5), whereby she uses her past trauma (injustices by the Trojans) to create new trauma for the Trojans. Seider then proceeds with a thoughtful analysis of Aeneas’ famous speeches to his comrades (1.94–101; 1.198–207), arguing that they express anxiety about and hope for commemoration. Viewed in this light, Dido’s murals are a reassurance that memory of Aeneas and Troy will not be lost. Seider ends with a discussion of the episode in Buthrotum, where he posits that it illustrates Aeneas’ decision to pay tribute to Troy’s existence in a new way. It could be countered, however, that Aeneas realizes he needs to found a different city than Troy precisely because Andromache’s and Helenus’ version is such a failure. I would rather suggest that in Buthrotum Aeneas learns the same lesson we saw in chapter one, that a portion of the past needs to be left behind or forgotten as a necessary condition for advancing into the future.

The next chapter explores how Aeneas deals with memory in relation to other people and Dido in particular. The author makes a very good case that in his narration to Dido, Aeneas focuses on events from his past and that his self-representation omits crucial information regarding his future in Italy. Although initially Dido internalizes Aeneas’ memories, she eventually destroys any traces of his memory (monimenta 4.497) in an attempt to create her own commemoration of their relationship. Her suicide rivals Aeneas’ version of events and challenges his assurances that he will remember her as long as he remembers himself. I found particularly perceptive Seider’s discussion of the intertext of Catullus 64, where he argues for Aeneas’ difference from Theseus. I wish he had taken his analysis even deeper to ponder on the implications of Dido’s versions of Roman future (or Roman past for Vergil’s audience), especially in view of her rewriting of Roman history with an alternative interpretation of the Carthaginian wars as retribution for past wrongs (especially in 4.625–29). Dido’s competing legacy has implications for Roman history and how it will be remembered by Romans.
Chapter four focuses on the narrator’s perspective on memory and his attempt to control commemoration. Seider gives an excellent analysis of the narrator’s apostrophes and shows how they shape the audience into a remembering community by championing a standardized version of the past. Various characters, however, display a variety of other perspectives that challenge the narrator’s omniscient version of events; the death of Nisus and Euryalus is a fine example of the ways in which the narrator’s commemoration is challenged by the lament of Euryalus’ mother that offers a strong alternative. Here again, Seider could have reflected more into the ways in which Vergil creates alternative memory-making processes. As in the case of Dido, Euryalus’ mother expresses a female perspective that goes against that of the narrator. We would have benefited from Seider’s insights on the fact that different or opposing perspectives are often gendered in the Aeneid. Overall, I found the author’s conclusion about the dynamic process of fashioning communal memory both interesting and illuminating, not least because I share the view that the Aeneid depicts an ideological process at work, not a fixed result of such a process.

The last chapter focuses on the final scene of the epic. In killing Turnus, Aeneas loses control of memory, gives in to his personal grief for the loss of Pallas, and Rome’s foundational moment, a moment to be remembered in the future, is an act of vengeance. In the reconciliation scene between Juno and Jupiter, Juno states that Troy and Rome cannot co-exist. Seider insightfully observes that Aeneas is absent from her rhetoric and argues that the Latins, not the Trojans, are Italy’s indigenous people and will supply the Romans’ defining characteristics. But Aeneas and the narrator construct a new community which is both Trojan and Roman. Aeneas’ final act shows that personal trauma cannot always be overcome in the name of a future reconciliation, yet an effort to do precisely that is necessary.

The book’s greatest strength is the multitude of sensitive, thought-provoking readings of the text. It is precisely these nuanced readings, however, that make the reader curious about their link to the poem’s Augustan context. The author briefly mentions Augustus and his attempts to control memory, such as in the case of the temple of Mars Ultor, but does not link the dynamic process of memory-making in the Aeneid to the process of ideological formation that occurs during Augustan times in Rome. Is Vergil offering a commentary on the difficulties involved? Is Aeneas’ ultimate failure to forego his personal memory of the past a commentary on Augustus’ difficulties to emerge convincingly as a new founder in the wake of the civil wars? There are instances where the memory of the father-and-son relationship can be fraught with painful difficulty (when for instance, Pompey and Caesar are called socer and gener in Aeneid 6.830–31) and stands in sharp contrast to that of
Anchises and Aeneas or of Aeneas and Ascanius. In the former case, the future is disrupted and memory cannot foster continuity.

