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# New England Classical Journal

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## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

Verbal Agency in the Speech of Cremutius Cordus (*Tacitus Annals*  
4.34-5) / **Daniel Libatique** ..... 1

### CANE STUDENT WRITING CONTEST WINNER

A Sacrifice in Vain / **Daniel Berk** ..... 17

### REVIEWS ..... 20

Andrew Porter, *Agamemnon, the Pathetic Despot: Reading Characterization in Homer* /  
reviewed by **Emily Katz Anhalt**

Michael Anderson and Damian Robinson, eds. *House of the Surgeon, Pompeii:  
Excavations in the Casa del Chirurgo (VI, 9-10. 23)* / reviewed by **Patricia Baker**

Neil Hopkinson, ed. and trans. *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Posthomerica* / reviewed by **Vincent  
Tomasso**

Roy Flechner, *Saint Patrick Retold: The Legend and History of Ireland's Patron Saint* /  
reviewed by **John Higgins**

Marcelo Epstein and Ruth Spivak, eds., *The Latin of Science* / reviewed by **Patrick Glauthier**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ..... 33

ANNOUNCEMENTS ..... 36

BOOKS RECEIVED ..... 38



# Verbal Agency in the Speech of Cremutius Cordus (Tacitus *Annals* 4.34-5)<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the agency (or lack thereof) in the verbs of the speech of Cremutius Cordus at Tacitus *Annals* 4.34-5. Cordus divests himself of agency in order to grant it to written works of literature, which can carry an author's legacy and authority into posterity even if the author himself is punished with death. By their very existence, such works, imbued with agency and power by their authors, stymie the efforts of book-burners and the authors' enemies to efface cultural memory.

**Keywords:** Tacitus, *Annals*, Cremutius, Cordus, agency, Tiberius

*Quo magis socordiam eorum inridere libet qui praesenti potentia credunt extingui posse etiam sequentis aevi memoriam. Nam contra punitis ingeniis gliscit auctoritas, neque aliud [externi reges aut] qui eadem saeuitia usi sunt nisi dedecus sibi atque illis gloriam peperere.* (Tac. *Ann.* 4.35.5)

All the more, it is pleasing to mock the folly of those who believe that by means of their present power, the memory of a subsequent age can be snuffed out. For rather, *auctoritas* grows when talent is punished, and [foreign kings or] those who have made use of the same savagery have gained nothing other than disgrace for themselves and glory for the talent.<sup>2</sup>

These lines close Tacitus' brief yet vitally important account of the trial, defense, and suicide of the historian Cremutius Cordus in 25 C.E., who was brought to trial on a charge of *maiestas* grounded in his seeming encomium of the Caesarian tyrannicides, Cassius and Brutus.<sup>3</sup> Tacitus bills the charge as a novel one;<sup>4</sup> whether true or not, from

<sup>1</sup> This article began as a presentation at the 2015 CANE Annual Meeting. I thank the conference participants for their comments; Aaron Seider, *NECJ*'s editor-in-chief, and the anonymous referee for their insights and suggestions; and Timothy Joseph, Dominic Machado, and Ben Leonard for their help, patience, and guidance as this article took shape. Any remaining errors are my own.

<sup>2</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise specified. Latin passages from *Annals* 4 are from Woodman 2018; *Agricola*, Woodman 2014; *Annals* 14-15, Wellesley 1986; *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, Winterbottom and Ogilvie 1975.

<sup>3</sup> "...because in his published annals, he had praised M. Brutus and said that C. Cassius was the last of the Romans" (... *quod editis annalibus laudatoque M. Bruto C. Cassium Romanorum ultimum dixisset*, 4.34.1)

<sup>4</sup> "...a charge that was new and heard first at that time" (*nouo ac tunc primum audito crimine*, 4.34.1). See Peachin 2015, 17-46, for evidence of the novelty of the charge. Woodman 2018, 189, connects this claim of novelty to the opening of Cicero's *Pro Ligario* both linguistically and thematically.

this point on, explicit praise of the tyrannicides becomes grounds for suspicion and condemnation.<sup>5</sup> Multiple sources record the fate of Cordus,<sup>6</sup> but only Tacitus provides a speech of Cordus in *oratio recta* (surely authored by Tacitus himself).<sup>7</sup> As such, three entities take part in the dramatic construction of the trial, as Hubert Cancik and Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier write: the speaker, Cordus; the writer, Tacitus; and the reader who navigates the narratological distance between (or conflation of) the two.<sup>8</sup> Tacitus' decision to attribute direct speech to Cordus makes him vivid to that reader, who must imagine Cordus delivering the speech before an audience that included the *princeps* himself. Indeed, Tiberius' aspect makes the outcome of the trial clear in Cordus' mind: "Tiberius, taking in the defense speech with a hostile visage" (*Caesar truci uultu defensionem accipiens*, 4.34.2). Cordus, as a result, knew that his execution was preordained: "certain that he would 'leave life'" (*relinquendae uitae certus*, 4.34.2). Tiberius holds the power over life and death in this match-up between historian and prince.

This disparity of power, I argue, is reflected in Cordus' direct speech at *Annals* 4.34-5, which contains syntax and verbs that illustrate Cordus' lack of agency. After defining agency, I demonstrate how Tacitus divests Cordus of agency by making him a verbal subject or agent only in cases where the verb is negated, static, or passive. Rather, Tacitus concentrates agency in physical texts and writings. I conclude that in the milieu of the imperious *princeps* who exercises his immense power over literature and the elite, though authors find their own agency sapped, they can nevertheless imbue their literature with it. They generate the records of the past and the media of memory that can carry their agency into posterity. This process is already at work in Cordus' own syntax.

### Agency as Action

Possessing agency means that one's actions or words are not circumscribed by external limitations, like social expectations or the commands of an emperor. The agent does something, rather than allowing the status quo to remain static or waiting passively to be swept up into the action of others. An agent has autonomy, exhibits control of his or her own actions, and executes those actions with intentionality.<sup>9</sup> Timothy Melley argues that in restrictive or hostile environments, like those created in the aftermath of war, individuals can take anxiety over the circumscription of their free will and autonomy (their

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the exile of C. Cassius, who wrote a laudatory inscription for a bust of his namesake and ancestor, and the assassination of L. Solanus, punished for his association with the Neronian Cassius (16.7-9).

<sup>6</sup> Dio 57.24.2-4; Suet. *Tib.* 61.3; Sen. *Ad Marc.* 1.2-4, 22.4-7, 26.1, 26.3. Cf. McHugh 2004, 402-3, and Rogers 1965.

<sup>7</sup> See Levene 2009, 212, on the social influences on and the authorial motivations behind the creation of such speeches: "Historians found it very natural to interpret history through the presentation of speeches that both discussed and putatively influenced that history, and indeed to insert speeches largely or entirely of their own composition to illustrate key themes underlying historical events" (emphasis mine). As Syme (1958, 337 n. 10) states, "The speech is all Tacitus."

<sup>8</sup> Cancik and Cancik-Lindemaier 2006, 345.

<sup>9</sup> For different components of this definition of autonomy and agency from primarily philosophical viewpoints, see Davidson 1980, 43-61; Dennett 1984, 50-73, esp. 52-7; Enç 2003; Lowe 2009; Taylor 1985.

agency) to the level of “agency panic,” defined as “intense anxiety about an apparent loss of autonomy or self-control — the conviction that one’s actions are being controlled by someone else, that one has been ‘constructed’ by powerful external agents.”<sup>10</sup> Romans under Tiberius and Sejanus undoubtedly lived in such a restrictive or hostile environment, but for agents throughout Tacitus’ historiographic works who resist the absolute power of the *princeps*, “agency panic” was not an issue, since the question of external control was never in doubt. Rather, because the emperor’s circumscription of individual autonomy was a given, agents concerned themselves with modes of either combatting or submitting to that circumscription.

Many agents engage in resistance to the tyrannical power of the *princeps* and his associated deputies throughout the *Annals*. A few well-known examples illustrate this pattern of resistance. The warrior queen Boudica (14.31-7) marshals an active opposition to the rapacious excesses of the Romans occupying Britain. The conspiracy of Piso (15.48-70) comprises powerful personalities and individual agendas aimed at the deposition of the *princeps* and the acquisition of his power for personal ends. The Stoic suicides littered throughout *Annals* 15 and 16 exhibit an ultimate type of action that sends a clear signal to the *princeps* that death is preferable to living under his rule. Those willing to die take fate into their own hands and effect an outcome that ameliorates their own personal disgrace and, more importantly, intensifies that of the emperor.<sup>11</sup>

These active resisters exercise their agency not only thematically but linguistically. We can see Tacitus’ attribution of agency to these actors through his choices of diction and morphological or syntactic manipulations.<sup>12</sup> Boudica, motivated by personal and familial outrage, states that she aims at vengeance: “She declared . . . that she was taking revenge not as a woman born to great ancestors for her kingdom and wealth, but as a lone woman from the crowd for her lost freedom, her body inflicted with lashings, the infected chastity of her daughters” (*testabatur* . . . *non ut tantis maioribus ortam regnum et opes, uerum ut unam e uulgo libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci*, 14.35.1). While Boudica speaks in *oratio obliqua* (versus Cremutius’ *oratio recta*), Tacitus looms in the background as an author and dramaturge, as it were, crafting the words and portrayals of each of these characters to suit his larger ends. Here, her words, though filtered through Tacitus’ omniscient perspective, nevertheless convey the active force with which she undertakes her resistance, and the grammatical syntax makes that force readily apparent. She acts as the subject of *testabatur* and the accusative-infinitive structure dependent on it, so both the act of declaring her motivations (*testabatur*) and the

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<sup>10</sup> Melley 2000, 12.

<sup>11</sup> For more on early imperial political suicides, see Edwards 2007, 113-43; Plass 1995, 81-134, esp. 87-91 on game theory in political suicides.

<sup>12</sup> Tacitus’ penchant for illustrating theme through morphology or syntax is not limited to these episodes; for example, Pigoñ 2008, esp. 295-303, explores the use of the passive voice to exculpate Germanicus in the Roman army’s troubles in Lower Germany.

act of gaining vengeance (*ulcisci*) are hers. The two deponent verbs (*testari* and *ulcisci*) highlight the tension between passive acceptance of the Romans' aggressions and active resistance against them. Further, Tacitus underscores Boudica's agency by describing her as one out of the crowd (*unam e uulgo*), a singular, lone woman taking the initiative while all the others do nothing.<sup>13</sup>

To take another example, Afranius Quintianus, one of the Pisonian conspirators, wants to avenge a slight to his reputation by Nero: "Quintianus, infamous for the passivity of his body and slandered in a shameful ditty by Nero, entered the conspiracy to avenge the insult" (*Quintianus mollitia corporis infamis et a Nerone probroso carmine diffamatus contumeliam ultum ibat*, 15.49.4). There is a fraught contrast between Quintianus' supposed sexual passivity (*mollitia corporis*) and the action that he takes (*ultum ibat*, an accusative supine after a verb of motion), though the latter is emphasized by its placement at the end of the sentence. Quintianus attempts to perform his masculinity through activity (*ultum ibat*) to prove that he is not passive, a trait imputed to him by the term *mollitia corporis* and even the syntax of the sentence; he receives the action of defamation from the passive participle *diffamatus*, and the agent of that action is Nero himself (*a Nerone*). But the structure of the sentence leads Quintianus from passivity to activity; he stands as the subject of *ibat*, just as Boudica stands as the subject of *testabatur* and *ulcisci*.<sup>14</sup>

In both cases, vengeance acts as a clear motivator for the program of resistance. Tacitus portrays both characters as taking the initiative, formulating or taking part in a plan of resistance defined by actions taken to subvert the existing power structure. More importantly, verbal agency underscores the characterizations of Boudica and Quintianus as agents of resistance. It is precisely this type of verbal agency that I argue Cordus lacks in his speech.

