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Articles

Scipio's Rome and Critias' Athens: Utopian Mythmaking in Cicero's *De Republica* and Plato's *Timaeus*

EVAN DUTMER

Abstract: Scholarly debate on the relationship between Cicero's *De republica* (*On the Republic*) and *De Legibus* (*On the Laws*) and the thought of Plato tends to focus on the supposed congruities or incongruities of the *De republica* and *De legibus* with Plato's own *Republic* and *Laws*. Still, Plato's discussion of ideal constitutions is not constrained to the *Republic* and *Laws*. In this essay I propose that we look to another of Plato's dialogues for fruitful comparison: the *Timaeus-Critias* duology. In this essay I bring these two texts into substantive dialogue to illuminate mysterious features of both. Sketched in these complementary passages, I think, is an outline for a particular kind of approach to political theory, one proposed as novel by Cicero's Laelius, but, as this essay hopes to show, with an interesting forerunner in Plato. I've called this approach 'retrospective ideal political philosophy' (RIPP). I end my essay with a few prospective theoretical notes on how this approach binds these two texts together.

Keywords: Cicero, Plato, Republic, Timaeus, Utopia, Ideal, Political Philosophy.

1. Introduction

Scholarly debate on the relationship between Cicero's *De republica* (*On the Republic*) and *De legibus* (*On the Laws*) and the political thought of Plato tends to focus on the supposed congruities or incongruities of the *De republica* and *De legibus* with Plato's own *Republic* and *Laws*.¹ Understandably so: the titles of the *De republica* and *De legibus* themselves pay homage to Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and there are certain notable similarities in form and content. Still, Plato's discussion of ideal constitutions is not constrained to the *Republic* and *Laws*.² In this essay I propose that we look to another of Plato's dialogues for fruitful comparison: the *Timaeus-Critias* duology.

In particular, I focus on the enigmatic introductory discussion of the *Timaeus* (17a-28b). In it, Socrates and his interlocutors review their conversation on an ideal constitution from the day before and detail its attendant societal classes and political offices (reminiscent, in some respects, to those of the *Republic*, but importantly different in others).³ A desirous Socrates then asks his companions, whom he views as uniquely versed in philosophy and politics, for a speech which shows this city—static in their previous discussion—exercising

¹ The author would like to extend sincere thanks to Richard Kraut, John Wynne, Kenneth Seeskin, David O'Connor, an anonymous reviewer at the *New England Classical Journal*, and audiences at Pennsylvania State University and Hamline University for their insightful comments, questions, and suggestions for improvement. Their feedback helped to produce a better paper.

For a representative sampling of current scholarly literature on comparison of Cicero and Plato's political thought, consult: Annas 2013, Atkins 2013a/2013b, Glucker 1988, Görler 1995, Powell 2001, Rawson 1973, Sharples 1986, Steinmetz 1989, Zetzel 1995. Abbreviations throughout this essay follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed.

² Discussions of ideal constitutions, in fact, proliferate. For a helpful list of potential candidates for the ideal city in Plato, consult Morrison 2007, sec. 3, and McKeen 2004 for a memorable description of the so-called "city of pigs", a perennial candidate for a sort of concealed ideal city.

³ The differences have produced their own substantial scholarly literature. For introductions into the debate (and for reasons why Plato may have chosen to adapt the Callipolis to the context of the *Timaeus-Critias*), see Pradeau 1997, Sallis 1999.

its abilities in war (19b-d). Critias, answering Socrates, breaks off into a speech in which he idealizes ancient Athens in a mythological account of its history and claims that ancient Athens is an actualized example of the ideal constitution discussed the day before (21a-26e).

Readers of Cicero's *De republica* will notice familiar elements in this discussion. In *Rep.* 1, Cicero's Scipio Aemilianus discourses on the ideal constitution, concluding that the mixed constitution is best (1.69), and declares that the ancient Roman constitution, exemplifying the ideal constitution just arrived at, is without equal (1.70). Then, in Book 2, he delivers an account of the genesis of the constitution that blends myth, history, and political theory.

In this essay I bring these two texts into substantive dialogue to illuminate mysterious features of both. First, I present and examine the introductory discussion of Plato's *Timaeus* (17a-28b), paying special attention to Socrates' note on method (19b-20c), the understudied speech of Critias (21a-26e), and the transition to the speech of Timaeus (26c-e). Striking parallels are drawn between Critias' history of ancient Athens and Scipio's history of early Rome. Second, I briefly review relevant portions of Books 1 and 2 of Cicero's *De republica*, where Cicero's Scipio discusses the ideal constitution and proposes ancient republican Rome as its *exemplum*.