If the reviewer may appear to have more questions than answers, it is thanks to the rich and stimulating discussions found throughout the book. Seider’s work tackles a fruitful line of inquiry that will surely stimulate more research on the problem of memory and identity in Roman literature.

NECJ 42.2

Vassiliki Panoussi
The College of William and Mary
Sueta$nius has the dubious distinction of being much read but little studied. His$ bi$ographies of the Caesars and “Illustrious Men,” filled with unique observations and$ salacious detail, are exploited as sources for political, social, and cultural histories,$ and yet his style, method, and aims as a writer have attracted relatively little atten$ tion. When he has been the subject of investigation, too often he is seen as falling$ short, but these judgments rest on applying to Sueta$nius standards and objectives$ that were not his own. The present volume of thirteen papers, which stem from a$ conference held in 2008 at the University of Manchester, explores Sueta$nius on his own terms. The first English language volume dedicated to Sueta$nius in well over two decades, the papers reveal the unity of Sueta$nius’ work and demonstrate the value of reading and studying Sueta$nius as a writer and stylist. While offering many new insights, the volume also points the way for further study of Suetonian biogra$phy. For the range of approaches and the up-to-date bibliography, the text should be the first stop for anyone considering future work.

Following an introductory essay by Tristan Power that frames the discussion and summarizes the contributions, the first nine papers explore aspects of the Lives of the Caesars. The first of Donna Hurley’s two contributions looks at the use of rubrics and divisions within the Lives and the tension that arises with matters of chronology. By privileging topics over chronology Sueta$nius has organized his volu$minous and diverse evidence in a way that allows comparisons to be drawn between the subjects of his biographies. The device is most successful in the Life of Augustus, which Hurley argues was established by Sueta$nius as a model for literary composition. The use of rubrics is shown to be less successful for emperors who had shorter reigns, and is suppressed when Sueta$nius chooses to connect negative qualities of his subjects with narratives of their deaths in order to show causation.

Sueta$nius’ use of quotations, the many instances where the subjects of his biogra$phies speak in their own voices, is the focus of Cynthia Damon’s study. These quo$ tations, Damon argues, are deployed by Sueta$nius in place of sententiae, providing a structural element at the conclusion of episodes and sections of rubrics. Damon’s reading simultaneously connects Sueta$nius to a major literary trend of his day and
marks him out as an innovator. In the space of a short article, Damon can only offer a sample; her ideas warrant further study.

Several articles demonstrate the need for reading the *Caesars* as a collection in order to appreciate Suetonius as a stylist. Tristan Power examines the endings of individual lives, revealing the artistry of Suetonius through verbal echoes and ring composition. The end of *Domitian*, Power argues, links back to the first quote from *Julius Caesar*, providing a new argument for the unity of composition. John Henderson contributes a narratological reading of the *Life of Julius Caesar*, also pointing to the unity of the lives. Henderson shows that Julius Caesar’s biography is programmatic as Caesar himself serves as an important literary theme in later lives. In regard to family, Augustus serves as an example of disappointed expectation in Rebecca Langlands’ contribution. Augustus, who worked to promote the family and set a new moral standard, is seen to fall far short of his goals as his hopes for the future fail to materialize. In the biographies of Augustus’ successors, Langlands shows, Suetonius uses hindsight as an effective literary device to reveal Augustus to be an ironic example.

The way that individual lives inform one another is explored in a number of other essays. Looking at Augustus’ fondness for setting examples, Erik Gunderson argues that Suetonius uses Augustus’ exemplarity to undermine Tiberius, whose own efforts to serve as a model end in failure. Focusing on Caligula, Hurley’s second contribution examines Suetonius’ use of irony in the account of Caligula’s death. Through comparison to Julius Caesar, Caligula’s assassination is seen as confirmation of his character. Returning to Augustus as a model, W. Jeffrey Tatum argues that Suetonius presents Titus as a successful emperor because, like Augustus, Titus was able to overcome his past. In the final chapter devoted to the Caesars, Jean-Michel Hull examines Suetonius’ reference to the mirrors of Domitian’s palace to explore his characterization of Domitian. Hull argues that the device of mirrors is used by Suetonius to portray Domitian as a lone tyrant who is unwilling to play the public role that Augustus so successfully embraced. Through his analysis, Hull restores what others have considered an unsuccessful biography.