### **Cremutius Cordus and His Lack of Agency**

Before an analysis of Cordus' speech at the level of individual verbs and phrases, some statistics about those verbs as a whole will help provide context for the granular details. In Cordus' speech, there are 38 conjugated verbs.<sup>15</sup> If we expand the count to other

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<sup>13</sup> See Gillespie 2018, 63-8, on Boudica's thematic and linguistic connections to Livy's Lucretia and Verginia; *ibid.*, 100-4, on Boudica as a *dux femina* figure; and Adler 2011, 122-7 and 130-9, on the narrative structure of Boudica's speech and its condemnation of Roman colonialism and imperialism.

<sup>14</sup> For detailed analysis of the Pisonian conspirators, their various motivations, and the structure of Tacitus' narrative, see Pagán 2004, 68-90.

<sup>15</sup> In order: *arguuntur, sum, amplectitur, dicor, composuerint, memorauit, tulit, appellaret, offecit, imponuntur, nominat, tradunt, praedicabat, peruigere, aequauit, respondit, habent, leguntur, tulere, reliquere, dixerim, exolescunt, irascere, uidentur, attingo, impunita [est], aduertit, ultus est, fuit, exemisset, incendo, noscuntur, aboleuit, retinent, rependit, derunt, ingruit, meminereint*. I include in this count clear elisions of *esse* (e.g., *impunita [est]*, 4.35.1).

verbal forms, there are also two infinitives<sup>16</sup> and 11 participles.<sup>17</sup> Of the 51 total forms, three express state or status; 17 are passive;<sup>18</sup> and 31 are active or deponent. Cordus serves as the agent or subject of the verbs in his speech on only five occasions;<sup>19</sup> of those five, one is static, one is passive, and three are active.

Those three active verbs that take Cordus as their subject are each negated, counter-intuitively making it clear that Cordus does *not* act. First, Cordus muses on Caesar's and Augustus' reasons for leaving Furius Bibaculus and Catullus unpunished for their insulting poems: "I would **hardly** easily **say** whether more out of moderation or wisdom" (*haud facile dixerim moderatione magis an sapientia*, 4.34.5). Next, he passes in *praeteritio* over the free-spoken and libidinous Greeks: "**I do not touch on** the Greeks, whose not only freedom of speech but also license went unpunished" (*Non attingo Graecos, quorum non modo libertas, etiam libido impunita*, 4.35.1). Finally, he speaks about the impossibility of his being partisan for Cassius and Brutus with the introduction of a leading interrogative particle: "For **surely I am not rousing up** the people for the sake of civil war through harangues at the moment when Cassius and Brutus are in arms and occupying the fields at Philippi, **am I?**" (*Num enim armatis Cassio et Bruto ac Philippenses campos obtinentibus belli ciuilis causa populum per contiones incendo?* 4.35.2).<sup>20</sup> Each of these verbs indicates some kind of waffling or unreal situation; in none of these cases does Cordus exhibit agency, defined as the performance of some sort of intentional action. First, his indecision in imputing Caesar's and Augustus' (in)action to *moderatio* or *sapientia* allows him not to take a decisive stance; the subjunctive mood of *dixerim* highlights the fact that he does not do so. In the second example, the force of speech-act inherent in the declaration of *atingo* is undercut by the negation of *non*; Cordus declares not what he is doing but what he is not doing. In the last example, the rhetorical nuance of *num* points to an action that to both speaker and audience is clearly not reality. Though Cordus is the subject of the active verbs *dixerim*, *atingo*, and *incendo*, in none of these instances does he actually act.

Cordus acts as subject to two other verbs earlier on in his speech, but in one case, the verb is a declaration of a static state, and in the other, the action is passively levied against himself. First, the static verb: "My words, conscript fathers, are accused; so innocent of deeds **am I**" (*Uerba mea, patres conscripti, arguuntur, adeo factorum innocens sum*, 4.34.2). The dichotomy between *uerba* and *facta* is an important signpost for illustrating the lack of agency in Cordus. It is not he but his words that have given cause for the charge. He argues that *uerba* are not sufficient grounds for accusation

<sup>16</sup> *laudauisse, prode*.

<sup>17</sup> *conscripti, scripta, rescripta, referta, adgnita, dictis, dicta, solutum, armatis, obtinentibus, perempti*. I count as participles here words that are used substantively (e.g., *scripta*, 4.34.4).

<sup>18</sup> These passive forms include participles that clearly have an adjectival sense, rather than any actual sense of action being performed upon the noun described (e.g., *conscripti, solutum*).

<sup>19</sup> One might argue for a sixth in the infinitive *laudauisse*, on which see below.

<sup>20</sup> For the miscellaneous interpretations of this sentence, see Martin and Woodman 1989, *ad loc.*; Woodman 2018, *ad loc.*; and Moles 1998, 140-1 n. 82.

against their speaker or writer, but the distinction between *uerba* and author or authorial action (*facta*) is not as clear-cut as he makes it seem here, as I will explore in the next section of this article. The etymology of *innocens* (*in-* = negative, *nocere* = to harm) may undermine my characterization of this paraphrastic construction as static, but even if the participle is taken in an active sense, the negation of the prefix aligns this example with the three above, namely a lack of action through negation; the point is precisely that he has not harmed anyone.

Second, Cordus expresses the accusation against him in a passive construction: “**I am said** to have praised Brutus and Cassius, whose deeds, though many have written on them, no one has recounted without honor” (*Brutum et Cassium laudauisse dicor, quorum res gestas cum plurimi composuerint, nemo sine honore memorauit*, 4.34.2). By means of the passive *dicor*, Cremutius disowns the charge: he did not praise, but he is said to have praised. The phrasing is deliberately slippery; by shifting into the passive, he avoids admitting to the charge of actually doing anything. The infinitive *laudauisse* is active and would logically take Cordus as an agent due to its dependence on *dicor*, but that very dependence precludes a definitive completion of that infinitive’s action; my being said to have done something does not mean that I actually did it. Cordus attributes the act of praising the tyrannicides, rather, to the countless others (*plurimi*) who have not only taken action to write (*composuerint*) the tyrannicides’ *res gestae* but have never done so without encomiastic tones (*sine honore*). Assimilating the deeds of the tyrannicides to those of Augustus by the use of the loaded *res gestae* would indeed be a dangerous undertaking, one that others, not Cordus, have undertaken. For Cordus, the act remains a charge made by others; he does not admit to doing anything.

## Literature as Agent

Who or what, then, exhibits agency in the speech? I offer that it is not only other authors who do so (as seen above) but, even more importantly, their works of literature. At 4.34.3-5, Cordus offers a laundry list of authors and works who have not only committed the very crime for which Cordus stands accused, namely praise of Caesarean or imperial enemies, but even escaped punishment:

[3] **Titus Liuius**, *eloquentiae ac fidei praeclarus, in primis Cn. Pompeium tantis laudibus tulit ut Pompeianum eum Augustus appellaret; neque id amicitiae eorum offecit. Scipionem, Afranium, hunc ipsum Cassium, hunc Brutum nusquam latrones et parricidas, quae nunc uocabula imponuntur, saepe ut insignis uiros nominat.* [4] **Asinii Pollionis scripta** *egregiam eorundem memoriam tradunt, Messalla Coruinus imperatorem suum Cassium praedicabat; et uterque opibus*

*atque honoribus peruigere. Marci Ciceronis libro quo Catonem caelo aequavit, quid aliud dictator Caesar quam rescripta oratione uelut apud iudices respondit?* [5] *Antonii epistulae, Bruti contiones falsa quidem in Augustum probra, set multa cum acerbitate habent; carmina Bibaculi et Catulli referta contumeliis Caesarum leguntur; sed ipse diuus Iulius, ipse diuus Augustus et tulere ista et reliquere...*

[3] **Titus Livy**, distinguished for his eloquence and trustworthiness, extolled among the foremost Gnaeus Pompey with such great praise that Augustus called him a Pompeian; and that did not obstruct their friendship. Scipio, Afranius, this very Cassius, this Brutus — nowhere does he call them robbers and parricides (which names are now set upon them), as often as he calls them distinguished men. [4] **The writings of Asinius Pollio** hand down an excellent memory of the same men, **Messalla Corvinus** declared that Cassius was his *imperator*; and each of these thrived in wealth and honors. How else did the dictator Caesar respond to **Marcus Cicero's book** in which he equated Cato to the heavens except by writing a speech back, as though in the presence of judges? [5] **The letters of Antony, the harangues of Brutus** contain insults against Augustus, false indeed but with much severity; **the poems of Furius Bibaculus and Catullus**, crammed with insults against the Caesars, are read; but divine Julius himself, divine Augustus both put up with these things and let them be...

The list of *exempla* begins with an author; Livy's partisanship with Pompey was not only unpunished by Augustus but even hardly a deterrent to their friendship. Cordus uses another author as an example later on; Messalla Corvinus extolled Cassius as his *imperator*. These examples, however, are woven amongst six examples of the authors' written works performing actions objectionable to the emperor. Asinius Pollio does not hand down an excellent record of Brutus and Cassius; his *scripta* do: *Asinii Pollionis scripta egregiam eorundem memoriam tradunt*. Caesar responds not to Cicero but to the book in which he equated Cato with the heavens: *Marci Ciceronis libro quo Catonem caelo aequavit ... dictator Caesar ... respondit*. Rebukes against Augustus are conveyed not by Antony and Brutus but by Antony's letters and Brutus' harangues: *Antonii epistulae, Bruti contiones*.<sup>21</sup> The songs of Furius Bibaculus and Catullus, not the authors themselves, were crammed with insults against the Caesars: *carmina Bibaculi et Catulli referta contumeliis Caesarum leguntur*.

Livy and Messalla Corvinus are two of the eight examples offered, and the mixture of authors with literature without noting a difference between the two seems deliberate.

<sup>21</sup> I assume here that these *contiones* survived into Cordus' time in some kind of written form. The insertion of (verbal) harangues into a list of scripted media would be difficult to rationalize otherwise.