But what's the distinctly philosophical payoff? Sketched in these complementary passages, I think, is an outline for a particular kind of approach to political theory—one proposed as novel by Cicero's Laelius, but, as this essay hopes to show, with an interesting forerunner among Plato's characters in the *Timaeus*). I've called this approach 'retrospective ideal political philosophy' (RIPP). This approach, I'll show, combines ideal political theory with a myth of an ancient, localized utopia as a sort of actualized past model of the ideal city.⁴

2. Ancient Athens in the Prologue to the *Timaeus*

As mentioned, my discussions of both the *Timaeus* prologue and *De republica* 1-2 shall concern what I take to be mythologized ancient utopias in Plato and Cicero, respectively. Before I continue, then, I will say what I mean by 'utopia' and 'myth': I call a description of a city 'utopian' if it is an imagined ideal city, past, present, or future, conceptual or actualized.⁵ By 'myth', I follow the more or less neutral ancient Greek notion of myth as 'story/account' (its truth-value less decidedly false than our current usage) whose subjects and events are beyond our current sense perceptions.⁶ I begin with the myth of the ancient utopia (ancient Athens) we find described in Plato's *Timaeus*, found at the very beginning of the dialogue.

The prologue of the *Timaeus* has long puzzled scholars.⁷ The confusion is multifaceted. First, there has been much debate as to whether the city described by Socrates and his companions—Critias and Timaeus—is in fact the same city described in the

⁴ Cp. Asmis 2005.

⁵ Considerable debate surrounds the use of this liquid term. Thomas More, who of course coined the term for his 1516 *Utopia*, seems to emphasize Utopia's being imaginary in nature, an *ou-topos*, "no-place". Subsequent usage has been considerably more inclusive—see, for instance, Klosko 2003, where utopianism (including the case of More) is explicitly connected with moral reforms to be realized in existent societies in Plato, the Jacobins, Marx—with many loosening the requirements for what might count as a 'utopia'. Indeed, a number of interpreters use 'utopia' and 'ideal city/government/constitution' interchangeably. Others, such as Morrison 2007, want to reserve 'utopia' for the *best* imagined society, resisting a proliferation of genuine candidates to the title of Plato's utopia. Given the number of times Plato's characters discuss a potential candidate for the ideal city across the dialogues, I prefer the inclusive approach. The classic source for utopianism in Western thought is Manuel and Manuel 1979.

⁶ Hence I largely follow Partenie 2018. See Nakazawa 2015, ch. 2, for helpful statistics and the ambiguity between *muthos* and *logos*.

⁷ See Annas 2011 for a helpful summary of the continued puzzlement and further reflections on the mysterious omissions of the prologue. Morgan 1998 contains a helpful, brief summary of the questions surrounding setting and *dramatis personae*. Similarly, consult Lampert and Planeaux 1998 for a miniature prosopography. For a classic investigation into the preface to the *Timaeus* seeking to establish its dramatic date, see Cornford 1937. For more wide-ranging interpretations of the earlier sections, see Calvo and Brisson 1997.

Republic or not.⁸ Second, what Socrates says about ideal political theory toward the beginning of the conversation, Critias' description of Solon's received wisdom from the ancient Egyptians, and, ultimately, Critias' praise for an ancient, idealized Athens (which speech he and Socrates describe as entirely true) have proven similarly difficult to interpret.⁹ Last, the Atlantis myth, described later in the *Critias*, has of course received the greatest attention.¹⁰

In this section I will present a few crucial passages from this introductory exchange in the *Timaeus* for fresh interpretation. These passages, I think, establish the methodology for a retrospective ideal methodology for political philosophy in the *Timaeus-Critias* duology. We will come to see a striking similarity to the project outlined by Scipio and Laelius in *Rep.* 1 and 2 in my next section.