Roy Gibson turns the focus to other works of Suetonius. By comparing the *De Viris Illustribus* with the discussion of literary figures found in Pliny’s letters, Gibson identifies Suetonius’ unique interest in social mobility through literature. While Gibson does not fully subscribe to the view that Suetonius represents a distinctly equestrian perspective, he nevertheless sees Suetonius as an important counterweight to the senatorial viewpoint presented by Pliny and others. In his second article in the volume, Tristan Power re-examines Suetonius’ work on “Famous
Courtesans,” known to us by title through a reference in the 6th century writings of John Lydus. Power suggests that the work was probably a commentary on literary beloveds, not a collection of biographies as has been generally believed. The breadth of Suetonius’ writings is also seen as T.P. Wiseman presents a forceful argument that we ought to follow Suetonius as a source for the evolution of pantomime from comedic performances of the Augustan age. Wiseman argues that Suetonius had a far wider ranging perspective than our extant comedic texts represent.

The final chapter by Jamie Wood considers Suetonius’ reputation in the Carolingian period and the use of the Lives of the Caesars by Einhard as a model for the Life of Charlemagne. Suetonius was known in the period not only directly through a manuscript of the Caesars, but also indirectly via mentions in the works of the earlier Christian writers, Jerome and Isidore. Wood’s essay serves as a fitting capstone to the volume. In the Carolingian age Suetonius was appreciated as a literary stylist of high repute. He was deemed worthy of imitation. In our day, as the diverse papers in this collection illustrate, we can benefit from considering Suetonius on his own terms.

As a whole, the volume makes a compelling case for examining Suetonius’ biographies as literary works. The rewards are a better understanding of the author and a new appreciation of the complexity of his writing. As is the case in any collection of essays that presents multiple views, the reader will find some arguments more convincing than others. It is not always clear that it is Suetonius’ artistry that is being revealed; it sometimes seems that an author is skilled at finding hidden meaning that may not have been intended by Suetonius himself. Nevertheless, those who mine Suetonius for evidence should be warned: Suetonius was concerned with more than simply ordering and recording details. If Suetonius’ style, method, and aims are not considered, the material cannot be fully appreciated or understood.

NECJ 42.2

Darryl A. Phillips
Connecticut College
Mary Beard,

*Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling and Cracking Up.*


Roman risibility receives cautious treatment. Articles and papers concentrate on topics that are weighty, arcane, or both. Excessive enthusiasm for, say, Plautine mischief risks the appearance, in some scholarly circles, of a form of intellectual suttee. Most classicists aren’t in the game for laughs: *sunt lacrimae rerum.*

Enter (stage left, naturally, from the forum, where the snappy repartee is) venturesome and energetic Mary Beard, who used her year as Sather Professor in 2008-2009 to consider what made the Romans laugh and why. Robert Benchley once said, “There seems to be no lengths to which humorless people will not go to analyze humor. It seems to worry them.” Professor Beard is neither humorless nor worried. Her present publication is, first, a general and theoretical discussion of “the slippery phenomenon of laughter,” (p. x) and, second, a presentation of specific topics which originated in individual Sather lectures. Along the way we learn, *inter alia,* that a weak joke was termed *frigidus*; barbershops were a good place to pick up the latest wisecrack; unworldly professorial types and the citizens of Abdera, in Thrace, were frequent butts of jokes; and baldness was a reliable source of humor. The latter must have made *calvus* Julius Caesar extra grateful for the *corona civica* he won at Miletus and which he wore as often as possible.

Beard begins by considering a number of theories of laughter, ranging from Aristotle to the 20th-century Russian philosopher Bakhtin. Despite a dutiful survey, she finds little firm guidance and moves cheerfully forward on her own, with an almost affectionate skepticism for the earlier scholarship. Wry phrases like “optimistically attributed” (p. 30), “the text is the product of much hard work by modern scholars,” (p. 55), “overconfident assumptions” (p. 83), and “Scholars ... have massaged fragments to fit” (p. 203) are encountered *passim.*