The interlocking order of examples ends with a heavy concentration of literature as opposed to authors: Livy, then the writings of Asinius Pollio, then Messala Corvinus, then the remaining five examples of written works. The movement of the paragraph starts with authors but aims towards the preponderance of written works, and this movement precisely encapsulates the transference that I argue is present in Cordus' speech. The ability to cause offense and do harm to those in power lies not in authors but in the works of literature that they produce. Therefore, any anti-imperialist readings of that literature or subversive exhortations are the production of the reader, not the intention of the author.

Nevertheless, the desire to punish the author is understandable, given the coextensive nature of the relationship between the author and his work. This kind of slippage between author and work is ubiquitous in Roman literature,<sup>22</sup> and indeed, Tacitus nods to the coalescence at the beginning of the *Agricola*:

*legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum saeuitum, delegato triumuiris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur.*

We read that it was a capital crime when Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus had been praised by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio, and that there was savage treatment not only against the authors themselves but also against their books; the triumvirs were allotted the duty of burning the monuments of the most brilliant talents in the *comitium* and forum. (*Ag.* 2.1)

The coordination of *auctores* and *libros* by the correlative *neque ... modo / sed ... quoque* puts them on an equal level. Dylan Sailor is particularly instructive on the simultaneous delineation between and coalescence of author and work: "The conceit that not only authors but also their books were destroyed nominally acknowledges a distinction between author and text, but by assigning them the same fate aligns them and equates them."<sup>23</sup> The author's work is coextensive with the author himself; as such, the dangers threatening one must necessarily threaten the other.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in the act of reading (*legimus*), the readers exercise the power to construct meaning in the author's words; the author may provide the words, but the readers complete the picture by reading (and reading into) what the author has put in writing.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Hor. *Carm.* 2.20.16-20, 3.30.10-14; Ov. *Am.* 1.15.31-42; Ov. *Met.* 15.877-9; Mart. 1.1, 9.97.2. See also Clay 1998 and Mayer 2003 on the coalescence of author and persona in ancient literature (or the lack thereof, according to modern definitions).

<sup>23</sup> Sailor 2004, 148. Useful and insightful also is Sailor 2008, 275-91.

<sup>24</sup> For historical surveys of book burning from the Republic to late Empire and the often concomitant punishment of the book's author, see Howley 2017 and Rohmann 2013.

<sup>25</sup> On the various interpretations of the verb *legimus* in terms of tense and implications for Tacitus' biography, see Woodman 2014, 76-7.

An alternative view to this one-to-one correspondence focuses on the idea of books as objects brought into being by their authors. John Moles suggests a parent-offspring relationship by wittily intuiting puns involving *liber*: “Implicit in all this are two crucial puns, namely that between *liber/liber*: books are guarantors of freedom—and that between *liber/liberi*: books are a person’s children.”<sup>26</sup> Just as children are reflections of their parents and have the potential to embody certain traits of their parents, books are reflections of their authors, and they can carry the author’s essence in their pages.

We may draw a parallel here to another Tacitean writer in danger, Curiatius Maternus of the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, the writer of a *Cato* that caused offense to powerful imperial enemies.<sup>27</sup> Julius Secundus, upon meeting Maternus in his study, asks him whether he will stand behind his work or edit it:

*tum Secundus, “nihilne te,” inquit, “Materne, fabulae malignorum terrent quominus offensas Catonis tui ames? an ideo librum istum apprehendisti ut diligentius retractares et, sublatis si qua pravae interpretationi materiam dederunt, emitteres Catonem non quidem meliorem, sed tamen securiorem?”*

Then Secundus said, “Maternus, does the chatter of ill-wishers not deter you at all from cherishing the offense caused by your *Cato*? Or have you for that reason taken that book of yours in hand to revise it more carefully and, after removing those things that have given fodder for a crooked interpretation, to publish a *Cato* that is indeed not better but nevertheless safer?” (*Dial.* 3.2)

Secundus’ wording simultaneously draws a distinction between and combines author and work. He highlights the materiality of the *Cato* when he notes how Maternus has taken the *liber* in hand (*apprehendisti*), but the adjective used to describe what Secundus hopes a revised book would be (*securior*) applies simultaneously to the work itself and to its author; the act of making the material in the work more palatable to those in power and thus more free from censure in turn makes the author more gratifying to those in power and thus more free from danger.

With regard to author and work, however, the destruction of one does not necessarily warrant the destruction of the other. The author may die, but his works, if shielded from the violence of the author’s enemies, will live on, and he will live on through those works. Indeed, if the works survive, the sentiments and characters contained therein live on as well. Cordus seems to write himself into his own histories by making himself

<sup>26</sup> Moles 1998, 153.

<sup>27</sup> “Then, on the next day after Curiatius Maternus had recited his *Cato*, when he / it was said to have offended the spirits of those in power, seeing that in the plot of the tragedy he forgot his own situation and had thought only of Cato...” (*nam postero die quam Curiatius Maternus Catonem recitauerat, cum offendisse potentium animos diceretur, tamquam in eo tragoediae argumento sui oblitus tantum Catonem cogitasset...*, Tac. *Dial.* 2.1). The passive *diceretur* can take as subject either the *Cato* or, just as easily, Maternus himself.

parallel with the subjects of his writing, Brutus and Cassius: “Nor will there be lacking, if *damnatio* assails, those who will remember not only Cassius and Brutus but also me” (*nec derunt, si damnatio ingruit, qui non modo Cassii et Bruti sed etiam mei meminerint*, 4.35.3). The present indicative force of *ingruit* chimes with the earlier assertion of Cordus’ awareness of the trial’s outcome (*relinquendae vitae certus*, 4.34.2). Cordus’ coordination of Cassius and Brutus with himself seems almost to set him in the same echelon of Caesarean and imperial resisters, but that connection must be made by Cordus’ readers, those who are supposed to remember (*meminerint*). Cordus stands as object, not subject, of the verb. His readers will be the ones to exhibit agency, and they hold the power to construe meaning and construct memory from his words.

The effacement inherent in the term *damnatio* proves a threat to Cordus and his works, but both did survive the threat of cremation and obliteration due to the intervention of Cordus’ daughter, Marcia: “Later, they were published again, for others, and especially his daughter Marcia, hid them, and they became far more worthy of interest because of Cordus’ fate itself” (ὕστερον δὲ ἐξεδόθη τε αὐθις (ἄλλοι τε γὰρ καὶ μάλιστα ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτοῦ Μαρκία συνέκρυπεν αὐτά) καὶ πολὺ ἀξιοσπουδαστότερα ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ Κόρδου συμφορᾶς ἐγένετο, Dio 57.24.4). Tacitus’ version of the preservation of Cordus’ works, however, divests Marcia and these unnamed others of agency: “The senators voted that the books should be burned by the aediles; but they remained, hidden and then published” (*libros per aediles cremandos censuere patres; set manserunt, occultati et editi*, 4.35.5). The books act as the subject of *manserunt*, though at the same time, they passively receive the action of the participles *occultati* and *editi*. Agents in this passage include the aediles, the senators, and the books themselves.

Here, the situation contrasts with that in the *Agricola* prologue, in which the “voice of the Roman people and the freedom of the Senate and the conscience of humankind” (*vox populi Romani et libertas senatus et conscientia generis humani*) survived *despite* the cremation of the books containing them. The actual *uerba* of the author exist in a corporeal form, not simply in intangible *memoria*. It is important to note, however, that Cordus’ works, at least by the end of the 1st century C.E., were redacted, as Quintilian notes: “The license of Cremutius has its admirers, not undeservedly, though the sentiments that it harmed him to have said were excised. But you can catch his abundantly lofty spirit and his bold feelings still in those parts that remain” (*habet amatores — nec inmerito — Cremuti libertas, quamquam circumcisis quae dixisse ei nocuerat; sed elatum abunde spiritum et audaces sententias deprehendas etiam in iis quae manent*, *Inst.* 10.1.104). We will take this fact into consideration in the final section.

With Cordus, the primacy of texts and books as vehicles for the past, as its “bearers or even embodiments,”<sup>28</sup> is particularly pointed, and we may now note its resonance with the above-quoted section of the *Agricola*. It is not simply that we know about the capital

<sup>28</sup> Sailor 2004, 151.

crimes and the charges against Arulenus Rusticus and Helvidius Priscus but that we *read* them: *legimus*. Tacitus invites his readers by means of the first-person plural verb to join him in constructing meaning and understanding from texts. The survival of Cordus' texts, then, allows the knowledge contained therein to be passed on throughout posterity to future readers. By creating a historical account meant to be read, Cordus empowers not only the written work with agency but also the readers: those who read the work construct meaning and interpret what lies latent between the lines, which may include something of the author himself. As Timothy Joseph writes, "Political boldness, then, seems to have cost Cremutius his life. But another type of audacity, the literary kind, was available to him and was able to survive and live on, uncut from the copies of his text that made their way to Quintilian."<sup>29</sup>

The onus of promulgating *memoria* rests primarily, however, in the books themselves. The burning of the books could not accomplish that at which the book-burners aimed, the destruction of the author's *memoria*. As Christopher Pelling notes, "Destroying memory is difficult; distorting it is easier—and that is what makes memory so difficult to control. That is what Cremutius' book-burners found, failing to heed what they might have remembered, that others who had done the same had achieved nothing except their own disgrace and their enemies' glory."<sup>30</sup> It is the texts that educate later generations in the absence of the author; it is the texts that exhibit agency. Even if Cordus' texts, or the objectionable material in them, were destroyed, the fact that Quintilian can reference their existence at some point in time suggests that their materiality and reception by an audience ensures their survival in at least memory, if not physicality.

### *Libri Manserunt*

Many scholars have written about the connections (and differences) between Tacitus and Cordus, a historian writing in dangerous times.<sup>31</sup> Mary McHugh, for example, points out how Cordus' mistake was not sufficiently obscuring his censure of Tiberius in his praise of Brutus and Cassius: "By speaking too openly (although this does not seem so obvious to us), Cremutius sealed his own fate. If Cremutius intended to use figured speech, he has failed, because his use of it was detected."<sup>32</sup> But Tacitus' very act of writing Cordus' speech into existence gives him a voice that seems intended to characterize Cordus as free-spoken, an agent of resistance. Cordus is able to speak in a way that Tacitus (wants his readers to believe that he) cannot.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Joseph 2014, 145.

<sup>30</sup> Pelling 2010, 367

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., Edwards 2007, 140-1; McHugh 2004, 397-8 and 404-5; Moles 1998, 142-7; Sailor 2008, 291-313.

<sup>32</sup> McHugh 2004, 398. See, however, Wisse 2013, 336-40, on the misapplication of the concept of figured speech to this episode, and *passim* for a more positive view of the speech: "Whatever we are to make of Cremutius' speech and its implications, it must be noted—especially in view of a recent attempt to interpret the speech as a failure [namely, McHugh 2004]—that Tacitus intends to leave us in no doubt that Cremutius is admirably courageous and, in the end, right in what he argues" (326).

<sup>33</sup> For the relative security that Tacitus experienced in the post-Domitianic era, see Haynes 2006; Ahl 1984, 207;

Dylan Sailor has investigated the enduring memory of Cordus in Quintilian and how Quintilian sums up Cordus' essence with the word *libertas*.<sup>34</sup> This association of Cordus with freedom pertains even though, as mentioned previously, the objectionable material in Cordus' work was probably excised by the time the work made its way to Quintilian. Nevertheless:

Quintilian's copy of the history was thus the embodiment of radical *libertas* despite no longer containing anything that could be characterized as an expression of radical *libertas*. At the same time, just as in Seneca, the book becomes an avenue of access to the man: you feel in it that *libertas* with which Cremutius had conducted his life, and the process of reading is here a matter of hunting through the text to "catch" the writer's "amply exalted spirit/nature/disposition" — and *spiritus*' common meaning of "life-breath" or "life" may suggest, again as in Seneca, that the book's survival has brought the author back to life as well.<sup>35</sup>

Books, in Sailor's estimation, are important not so much because of the words they contain but rather because of the power with which the author imbues those words and the book. In Tacitus' comments at the end of the Cordus narrative (the epigraph to this article), he claims that such personal power, *auctoritas*, grows despite the actions executed by those who possess legal power, *potentia*.<sup>36</sup> Even if the author's enemies capitalize on their *potentia* to enact violence against or even efface problematic passages, the spirit of the author's *libertas* lives on even in parts of the work that could be construed as inoffensive to the *princeps*. Such violence and effacement are immaterial because the author's enemies can never quench the author's *libertas* and *memoria*. The mere existence of books as the physical embodiments of an author's power, even if the books are later destroyed or edited, is enough to plant the author firmly in social memory. Again, the very fact that Quintilian knows about the editing of Cordus' works testifies to the inefficacy of book-burning; a later generation's knowledge of the unedited version and the spirit of the author's *libertas* that led to the editing proves that the books had already granted the author his place in social memory.

This transference of *auctoritas* from the author to the book can then augment the *auctoritas* of the eventual reader, to whom Tacitus cedes the power of interpretation at the end of his famous digression on history in 4.32-3: "Even glory and virtue have enemies, as

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and Tac. *Hist.* 1.1: "But if life should allow, I have set aside for my old age the principate of divine Nerva and the rule of Trajan, richer and safer material thanks to the rare happiness of this period of time when it is allowed to feel what you want and to say what you feel" (*quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi Nerae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui, rara temporum felicitate ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet*).

<sup>34</sup> Sailor 2008, 280-1.

<sup>35</sup> Sailor 2008, 280-1

<sup>36</sup> For the difference between *auctoritas*, personal authority, and *potentia / potestas*, the power(s) granted by legal sanctions, see Cooley 2009, 271-2.

alleging the opposite from too much proximity” (*etiam gloria ac uirtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquo diuersa arguens*).<sup>37</sup> The very act of lauding praiseworthy characteristics, however positively the author may have originally intended it, could be interpreted as an attack by and on later generations. Ellen O’Gorman notes, rightfully, that Tacitus here undercuts Cordus’ argument that contemporary readers who detect condemnation of Tiberius in Cordus’ depiction of the tyrannicides are misreading: “Tacitus ends his digression with a statement which denies ultimate control of meaning to the historian; his history’s meaning is determined by future readers regardless of his intentions.”<sup>38</sup> But this effacement of the author and the misinterpretation or willful ignorance of his intentions, I argue, is the very point that the syntax of Cordus’ speech illustrates: authors divest themselves of power by imbuing their works and, by extension, their readers with it.

Tacitus finds risible the idea that the burning ordered against Cordus’ books (*cremandos*, 4.35.5) could destroy with them the memory of a subsequent age (*extingui posse sequentis aevi memoriam*, 4.35.5). The idea is *socordia*, folly, which resides in assuming that the books, during the time of their unedited existence, have not already actively done their job, namely educating an audience with knowledge that can be passed on to later generations. The book is the vehicle by which *libertas* and *memoria* come down to later generations, and Tacitus through Cordus empowers the book and writing with agency through the agency of the speech’s verbs.

Cordus is innocent of deeds (*adeo factorum innocens sum*, 4.34.2), save for the deed of writing encomiastic words about the tyrannicides. But perhaps the location of a charge in *uerba* as opposed to *facta* is the entire point, both for the imperial court and for Tacitus.<sup>39</sup> Words and their vehicles, namely books, memorialize the past, whether it includes positive or negative *exempla*, pro- or anti-Caesarean or imperialist characters, the emperor or his detractors. They can act as weapons against entrenched and unjust power, and those weapons, if construed as such, cause the damage, not the weapons’ wielders, as the syntax of Cordus’ speech makes clear in the attribution of agency to many other entities except Cordus himself. The destruction of words and books does not necessarily mean the obliteration of *memoria*, and their survival aids the promulgation of *memoria* throughout the ages, into our own.

<sup>37</sup> 4.33.4, translation by O’Gorman (2000, 102).

<sup>38</sup> O’Gorman 2000, 102. See, however, Wisse 2013, 328-47, which convincingly reconciles the seeming disingenuousness of Cordus’ claims (as depicted by Tacitus) with the digression that precedes it by shifting the onus of blame onto Tiberius himself: “Neither Tacitus in the digression nor Cremutius in his argument is disingenuous. It is a historian’s task to give examples and to interpret historical characters, situations and developments. People who feel personally criticised only have themselves to blame” (347).

<sup>39</sup> Historiographic anxiety over the performance of deeds versus the recording of them is present also in Sallust *Cat.* 3 and, to an extent, Livy 31.1; he highlights the fact that he is merely writing about these martial events rather than taking part in them himself: “It pleases me too to have come to the end of the Punic War, as though I myself had a share in the labor and anger” (*me quoque iuuat, uelut ipse in parte laboris ac periculi fuerim, ad finem belli Punici peruenisse*).

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2019 Topic

## **Fake News and True Report: Telling Lies and Telling the Truth in the History, Politics, Poetry, and Mythology of Ancient Greece and Rome.**

We hear a lot about fake news in the media, from politicians, and on social media. What would fake news look like in the ancient world? Fake news could occur in a number of types of literature: public reports (think about possible fallacies or exaggerations in Julius Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War), and historical narratives (think about legends in Livy's early history of Rome - even Livy admits that he had to mix truth with fiction). But fiction-based narratives like poetry can also represent things in a way that favors one side or another: think of the way Vergil's *Aeneid* could be seen to promote Augustus and his regime. Was there perhaps an alternative viewpoint that was not represented in that famous epic? What about the way that Pandora, the first woman in Greek mythology, is represented - might there have been other ways to represent the role and value of women in Greek society?

There are many other ways that "fake news" could be found in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. For this paper topic, write a document that **identifies the fake news** in some ancient Greek or Roman source, and **provide your own creative perspective on that**. As seen below in the guidelines, this may take the form of a short story, poem, essay, or dialogue. Your project will be judged holistically, based on how successfully you address the given topic, how imaginative and creative your idea is, and how well you use language to engage your reader.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the 2019-2020 NASSP List of Approved Contests, Programs, and Activities for Students.

# A Sacrifice in Vain

by Daniel Berk, The Roxbury Latin School

Roxbury, MA

Teacher: Darian Reid

*“Aut cum scuto aut in scuto.”*

These words resounded in my head as I donned my armor. As my hands fumbled for the straps, I could only think about what this precept meant for me that day, as we were about to set out for the closest winter quarters. I, Commius Parsus, centurion of the fifth cohort of Caesar’s tenth legion, was going to die. The orders from our general Quintus Titurius Sabinus were to leave from our camp as quickly as possible, since an attack from the Eburonian savages was imminent. I planned to march under the standard of Cotta.

Lucius Aurunculeius Cotta was a man whom I, along with the entire legion, admired. Unlike Sabinus, Cotta was a fighter. There was a reason he did not wear the gold-plated armor of a general. He saw too much action for things like that. In every battle I had ever fought, he was there beside the grunt soldiers. We all knew Sabinus’ plan was not how Cotta liked to do things, but he nevertheless supported it.

As we trudged out of camp, the sun’s rays were beginning to lash out against the sky. Alongside my aquilifer Petrosidius, I led my century into a steep ravine. As our sandals dragged through the clods of dirt, my fears were confirmed. I saw the glint of an iron javelin fly by my face and bury itself in the leg of Titus Balventius, one of my fellow centurions. The following minutes of battle were short-lived. I heard the fateful command fly from Cotta’s mouth: *“Consistete in orbem!”* We locked shields and joined together into a circle, one of the legion’s most feared formations. At this point, we were on the defensive and could suffer losses until reinforcements came, or until we were all dead. Our numbers, as well as our morale, slowly dwindled as Ambiorix, chief of the Eburones, and his group of warriors slowly advanced.

I raised my javelin, ready to face death and take my stand for the legion and for Caesar. But, my battle cry was cut short by the blast of a trumpet, signaling a parley. I saw Sabinus and the rest of the high command, save for Cotta, drop their weapons. Then, a nightmare unfolded before my eyes. The Gauls had slowly surrounded the high command, now unarmed, and they rushed in for the kill. With Sabinus and the rest of the high-ranking centurions killed, the Gauls converged on Cotta, who was now fighting desperately, and they sent his soul to Elysium.

Without a leader, the rest of us took flight. I took my men through the woods in search of the closest camp. It was a long, dangerous journey, but at last I made it to the

camp of Titus Labienus. The Fates looked down kindly upon me, and I was discharged before I had to experience anymore of Mars' atrocities.

*Postea*

I walked through the Forum, anxiously wringing my hands. Today, there would be a reading of Caesar's memoirs at the *Campus Martius*. When I arrived at the rolling field, where I had been mustered years before, the memories came flooding back: the bloodstained breastplate of my aquilifer, the bloodthirsty fire in every Gaul's eyes as they cut down my men, and the gaping pit in my stomach. The troubadour was greeted with wild applause as he began his tale. He began, announcing, "I will sing of the heroic deeds of Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus, two rival centurions, who in the fifth year of the Gallic War were able to reconcile their differences and save their camp from certain destruction." As I listened to the sickly-sweet story, I was filled with unbearable anger. How could Caesar speak of such victory, while I had seen so much death? There was neither victory nor virtue in the war I fought, only suffering and death. Caesar's fanciful propaganda was nothing like it. I stumbled away from the crowd, knowing that no one else would realize Caesar's trickery. And now, Caesar was in Rome itself, with the adoration of the people, and with the city under his thumb...what would be his next move?

## REVIEWS

Andrew Porter, *Agamemnon, the Pathetic Despot: Reading Characterization in Homer*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 264. Paper (978-0-674-98445-5) \$24.95.