A surprise is Beard’s reluctance make much reference to the Saturnalia, “one of the least understood but most confidently talked about of all Roman rituals” (p. 63). She states that as example of Roman role-reversal the Saturnalia is a “much flimsier construction than is generally allowed” (p. 64), and thus cannot support a close investigation into the societal inversions that produce humor by incongruity. Beard is always careful not to over-reach, given the paucity of evidence and the remove of time. Regarding the latter: “We always run two different and opposite risks: both of
exaggerating the strangeness of past laughter and of making it all too comfortably like our own.” (p. 54). There are other traps. Beard notes that the Romans admired “Attic salt,” the clever raillery of the Athenians, but the term itself, wit as *sal*, seen clearly in Catullus, is a Roman and not Greek construct. The Greeks did not use their own word for salt, *hales*, in that fashion. However, later Greeks like Plutarch spoke of the *hales* of Aristophanes and Menander, having adopted the foreign term and perhaps the Roman and not Greek perspective.

For the non-specialist, the pace picks up considerably in Part Two, whose topics include Cicero and his *de Oratore*, verbal jousting between emperor and subjects, funny animals, and a late Roman joke book titled *Philogelos*. The Cicero whom Beard treats in Chapter 5 is not the hurler of grim involuted volleys at L. Sergius Catilina. School and university students, and perhaps some teachers, will benefit from meeting a witty man whose levity often made him appear frivolous to less jocose peers. Beard makes a point which gets to the pith of aristocratic *dignitas*, and perhaps by extension, *Romanitas* itself. An orator, by definition a competitive public figure in a competitive public society, had to be extremely careful that his humor was directed at others and could not somehow deflect back on himself, as the figure of fun. At the center of this dilemma is the dual nature of the term *ridiculosus*, one of those frequent and frequently puzzling Latin adjectives which has both an active and a passive interpretation. Is that fellow up on the Rostra or in the basilica pointing laughter at others or is he himself laughable for his efforts? Power rests with those who drive the response, not with the object of the laughter. Additionally, the origin of the humorous material was important. Besides skill of presentation, the orator’s status as a public performer rested on ownership of his own words. The mark of an independent, active aristocrat was his ability to create fresh material for the occasion, so to speak, while the very much lower-caste stage actor merely passively recited lines that had been written for him.

Laughter as power appears again in Chapter 6, From Emperor to Jester. Confident Caesar Augustus could appear to be joshing himself, slightly, when he asked a hesitant petitioner if the fellow thought he was offering a small coin to an elephant. Augustus, moreover, tolerated a more obvious joke, one which threatened the very legitimacy of his patriarchal power. Upon encountering a visitor to Rome who greatly resembled him, the emperor asked if the man’s mother had ever been in Rome. The man replied, no, but his father had. By contrast, the monster emperors (Beard’s term) used humor as a form of degradation. Caligula, to take an extreme example, forced a man to watch his own son’s execution and then invited the man to dinner that evening, during which Caligula impelled his guest to laugh during jok-
ing banter. The victim tolerated this treatment, apparently, because he had another
son to protect.

The eighth and last chapter, *The Laughter Lover*, deals with the *Philogelos*, a
collection of about 265 jokes dating to perhaps the fourth or fifth century CE. Beard
argues that “the jokebook was characteristically, if not exclusively, Roman ... [and] ...
the joke as we understand it was a Roman invention.” (p. 186). This requires explana-
tion. Beard is of course not suggesting that the Romans were the first to tell jokes.
Her proposal, perhaps intentionally more provocative than persuasive, is that by col-
lecting jokes for the use by street-corner comedians, moochers hoping to exchange
one-liners for a dinner invitation, unimaginative barristers, or simply someone with
grandchildren to entertain for the afternoon, the Romans created the joke as a com-
modity, to be bought and sold in the marketplace. With that interesting thought,
Beard leaves us pondering, if not exactly laughing.

Which reminds me. Did you hear the one about the Roman who, ignoring all
improbabilities, wanted to invest $400? Why, he put it in a CD, of course.

*Ridete omnes.*

*NECJ* 42.2

Peter Amram
Milton, MA
Dear Colleagues,

Spring has finally appeared in Western Massachusetts, and the 109th annual meeting of CANE seems a long time ago. In the beautiful setting of Noble and Greenough School we enjoyed two days of a jam-packed and varied program, a delightful banquet and lots of sociability.