Andrew Porter's engaging examination of Agamemnon in Homeric epic is a welcome addition to Homeric studies. Drawing on earlier, more general studies of characterization, Porter identifies Agamemnon's distinctive personality traits against the background of traditional oral elements well known to epic singers and their ancient audiences. This detailed, compelling analysis also incorporates the larger question of Homeric characterization itself and the capacity of oral technique to permit individualization of character. Consisting of five chapters with copious notes, an appendix on colometry and formulae, an extensive bibliography, *index locorum*, subject index, and index of words and phrases, Porter's book is both informative and stimulating. Porter argues persuasively that traditional story patterns shape the depiction of Agamemnon in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the audience's reaction to it. Set against an ancient audience's prior knowledge of the events at Troy and afterward, Porter argues, Homer's portrait of Agamemnon highlights his tremendous deficiencies as a leader.

Porter maintains that although both epics were and are accessible to all, they were especially revealing to an audience familiar with epic storytelling. Fieldwork on the South Slavic epic tradition suggests that the Homeric singer's audience would have been similarly knowledgeable and intensely involved in the poetic performance. Arguing for an intimate connection between individual characterization in a given scene and the associations of the larger narrative tradition, Porter explains that rather than limiting a poet's creativity, this connection offers opportunities for the poet to challenge the audience's expectations or to create dramatic irony. Achilles' rejection of the embassy in *Iliad* 9, for example, gains ironic force from the audience's foreknowledge of the dire consequences to follow for the Greeks and for Achilles himself. Just as typical Homeric scenes provide a backdrop for significant departures, signaling something new to the audience, the same process, Porter explains, occurs in Homer's depiction of character. Alterations of conventional details both surprise the audience's expectations and re-affirm the audience's awareness of the characters' distinctive personalities.

Central to Porter's methodology is the recognition that our written version of the *Iliad* must be later than some oral version (or versions) of the *Odyssey*. Porter argues convincingly that Homer's portrait of Odysseus indicates not only that the *Iliad* influenced the *Odyssey* but also that the *Odyssey* influenced the *Iliad*. The traditional audience, in other words, already knew details that later audiences, reading the texts, have to wait to

discover. Homeric characterization emphasizes characters' words and actions, and both epics persistently resonate between past, present, and future events. To understand Homeric characterization, we must read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together.

Porter provides a focused and illuminating synchronic reading of both epics. His meticulous, scene-by-scene analysis measures individual character depictions against traditional uses of relevant words and phrases. The resulting portrait of Agamemnon is far from flattering. The *Odyssey's* emphasis on Agamemnon's recklessness, miscalculation, and arrogance reflects an "ironic disdain" for Agamemnon in the poetic tradition (67). Agamemnon's "lack of foresight" (71) provides a counter-model and warning for Odysseus to take care and to plan ahead.

The *Iliad* similarly presents Agamemnon as impulsive and miscalculating. This epic also emphasizes his "impetuous leadership style" (159) and implicitly alludes to the story of the House of Atreus and Agamemnon's feud with Thyestes. (Porter remains unconvinced by arguments against the authenticity of *Iliad* 10, and his discussion of it bolsters claims for accepting it as organic to the epic as a whole.) Without diminishing Agamemnon's considerable martial ability, the *Iliad* throughout highlights his inability to see his own mistakes and foresee their consequences and his subsequent unwillingness to accept responsibility for his prior actions and their dire results. His frequent protestations of his own blamelessness convince no one. Agamemnon's inability to take responsibility for his own actions contrasts with Achilles' ultimate recognition of his own responsibility for the consequences of his anger.

The value of Porter's book lies more in its details than in its overarching conclusions. Porter well substantiates his claim that both epics present Agamemnon as "impetuous, thoughtless, rash and foolish," and that the *Iliad* further distinguishes him as "inept and unconvincing as a leader," notable for his "arrogance, imperiousness, irreverence, and insult" (177). But *despotēs* never appears in Homer, and Porter never precisely identifies his understanding of "despot," seeming to use it as shorthand for "bad king, ruler, or leader." Porter ultimately defines Homer's Agamemnon as a "pathetic despot" (e.g., 197) because the poet draws on the traditional epic depiction of Agamemnon as both causing and experiencing the *pathos* consequent on his family's story and his own actions. This conclusion risks seeming circular, however, as if Porter were claiming that Agamemnon's portrait in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is consistent with the poetic tradition because the poet drew on that tradition.

Similarly, Porter's frequent references to the poet's desires or intentions appear to undercut the book's central (and convincing) argument that the poetic tradition provides the essential context for individual events and character portraits. Given the strength of the book's interpretive arguments about textual *effects* and our ignorance of the identity of the poet (or poets), such confident assertions of the poet's goals seem unnecessary and

distracting: e.g., “The poet is intent on further displaying...” (57), “...the poet wanted ... to create...” (58), “Homer wishes us to see...” (75), “the poet wants us to consider” (77), “...what the poet means to do is ...” (92), “the poet wants us to see...” (96), “the poet wishes to...” (117 and 134), “the poet may have wanted...” (142), “the poet’s intention is...” (157), “...the poet...wished to show” (159), “the poet ... meant to show...” (p. 183).

Despite succumbing at such times to the intentional fallacy, Porter’s meticulous philological examination usefully revisits familiar terrain and adds many valuable new insights. Although directed toward scholars and including extensive and thoughtful discussion of relevant scholarship, the book provides translations of all quoted Greek passages, and Porter’s clear, lively prose will make it appealing to undergraduates and non-specialists as well. (In quoting the scholarship, however, Porter assumes that readers have a working knowledge of French, Italian, and German). Porter’s systematic, sequential commentary on significant passages in the epics results in considerable repetition of arguments, and his concluding chapter provides a detailed, repetitive recapitulation of the entire discussion. The extensive repetition, though wearing at times, might however be useful for undergraduate and non-specialist readers unfamiliar with this material.

Most valuable is Porter’s persuasive reminder that knowledge of Agamemnon’s entire story informed an ancient audience’s reaction to any given scene’s description of Agamemnon’s words and actions. The nature of the oral tradition necessitates that we read the *Iliad* as Homer’s original audience must have heard it, with the events of the *Odyssey* firmly in mind. The consistency of Homer’s depiction of Agamemnon’s character makes the audience see him as unlikely to be capable of change or improvement as a leader.

Porter never suggests that Agamemnon’s character portrait, his traditional “proclivity for distasteful despotism” (157), calls into question either the other warriors’ willingness to follow his leadership or the willingness of the external audience to accept such destructive and self-destructive characteristics in their own leaders, but as authoritarianism gains ground in the twenty-first century, the question seems well worth asking.

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Michael Anderson and Damian Robinson, eds. *House of the Surgeon, Pompeii: Excavations in the Casa del Chirurgo (VI, 9-10. 23)*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. 664. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-78570-728-5) \$110.00.

A popular understanding exists that Roman atria style houses came into existence around the third or second century B.C.E., and the House of the Surgeon (Casa del Chirurgo), is regularly identified as a prime example of this iconic Roman architectural

style. Archaeological studies on the Casa del Chirurgo were undertaken in the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the dwelling was given its name because of a set of medical tools found within it. At this time, archaeologists dated it to the mid-third century B.C.E. and established that it was a housing style for the elite. However, as pointed out in the recent excavation report, *House of the Surgeon, Pompeii: Excavations in the Casa del Chirurgo (VI, 9-10. 23)*, edited by M. Anderson and D. Robinson, the original interpretation as an elite dwelling and its date are problematic.

The report presents the findings of an Anglo-American field project on the building that ran between 1994 and 2006. The idea for the project began in 1993. At this time, Pompeii's *Soprintendente*, Professor B. Conticello, called for international support to help fund and restore the maintenance of the houses at the site, and a team from the University of Bradford, UK, answered the call. They held their first season of exploratory fieldwork in 1994 to determine the potential for leading an excavation in the insula. At this time, they joined with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and together the teams worked on the Casa del Chirurgo until 2006.

The methods employed by the team were situated amongst newer means of archaeological dating and interpretation than those employed in the original excavations. Even until the 1990s, there had been little reliance on archaeological stratigraphy to date the structures in Pompeii; most of the dating was based on architectural style and descriptions of houses in Roman literature. In contrast, the team excavated below the foundations of the house to establish stratigraphic phases and dates of construction.

The published report of the fieldwork gives a thorough overview of the excavations and is laid out in an easily accessible manner. It begins with a review of the location and history of the area, providing a background to how Pompeii, the insula, and the house were studied in the past. Following this, the authors of Chapter Two provide details of how their excavations were organized. The archaeologists divided the work between rooms, and each room had a supervisor who was responsible for the excavation team and recording the area. The excavation was led as a field school, with the majority of diggers being students. The artefact analyses were undertaken by specialists in pottery, glass, numismatic, bioarchaeology, and environmental remains. Some of these specialist reports are in this publication, but others will be produced at a later date.

The remaining chapters of the study are dedicated to reporting the archaeology of the House. Chapter Three gives a brief overview of the excavation history and area of the site. A detailed description of the stratigraphy of the site is presented in Chapter Four. Nine phases of construction and use were given to the building. Phase 1 was the base layer of natural soils. The earliest construction was found in Phase 2. In this phase, terracing and an early Pre-Surgeon structure was identified as an atrium style house. The third phase was the construction of the Casa del Chirurgo and dates to sometime around 200-130 B.C.E.

Phase Four (c. 100-50 B.C.E.) had new rooms, concrete flooring, and wall decorations added to the house. Another phase of redecoration dating to the end of the first century B.C.E. or beginning of the early first century C.E. is identified as Phase 5. At this time, shops were added that possibly indicate the developing economic importance of Pompeii. The owners also incorporated a common trend into their home when they extended the view from the fauces into the garden. Phases 6 and 7 (mid-first century C.E. to C.E. 79) saw two further periods of redecoration. Phase 7 is identified as the changes that took place after the earthquake(s) of C.E. 62/3. Phase 8 is post eruption, which shows little evidence for looting. Finally, the early 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century excavations are represented as Phase 9.

Chapter five is the most substantial chapter of the book, and gives a full description of the stratigraphy at the site, each room that was excavated, and what was found in each of the phases. This section, like the entire report, is well illustrated with clear plans of the archaeology of each room and a map of its location in the house. Photographs are also given for most of the rooms, particularly showing important aspects of the walls, structural attributes, and drainage, for example.

Following this are chapters on the particular finds from the house. H. E. M. Cool presents highlights in her report of the glass vessels and small finds. The full report of these artefacts is published in a volume dedicated to finds from the entire insula. R. Hobbs, who notes that only 59 coins were found in the dwelling, reports the numismatic artefacts. This made up to 4% of coins from the entire insula. H. White records the plaster fragments and presents ideas about how individual rooms were decorated. The mosaic and marble inlay decorations are written about by W. Wootton. The faunal remains studied by J. Richardson show evidence for more sheep than pigs; while chickens and eggs became popular at later dates of occupation. C. Murphey's studies of the archaeobotanical remains shows evidence for fruits, grasses, nuts, pulses, and weeds. Finally, R. Veal examines the evidence for fuel and timber. A variety of trees and shrubs, many from the mid Apennine region were found: hazel, walnut, plum, grapevine, olive, oaks, maple, ash, and beech.

This new archaeological report is an important addition to studies on Roman dwellings and Pompeii. Its reinterpretation of the structure significantly shows that it was not an elite style of housing and that it was used for a wide variety of functions over an extended period of time. The report is useful for anyone requiring detailed information of the dwelling and insula in which it stood. The substantial work of the writers and the entire team is to be commended for the detail presented in an accessible and informative manner.

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Neil Hopkinson, ed. and trans. *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Posthomerica*. Loeb Classical Library 19. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. 736. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-99716-5) \$36.00.

In the third century CE, a poet named Quintus wrote an epic poem in Greek titled τὰ μεθ' Ὀμηρον, “The Things After Homer,” now commonly referred to as the *Posthomerica*. Often called “Quintus Smyrnaeus” or “Quintus of Smyrna” because the *Posthomerica*’s narrator claims to be from Smyrna, Quintus arranged the contents of his epic into 14 books that span the events of the Trojan War between the funeral of Hector at the end of the *Iliad* through the returns of the Achaeans to Greece just prior to the *Odyssey*. Arthur S. Way translated Quintus’ epic for the Loeb Classical Library series in 1913, which was replaced in 2018 by the current book under review. Neil Hopkinson’s translation addresses two often complementary, though sometimes contrasting, reasons modern readers engage with the *Posthomerica*: to gain a more complete understanding of the Homeric epics and the wider Trojan war tradition, and to appreciate Quintus’ artistry in the context of imperial Greek culture.

Although the events of the Trojan War were depicted in the poems of the so-called Epic Cycle (the *Aethiopis*, *Little Iliad*, *Sack of Troy*, and *Returns*), those epics were lost sometime before or during the fifth century C.E., and, since it happened to deal with the same material, the *Posthomerica* quickly became the go-to text. For instance, Book 2 depicts the arrival and failure of the Aethiopian king Memnon and his forces to help the Trojans (events that were portrayed in the *Aethiopis*), and in Book 9 Odysseus and Diomedes bring Philoctetes from the island of Lemnos (an episode in the *Little Iliad*). It is still debated whether Quintus’ purpose was to replace the Epic Cycle poems (as opposed to creating something independently), but certainly many have felt that the *Posthomerica* is useful primarily because it helps us better understand the Homeric epics. This likely motivated Way’s 1913 translation only a few years into the Loeb series’ existence as well as its inclusion into the Barnes & Noble Library of Essential Reading series.

On this count, Hopkinson’s translation is certainly an improvement on Way. In general, Hopkinson has chosen to make his rendering more accessible to readers of the early twenty-first century by using prose (Way employed a much-ridiculed blank verse) and by translating into smooth English that is not overly showy (whereas Way’s translation often ascends to heights of over-the-top archaism; see below). Because of the *Posthomerica*’s narrative, Quintus’ epic is ideal reading in courses on myth and/or classical culture, but Hopkinson’s translation falls a bit short there. When I taught a course on versions of the Trojan War, I assigned Alan James’ 2004 translation (*The Trojan Epic*, Johns Hopkins University Press), in part because it is reasonably priced for student budgets, and his translation is more clearly aimed at a general audience, with a good introduction

and commentary. On the other hand, Hopkinson 2018 has, as usual in the Loeb series, facing Greek text and a small apparatus criticus--ideal for Greek courses on Homer and/or imperial literature (Quintus' Greek is not substantially different from Homer's).

Recent decades have seen a revival of scholars' interest in the *Posthomerica*, largely due to a wider awakening of interest in Greek literature produced in the Roman Empire. Hopkinson, who included several passages from the *Posthomerica* in his *Greek Poetry of the Imperial Period: An Anthology* (Cambridge 1994), is himself one of these scholars. This scholarly perspective is addressed in this Loeb with ancient testimonia on Quintus and the *Posthomerica* prefacing the translation, as well as Hopkinson's use of Greek text edited by Francis Vian in the 1960s (Way's translation had made use of an 1850 edition). Whereas Way's 1913 translation used words that were archaic, even by turn-of-the-century standards, Hopkinson has used archaisms sparingly and with a view to approximating an element of Quintus' artistry: "English archaisms can help to produce an appropriate distancing effect, and the present translation has a tincture of these" (xi). Balancing archaism with the contemporary is no easy task for a translator of the *Posthomerica*, since about 80% of Quintus' lexicon can be found in the Homeric poems. Hopkinson's Loeb also provides a decent (if brief) general introduction to Quintus' work in addition to a listing a selection of scholarship.

A comparison of Hopkinson and Way's translations of the same passage from the *Posthomerica* is a good encapsulation of the issues that I have raised in this review. The passage is a simile, which is a signature element of Homeric poetry and a very-frequently (some would say too-frequently) imitated element of Quintus' poetry. Quintus is, of course, imitating Homer here, but he is also purposefully allowing his audience's cultural context to seep through his heroic-age narrative:

*Posthomerica* 6.527-37:

Καὶ τότε ἄρ' οἰώθησαν ἀγακλειτοὶ βασιλῆες  
Ἀτρεΐδαι· περὶ δέ σφιν ὀλέθριος ἴσταθ' ὄμιλος  
βαλλόντων ἐκάτερθεν ὃ τι σθένη χερσὶν ἐλέσθαι·  
οἱ μὲν γὰρ στονόοντα βέλη χέον, οἱ δὲ νυ λῆας,  
ἄλλοι δ' αἰγανέας. Τοῖ δ' ἐν μέσσοισιν ἐόντες  
στρωφῶντ', εὖτε σύες μέσῳ ἔρκει ἢ λέοντες  
ἦματι τῷ ὄτ' ἄνακτες ἀολλίσσως ἄνθρώπους,  
ἀργαλέως δ' εἰλῶσι κακὸν τεύχοντες ὄλεθρον  
θηρῶν ὑπὸ κρατεροῖς, οἱ δ' ἔρκεος ἐντὸς ἐόντες  
δμῶας δαρδάπτουσιν, ὃ τίς σφισιν ἐγγυὸς ἴκηται·  
ὧς οἱ γ' ἐν μέσσοισιν ἐπεσσομένους ἐδάϊζον.

Way 1913:

And now the Atreid kings, the war-renowned,  
Were left alone, and murder-breathing foes  
Encompassed them, and hurled from every side  
Whate'er their hands might find—the deadly shaft  
Some showered, some the stone, the javelin some.  
They in the midst aye turned this way and that,  
As boars or lions compassed round with pales  
On that day when kings gather to the sport  
The people, and have penned the mighty beasts  
Within the toils of death; but these, although  
With walls ringed round, yet tear with tusk and fang  
What luckless thrall soever draweth near.  
So these death-compassed heroes slew their foes  
Ever as they pressed on.

Hopkinson 2018:

Then those renowned kings, the Atridae, were all alone and surrounded on every side by a murderous crowd throwing whatever missiles came to hand: some rained down grievous arrows, others rocks or javelins. There they stood in their midst, turning now this way now that, like boars or lions penned in on those occasions when rulers round up human beings in a confined space and devise for them a horrible death from powerful wild beasts which in that arena rip and mangle any of those slaves who come near them: just so they set about slaying the enemy who charged at them from every side.

Comparison of these two translations demonstrates how, first of all, Way's archaism is unnecessarily obscure (e.g., "compassed round with pales," "thrall") as compared to Hopkinson's carefully calculated translation ("penned in" and "slave" vs. "set about slaying") and, second, Way tends to hew closer to the Greek than Hopkinson (e.g., ἔρκος, which Way renders as "a confined space" and Hopkinson as "arena," is a word found in both Homeric poems that means "enclosure"--Quintus could have used other words specifically meaning "arena"--so Hopkinson's "arena" misses an important aspect of what Quintus is up to, even as it makes the meaning clearer to non-specialist readers).

In sum, then, Hopkinson 2018 is a welcome update to Way 1913, and I commend him for this effort in increasing the visibility and accessibility of the *Posthomerica*. However, for general readers and students, I recommend James 2004.

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Roy Flechner, *Saint Patrick Retold: The Legend and History of Ireland's Patron Saint*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Pp. 320. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-691-18464-7) \$27.95.

St. Patrick, author of two works in Latin, the *Confessio* and the *Epistula ad Milites Crotici*, is one of the few Latin writers from Late Roman Britain and the only one that gives us any sense at all of living in that time and place. Ancient historians have tended to leave Patrician scholarship to medievalists and Celticists. Roy Flechner's new book places Patrick firmly in Late Antiquity, in the cultural milieu of Late Roman Britain. Reading Patrick's writings with an eye to modern literary scholarly techniques and the social history of the fourth and fifth centuries, Flechner develops a novel interpretation of Patrick's life in Britain and Ireland during his youth and of his later mission to Ireland. Flechner's interpretation shows Patrick in a new light and expands our view of Ireland's relationship to the later Roman Empire and our view of Hiberno-Roman relations. In his approach to the material, Flechner is solidly in the latest school of interpretation of early Irish history which integrates the story of Ireland into the story of Late Antiquity. *Saint Patrick Retold* is another attempt to bring these stories together. It is explicitly "not strictly academic and... written with a wider popular appeal in mind..." but is also directed to "a more specialist readership" (xvi-xvii). It shows: the book is far more readable and enjoyable than most academic histories.

The book includes chapters dealing with the historical Patrick and his context, and with the development of the Patrick legend in the Middle Ages and later. Flechner treats the social and historical context of Late Roman Britain, Late Iron Age Ireland, and slavery, both Patrick's and others'. He then deals with religion, pre-Christian as well as Christian, and Patrick's life as a missionary. The book concludes with two chapters on the development of the Patrick legend in the Middle Ages. This review concentrates on the material dealing with Patrick himself in the Late Roman context. The major new insights appear in the chapter on "Captivity" (94-118). Flechner makes some startling suggestions.

All work on Patrick must start with his two works, the *Confessio* and the *Epistula*. Recent work has established that they are sophisticated literary works and not the naïve and primitive writings that earlier scholars thought them. Flechner reads these works with the tools of literary scholarship, and concludes that it was never Patrick's intent to give a straightforward and factual account of the events of his life. In particular, Flechner distinguishes between *argumentum* and *fabula* in rhetoric, the one meant to be fact and the other a form of argument. Both of Patrick's works are rhetorical and polemical, and therefore do not require strict adherence to historical fact. This approach to the texts gives Flechner the freedom to go beyond what the words literally convey and to dig deeper into the implications of Patrick's polemical purposes.