I want to thank once again all who made this year’s meeting possible. First, I thank all who delivered papers or presented workshops. A nod too to this year’s exhibitors, Hackett, Pearson, the Society of Classical Studies, formerly known as the APA, Bolchazy Carducci, CANE Emporium, CANEPress, Pericles Group, the CANE Used Book Sale, the Ascanius Institute, Legion III, and the Campanian Society. I especially thank Bolchazy Carducci for their generous contribution to the banquet. I am deeply grateful to those at Noble and Greenough who made running such a complex program look easy: Bob Henderson, Head of School, and the endlessly patient and helpful George Blake, Chairman of the Classics Department, and his colleagues Megan Glenn and Mark Harrington who smoothed out any bumps in the road, especially with registration; Dawud Brown and his students for super help with technology; and the maintenance staff who made it all work; the CANE Executive Committee, especially Rosemary Zurawel, Donna Lyons and Ruth Breindel, who have been a fount of wisdom, experience, patience and understanding during this past year, and helped so much with this conference. The whole Executive Committee serves this organization with distinction. I am grateful to all of them.

I give special thanks to our immediate past president, Mike Deschenes, the most organized man in the world, who guided me with patience and kindness through all sorts of choppy seas while never losing his sense of humor.
If there has been any greater pleasure and honor than to serve as your President this year, it is to hand the gavel to Sean Smith whom I have known more than thirty years and whom I taught way back when the earth was cooling. A brilliant teacher and winner of both CANE’s Wiencke award and the APA’s award for Outstanding Teaching at the pre-Collegiate Level, Sean has also been a helpful, generous, and kind mentor to almost two generations of MAT students at UMass Amherst. Sean was an outstanding student who could have been successful in any number of professions. We are very lucky that he wanted to be as good a teacher as his own teacher, Betty Jane Donnelly. And, just between you and me, Sean is a brilliant sight-reader of Cicero. With that highest of compliments, I pass on the gavel to Sean.

As I make my exit, let me remind you of a few things. First, we will meet next year on March 18–19 at Smith College, Northampton, MA. Secondly, please peruse the list of CANE scholarships and awards listed in NECJ and on our website. Some of these were not awarded this year. Please do not let these opportunities pass you by. Finally, the Executive Committee voted at its April meeting to have CANE subscribe to the Loeb Classical Library online. Thanks to all who took the time to check this out at the annual meeting and give us your feedback.

Wishing you all a happy and relaxing summer,

Elizabeth Keitel
President, Classical Association of New England

Elaine Dates, or “Lainie” as many knew her, died on Nov. 18, 2014, aged 72, in Shelburne, Vermont. She graduated from the University of Vermont in 1964, went on to receive a Masters from Wayne State University, and taught at Burlington High School from 1972 until 1998. She taught Latin to a generation of students in Burlington, and did so with learning, sanity, imagination, and irreverence. Her classroom was filled with art and even Latin graffiti; as one former student put it, she was not afraid of the chaos of discovery. She was the colleague who could be counted on to take students to Italy, teach Advanced Placement as an overload, or help build a catapult.

She was active in the Vermont Classical Language Association, Vermont Council on the Humanities, Vermont Foreign Languages Association, Northeast Conference of Foreign Languages, the American Classical League, and served CANE in many capacities. She received the University of Vermont’s Outstanding Teacher Award, the American Association of University Women’s Vermont Teacher of the Year Award, and a Rockefeller Fellowship to study Etruscan Art in Italy. For many years, she and her husband Steve took groups of students to Italy—something she was comfortable doing, because along the way she had earned a masters degree in Italian from Middlebury and spent a year at the University of Florence.

In fact her interests and abilities were extraordinarily broad. One should note the fact that she and her partner were the nationally top-seeded debate team at the National Debate Tournament in 1964, and she was a successful debate coach at Burlington High for many years. But as stimulating as teaching was, she would not be limited by it. After thirty-four years in the classroom, she was one of a number of teachers who took sleeping bags to camp out at the school administration building in order to take advantage of an early retirement package. This meant, for her, being able to embark on a new set of interests. Four years of training led her to become a National Garden Club Accredited Judge. She served on the boards of trustees of various libraries in Vermont. And she continued to attend CANE and travel to Italy. All of this activity surely explains her success as a teacher: it is the ability to tap into what’s outside of the classroom that makes it interesting.

Ken Rothwell
Department of Classics, UMass Boston
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