In the *Confessio*, Patrick gives an account of his early life. He was the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest, and was of the propertied, decurion class in Roman Britain. He describes his capture by Irish raiders when he was 16, his years in Ireland as a slave, and his escape back to Britain. The context of this account in the history of Late Roman Britain clarifies what happened. Patrick's social class included many slave owners, Patrick's family among them (and we should remember that slave-owning was perfectly respectable for Christian and non-Christians alike in the Late Empire). This class was burdened with high taxes; it would make sense for the young Patrick, as heir to a wealthy man, to take his fortune out of the empire, away from the tax-gatherers. The easiest way to transfer wealth across the Irish Sea and imperial border would have been in moveable goods. In a pre-monetary economy like that of Ireland, that meant slaves. If Patrick had wiggled out of his obligation to pay taxes as a decurion, that would have given rise to questions about Patrick's character. Later in his career he wrote the *Confessio* in response to some undefined and obscure criticism of his mission. His insistence that he was in fact a captive in Ireland and that he left Britain unwillingly might be meant to obscure the true situation. Flechner ties into this alternative narrative some details of Patrick's mission: he was able to operate in the Irish social and legal context only if he possessed independent wealth, since Ireland was very much a gift-economy at the time: he had to exchange gifts with rulers. Patrick's wealth could not have been in land: in Ireland, land was a communal possession and could not be alienated away from the kingdom; Patrick, a foreigner, was not a part of Irish tribal society. Here, too, the evidence suggests that he traded in slaves while a missionary. This suggestion acquires some force when we take it in connection with Ó Corráin's suggestion (*Peritia* 28, 2017) that the writer Orosius, another non-Irish Roman, was himself a slave and slave trader in southern Ireland at the same period.

This new narrative is intriguing. It gives a context to several puzzling parts of Patrick's writings: his rocky relationship with the British church leaders, his apparently easy escape from bondage in his youth, and his ability to operate in Ireland as a missionary. It also fits Patrick neatly into the world of Late Antique British society and gives us a considerably more detailed picture of how trade worked between the empire and the lands beyond the borders. We have always known that there was trade; now we can perhaps see it happening. The book taken as a whole, though, seems shaky. The evidence for Patrick's life rests on only two relatively short texts, neither of which is meant to give a coherent picture of his life; therefore, all of our knowledge has to be provisional and inferential at best. The historical context that Flechner gives is very good as background; as far as telling us anything substantial about Patrick, though, it is mostly the basis for showing the sort of thing that Patrick probably experienced and provides no evidence to support Flechner's conclusions. When details become important, Flechner has no choice but to write the life of Patrick as other scholars have done—virtually, if not grammatically, in the subjunctive.

Flechner is well aware of the limitations his work entails: he says that his “alternative narrative cannot, admittedly, be corroborated, and it is clear that there is more to the story than we have been able to recover” (58).

The few misprints cause little difficulty for the reader. To avoid confusion, note that Ammianus wrote in the fourth, not fifth century (79); read “Britain” for “Ireland” (107). The bibliographical section is well put together and comprehensive and will be very helpful to readers, especially those unfamiliar with Late Roman Britain, early Ireland, and Insular Latin literature.

I do not wish to end on a negative note. This is a novel and exciting new perspective on Patrick’s career. Flechner’s argument, which he does not over-sell, is not only intriguing but more compelling the more I think about it. If we regard this work as the spur to future research it is enormously valuable.

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Marcelo Epstein and Ruth Spivak, eds., *The Latin of Science*. Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2019. Pp. xxxii + 395. Paper (ISBN 978-0-86516-860-2) \$29.00.

With *The Latin of Science*, Marcelo Epstein and Ruth Spivak have attempted to fill a surprising “anthological vacuum” (xii): they have produced a student-friendly reader of scientific Latin. The twenty-two readings represent twenty authors, from Vitruvius and Pliny to Isaac Newton and Luigi Galvani. Almost every text is presented in two ways: facsimiles of early printed editions are followed by “a modern transliteration” (xiii) of the precise passages to be read. A brief introduction precedes each selection, and explanatory notes follow; the notes strike a balance between grammatical, historical, and scientific issues. Other significant features include a historical survey of Latin scientific writing (10 pages); appendices on Latin pronunciation, Latin grammar (77 pages), and the “quirks” (327) of early printed books; and a comprehensive glossary. By simply suggesting that scientific texts belong in the undergraduate Latin classroom, and by demonstrating how teachers might incorporate such texts into their curricula, Epstein and Spivak have performed a valuable service, and I have no doubt that students will enjoy and be energized by the readings. At the same time, certain features of *The Latin of Science* may make Latin teachers reluctant to include it on their syllabi.

The book, organized by discipline, is at its best in the Astronomy and Rational Mechanics chapter. Anyone interested in the history of science will be thrilled to read the original words of Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton. The editors’ introductory essays connect the passages, and the texts themselves display a range of registers and

methodological approaches that showcase both the richness and the powerful concision of the Latin language.

Below, I address the book's major weaknesses under three headings. It should be noted in advance, however, that a companion volume and website are in the works and that these resources may well address some of the issues raised here.

1. The editors encourage users to read the Latin passages directly from the facsimiles. While this may be a valuable and even enjoyable exercise, it takes considerable time. Realizing that students (and teachers) will want texts that are easier to decipher, the editors have produced transliterations that expand abbreviations and replace symbols with words but that retain the punctuation of the early printed editions. This procedure is peculiar. From a practical perspective, the punctuation can be disorienting. Intermediate-level students have enough trouble determining the boundaries of clauses and grasping the natural articulation of Latin sentences without having to contend with Renaissance and early modern punctuation.

The very decision to privilege an early edition of an old text poses a deeper problem. For the ancient authors, at least, standard critical editions exist, and these editions represent the cumulative work of generations of scholars. Epstein and Spivak ignore this scholarly history. What is the benefit of reading Seneca's *Natural Questions* from facsimiles of a random seventeenth-century edition? The rationale seems to be that it is like "playing period music on the corresponding period instruments" (xiii). But Seneca did not write in seventeenth-century Venice. Do the images get us closer to Seneca's meaning? The text differs in a number of places from the excellent edition of H. Hine (Stuttgart, 1996), and not in ways that improve sense or readability. It is perhaps justifiable to reproduce the text of an edition that appeared during the author's lifetime or with which the author was directly involved. That being said, the organizing principle of *The Latin of Science* tacitly encourages the reader see no difference between a first edition of Newton's *Principia* and a sixteenth-century edition of Vitruvius' *De architectura*; the false equivalence misrepresents the nature of both documents.

2. A key element of what makes a student edition valuable is the assistance it gives with the language. While *The Latin of Science* contains many accurate and helpful grammatical notes, some are confusing or even misleading. I cite a few examples: *ut* clauses with the subjunctive dependent on *oportet* are "subjunctive conditions" (44); when a complicated sentence is compressed to *colligemus et transferemus in hoc opus nostrum quae tradita fuisse et quae observata esse a maioribus* (62), it is implied that relative clauses do not need finite verbs; the future passive infinitive *reperitum iri* is "used... in an accusative" (91) in indirect statement without further explanation or discussion; in *nunquam tamen potui efficere quin...*, "The particle *quin* is a negative version of *qui*" (200); in a concessive clause introduced by *licet* and containing the preposition *cum*, "We

can... ignore *licet*” and treat *cum* as the concessive conjunction, even if the resulting translation “is a bit forced” (219).

Nor is the book’s compendium of Latin grammar free from confusing statements and the occasional error. In the first chapter, we are told that the influence of Latin on English makes reading some Latin sentences easy; for example, *Philosophus esse difficile est* (250). The same page contains a discussion of Latin word order in which the elements of this sentence are repositioned in two different ways, and in both cases *philosophus* remains in the nominative.

Taken together, the grammatical notes and compendium seem unlikely to help students improve their fundamental understanding of Latin. One gets the impression that the editors are trying to demystify the language, to make it appear straightforward, a goal that is not itself objectionable but that, in the present case, comes at the expense of grammatical rigor and precision. A commentary and grammatical compendium that, as far as I can tell, do not mention the sequence of tenses will appeal to some, and certainly not to others.

3. There is no bibliography, and there are few references to recent scholarship. This is a missed opportunity. *The Latin of Science* might very well excite users, but where are they to go for cutting edge discussion and more primary texts? The conspicuous absence of suggestions for further reading is felt acutely in the historical survey. The essay is teleological, subtly implying the self-evident and inherent value of (early) modern authors, especially by comparison with their classical predecessors. But while Pliny’s *Natural History* “can hardly be considered a purely scientific work” (xxiii), the editors do not take the time to interrogate the definition or history of the idea of science itself. In an anthology whose title includes the word science and whose readings represent a wide variety of intellectual traditions and methodologies, this is a striking omission. A brief discussion about what it means, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to practice the history of science (or the philosophy of science, or the sociology of science, or science studies in general, etc.) would have been beneficial and likely to engage students.

To sum up, the basic idea behind *The Latin of Science*—a student-oriented reader of scientific Latin—is most welcome, and readers of every level will find new and exciting texts to study and enjoy. As a tool for the Latin classroom, however, there is room for improvement.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Iohannes omnibus sodalibus salutem.

That greeting is of course more apt in a literal sense now than it has been—hopes for your health, in these times of unexpected and devastating disease. Of course, the COVID-19 disaster is bigger than our small classical society, but we are caught up in it. We are also reacting as a community in various ways. We are working with other classical organizations to provide assistance to our colleagues who are in need at the moment. Most notably as we all know, the pandemic caused us to cancel the Annual Meeting in March. And, I suggest, we have a unique perspective on the situation that is of value to our wider communities as well.

### I. Support for classicists affected by COVID-19

First, we are supporting a very important project: the **SCS-WCC COVID-19 Relief Fund**, set up by the Society for Classical Studies and the Women’s Classical Caucus, and now co-sponsored by CANE, CAAS, CAMWS, and other classical organizations throughout the country. The fund is meant to support classicists, including graduate students and faculty, who have immediate and pressing needs for small amounts of financial assistance. The need is real—the initial amount of \$15,000, distributed in amounts of \$500 or less, was gone in eight hours. CANE has made an initial contribution and plans to increase the amount as the need continues. I urge individual members to make contributions to this fund for our fellow-classicists if they are able to do so. See <https://classicalstudies.org/scs-news/scs-wcc-covid-19-relief-fund> for more information and to contribute.

Second, CANE has itself set up an additional program of support for teachers in our area who are experiencing like need. In recognition of the extremities of our times, the Educational Grants Committee is temporarily expanding its charge. In addition to the committee’s ongoing support for teachers’ purchases of classroom resources, including access to online materials or service to assist with distance learning, the committee is also now offering micro-grants to Classics teachers for personal needs. CANE members (regardless of location) and anyone who teaches Classics-related curriculum in New England are eligible. Please contact Lindsay Sears at [eduprograms@caneweb.org](mailto:eduprograms@caneweb.org) to apply for any of the grants offered by the committee.

## II. Moving the Annual Meeting to a virtual format.

Before talking about the response to our having to cancel the meeting scheduled for Trinity College, I would like to take a short bit of space to thank Trinity for agreeing to host us. The arrangements were all made, and I can say that they went very smoothly. In particular, I would single out for our thanks the Local Arrangements Coordinator, Meredith Safran, whose efforts on behalf of CANE are enormously valuable. Thank Meredith when you get to see her!

Many scholarly and pedagogical organizations have moved their meetings to a virtual format. CANE was among the first organizations to have to cancel, and we have taken a while to decide what to do and how to do it. I felt that we needed a venue for sharing our scholarly and pedagogical work, and to come together as a community. Here is the plan.

In July, there will be a virtual CANE Annual Meeting, via our new Zoom account. The meeting will consist of several paper sessions and workshops during the week of July 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> (not coincidentally, the same week of the cancelled CANE Summer Institute for this year). There will be no split sessions, so everyone can go to everything if they choose. Unfortunately, we will not be able to have the traditional CANE events like the Banquet or the awarding of the Barlow-Beach award, but they will come next year when we meet at UMass Amherst under the leadership of our new President, Teresa Ramsby. All of the sessions will be recorded and available for anyone who can't make a particular panel. And for this special meeting of our community, CANE will not charge any registration fees. Watch [caneweb.org](http://caneweb.org) for further updates as we organize the logistics nearer to time.

As a final note on the past year, allow me to recognize the wonderful work that the outgoing Immediate Past President, Sue Curry, has done over the last three years. Of course, she presided over a most successful and stimulating Annual Meeting last year at Holy Cross, but I would like to say also that her dedication to CANE and to the world of classics in a broader sense, is truly inspiring. Thank you, Sue, for everything, and be sure to stay involved!

## III. Reacting as classicists

As I have been thinking about the pandemic as a classicist over the last several weeks, it has struck me how much we already know about it from our special point of view. Liz Baer's recent op-ed in the *Berkshire Eagle*, available at <https://caneweb.org/new/?p=4389> and on CANE's Twitter feed, makes the point that Aeneas's speech to his men can help us to interpret our difficulties in retrospect. Vergil is not the only author to be helpful. After all, classical literature as we understand it starts with an epidemic in the *Iliad*. Oedipus's tragedy starts with his reaction to a plague, and the

Plague of Athens in Thucydides has been cited by many commentators already as a model for our understanding of what we are going through in real time. Not only that; those of us who are Roman imperial historians or early medievalists know about the plagues under Marcus Aurelius and Justinian at the cusp of the ancient and medieval worlds. Plague is a constant thread throughout the area of our study, in literature and history, and so I think we as scholars of antiquity have in a real sense already seen this kind of event and we know how it turns out. Not usually that well—to take one example, if we recall Agamemnon’s reaction to the plague in Homer we can see that his selfish reaction to having to make sacrifices for the common good did not solve the problem. The community, and in particular for us, CANE as a professional and intellectual home, is what gets us through these hard times. That’s the message I want to leave with this Classics community, that we are meant to support one another; and that we can say that with some assurance to our wider circle.

*Durate et vosmet servate secundis,*

John Higgins  
CANE President

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THE 2020 CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

## Facing Adversity in the Ancient World

Herodotus tells us in the first book of his *Histories* that when Solon, the leader of Athens, visited Croesus, the incredibly rich king of Lydia in Anatolia, the king asked Solon who he thought was the happiest and most prosperous. Croesus thought Solon would say “You are, O Croesus, because of your great wealth.” But Solon replied instead that he would count no man happy until his death, because misery and suffering can befall anyone, no matter how wealthy or happy they seem (*Histories* 1.30-2).

There is ample evidence that people of all ancient cultures had to face many challenges and adversities in life. When one considers the relatively short life spans of men and women in the ancient world, it is clear that there were many obstacles to a long or easy life in the thousand-year period we study, from roughly 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E. Our ancient writers tell us of diseases, plagues, invasions by hostile armies, piracy, enslavement, crime, death in childbirth, and countless other realities that made life difficult and strenuous.

**For this writing contest:** provide your own short story, poem, essay, or dialogue on the topic of *dealing with or facing adversity in the ancient world*. Your project will be judged holistically, based on how successfully you address the given topic, how well you engage your reader, and how well you write as you present your idea. ***Deadline for submission: December 15, 2020.***

#### ***Guidelines for Students (please note all these):***

- ▶ Your project may be a short story, poem, drama, or essay.
- ▶ Maximum length: 700 words.
- ▶ Your project should not be hand-written. Please provide a typed document.
- ▶ If you use any source materials for this project, you must provide a bibliography with specific references.
- ▶ Your name should not appear on the project itself.
- ▶ Please include a **cover page** with your document that contains the following information:  
Name of Student

Grade of Student

Name of School

Name and Email address of Teacher

The following statement - with your name typed as signature:

*This project represents my own original work. No outside help has been provided for this project. I understand that if my entry is selected as a winner, my entry and my name will be published on the CANE website.*

*Signed:*

*Date:*

**Teachers:** please send your students' submissions to your state representative for CANE (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, and VT). For the list of state representatives, see [https://caneweb.org/new/?page\\_id=230](https://caneweb.org/new/?page_id=230). The winner receives their award, and reads their winning entry, at the banquet at the annual meeting banquet of CANE in spring of 2021.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the 2020-2021 NASSP List of Approved Contests, Programs, and Activities for Students.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

List of books received, April 2020

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

Appian, *Roman History, Volume I*, edited and translated by Brian McGing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 452. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-99647-2) \$28.00.

Appian, *Roman History, Volume II*, edited and translated by Brian McGing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 368. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-99648-9) \$28.00.

Appian, *Roman History, Volume III*, edited and translated by Brian McGing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 400. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-99726-4) \$28.00.

Elton T. E. Barker and Joel P. Christensen, *Homer's Thebes: Epic Rivalries and the Appropriation of Mythical Pasts*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies (Harvard University Press), 2020. Pp. 426. Paper (ISBN 978-0-674-23792-6) \$29.95.

Bob Bennett and Mike Roberts, *The Wars of Alexander's Successors 323-281BC. Volume I: Commanders and Campaigns*. Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 256. Paper (ISBN 978-1-526760746) \$24.95.

Steele Brand, *Killing for the Republic: Citizen Soldiers and the Roman Way of War*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. Pp. 384. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-4214-2986-1) \$34.95.

William Brockliss, *Homeric Imagery and the Natural Environment*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies (Harvard University Press), 2019. Pp. 294. Paper (ISBN 978-0-674-98735-7) \$28.50.

Guilia Maria Chesi and Francesca Spiegel, eds., *Classical Literature and Posthumanism*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. xvi + 460. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-350-06950-3) \$160.00.

Sarah Court and Leslie Rainer, *Herculaneum and the House of the Bicentenary: History and Heritage*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2020. Pp. 168. Paper (ISBN 978-1-60606-628-7) \$29.95.

Nathan T. Elkins, *A Monument to Dynasty and Death: The Story of Rome's Colosseum and the Emperors Who Built It*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. Pp. 184. Paper (ISBN 978-1-4214-3255-7) \$19.95.

Thomas Fischer, *Army of the Roman Emperors*, trans. M. C. Bishop. Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 464. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-61200-810-3) \$45.00.

Andrew P. Fitzpatrick and Colin Haselgrove, *Julius Caesar's Battle for Gaul: New Archaeological Perspectives*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 336. Paper (ISBN 978-1-78925-050-3) \$55.00.

Paolo Galluzi, *The Italian Renaissance of Machines*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies (Harvard University Press), 2020. Pp. 296. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-98439-4) \$39.95.

Tom Geue, *Author Unknown: The Power of Anonymity in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 376. Cloth (ISBN 978-0674-98820-0) \$45.00.

David Grant, *Unearthing the Family of Alexander the Great: The Remarkable Discovery of the Royal Tombs of Macedon*. Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 360. Cloth (978-1-52-676343-3) \$42.95.

Nancy Thomson de Grummond, *Cetamura del Chianti*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2020. Pp. 200. Paper (ISBN 978-1-4773-1993-2) \$29.95.

Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage's Other Wars: Carthaginian Warfare outside the "Punic Wars" against Rome*. Barnsley, Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 256. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-78-159357-8) \$39.95.

Katherine Kretler, *One Man Show: Poetics and Presence in the Iliad and Odyssey*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies (Harvard University Press), 2020. Pp. 390. Paper (ISBN 978-0-674-98002-0) \$24.95.

Michael Kulikowski, *The Tragedy of Empire: From Constantine to the Destruction of Roman Italy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 424. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-66013-7) \$35.00.

Livy, *History of Rome, Volume V: Books 21-22*, edited and translated by J. C. Yardley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 496. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-99694-6) \$28.00.

John Lucas, Carrie Ann Murray and Sara Owen, eds., *Greek Colonization in Local Contexts: Case Studies in Colonial Interactions*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 248. Paper (ISBN 978-1-78925-132-6) \$59.99.

Patricia Lulof, Ilaria Manzini, Carlo Rescigno, eds. *Deliciae Fictiles V: Networks and Workshops: Architectural Terracottas and Decorative Roof Systems in Italy and Beyond*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 688. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-78295-310-8) \$95.00.

Philip Matyszak, *The Rise of the Hellenistic Kingdoms 336-250 BC*. Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 176. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-47-387476-3) \$34.95.

Janet L. Nelson, *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019. Pp. 704. Paper (ISBN 978-0-520-31240-7) \$34.95.

Miguel Ángel Cau Ontiveros and Catalina Mas Florit, eds., *Change and Resilience: The Occupation of Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 336. Paper (ISBN 978-1-78295-180-7) \$45.00.

Elis Perego, Rafael Scopacasa and Silvia Amicone, eds., *Collapse of Survival: Micro-dynamics of Crisis and Endurance in the Ancient Central Mediterranean*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 208. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-78295-100-5) \$70.00.

Pindar, *The Odes*, translated by Andrew M. Miller. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019. Pp. 376. Paper (ISBN 978-0-520-30000-2) \$19.95.

Andrew Poulter, *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Lower Danube: Excavations and Survey at Dichin, a Late Roman to early Byzantine Fort and a Roman Aqueduct*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 904. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-78570-958-6) \$110.00.

Adrian Radelescu, *Ovid in Exile*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. 188. Paper (ISBN 978-1-59211-019-3) \$24.99

Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Life of Alcibiades: Dangerous Ambition and the Betrayal of Athens*, translated by Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings. Pp. 228. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-5017-1975-2) \$29.95.

Musonius Rufus, *That One Should Disdain Hardships (The Teachings of a Roman Stoic)*, translated by Cora E. Lutz, trans., with an introduction by Gretchen Reydams-Schils. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020. Pp. 160. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-300-22603-4) \$22.00.

Gareth C. Sampson, *Rome, Blood & Power: Reform, Murder and Popular Politics in the Late Republic*. Barnsley, Yorkshire and Havertown, PA: Pen and Sword Books, 2019. Pp. 320. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-52671-017-8) \$34.95.

William Shepherd, *The Persian War in Herodotus and Other Ancient Voices*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2019. Pp. 511. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-4728-0863-9) \$30.00.

Charlayn von Solms, *A Homeric Catalogue of Shapes: The Iliad and the Odyssey Seen Differently*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. xiii + 220. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-350-03958-2) \$115.00.