I will begin with a passage where Socrates reflects on the ideal city that he and his companions have just discussed the day before (the so-called “city of yesterday”, *Ti.* 19a) and asks Timaeus and Critias for a new kind of portrait of the ideal city. He wants to see the city “in action,” instead of its being static as it was in their previous discourse. He says:

Socrates: All right, I'd like to go on now and tell you what I've come to feel about the political structure (πολιτείας) we've described. My feelings are like those of a man who gazes upon magnificent-looking animals (ζῷα καλά), whether they're animals in a painting or even alive but standing still, and who then finds himself eager to look at them in motion or engaged in some struggle or conflict that seems to show off their distinctive physical qualities. I felt the same thing about the city we've described. I'd love to listen to someone give a speech depicting our city in a contest with other cities, competing for those prizes that cities typically compete for. I'd love to see our city distinguish itself in the way it goes to war and in the way it pursues war: that it deals with the other cities, one after another, in ways that reflect positively on its own education and training, both in word and deed (τῇ παιδείᾳ καὶ τροφῇ κατὰ τε τὰς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις πράξεις)—that is, both in how it behaves toward them and how it negotiates with them. (*Ti.* 19b-c)¹¹

Socrates here desires not just an outline of the mere *potential* of the ideal city, not to behold it as artifact, but to witness it living, moving, breathing, and excelling as an actualized political power.¹² Socrates compares this to beholding a beautiful painting of an animal or an alive but resting one, commenting on the almost sad inactivity contained in both. Socrates desires a city in motion and engaging in things characteristic of great cities—in this case, in the contests of war. Kathryn Morgan likens Socrates' complaint to someone looking at a “still

⁸ Taylor 1928 and Cornford 1937 represent helpful short hands to the philological reasoning on either side of the debate: On the one hand, Taylor (following the commentary tradition, including Proclus) sees the prelude establishing continuity with “yesterday's discourse”—namely, the dramatic action of the *Republic*; on the other, Cornford notes the unlikelihood that the festival of Bendis would precede the Panathenaea by just two days (the *Republic* occurring on the first holiday and the *Timaeus* on the second, respectively). For more, see Zeyl 2000, xxvii, Calvo and Brisson 1997.

⁹ Comparatively less has been written on these topics, but Johansen 1998 is comprehensive; Rowe 1999 situates these themes against the *Republic*; Morgan 1998 attends to the historiographical questions surrounding the prologue, connecting Critias' speech to the panegyric genre (as in Isocrates' *Panegyricus*); Morgan 2010 develops an original, rich reading of the narrative structure of the *Timaeus-Critias* and a possible interpretation of the fragmentary nature of the latter.

¹⁰ Gill 1977, 1979a/b are both influential interpretations of the Atlantis myth and contain helpful introductions to a large scholarly literature. Gill 2017 represents an invaluable update with a rich commentary on the Greek text of the Atlantis myth in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

¹¹ Translations throughout follow Zeyl's standard Hackett translation (2000) besides minor typographical alterations. The Greek text matches John Burnet's standard critical edition for Oxford Classical Texts (1903).

¹² Indeed, Porphyry and Proclus think Socrates is asking for a tantalizing potency to become act, anticipating Aristotle (see fr. VII in A. R. Sodano, *Porphyry, In Platonis Timaeum Commentariorum Fragmenta*, Naples 1964, cited in Johansen 1998).

life” and wanting more—wanting to taste the fruit displayed on the table; wanting to see the smile of a person in a portrait; wanting to see the trees of a landscape rustling in the wind.¹³

Socrates then considers who might be up to this task. This sort of inquiry would require those who can excel in both philosophy and politics, admittedly a rare sort (and, of course, a perennial Socratic-Platonic theme). Fortunately, he thinks, his compatriots are uniquely qualified for this sort of philosophical discussion:

So that leaves people of your sort, then. By nature as well as by training (φύσει καὶ τροφῇ) you take part in both philosophy and politics at once. Take Timaeus here. He’s from Locri, an Italian city under the rule of excellent laws. None of his compatriots outrank him in property or birth, and he has come to occupy positions of supreme authority and honor in his city. Moreover, he has, in my judgement, mastered the entire field of philosophy. As for Critias, I’m sure that all of us here in Athens know that he’s no mere layperson in any of the areas we’re talking about. And many people whose testimony must surely be believed assure us that Hermocrates, too, is well qualified by nature and training to deal with these matters. Already yesterday I was aware of this when you asked me to discuss matters of government, and that’s why I was eager to do your bidding. I knew that if you’d agree to make the follow-up speech, no one could do a better job than you. No one today besides you could present our city pursuing a war in a way that reflects her true character. (*Ti.* 20a-b)

Socrates here praises his counterparts as accomplished in both philosophy and politics. They alone can accomplish the task Socrates sets out: to describe the virtuous city competing and excelling in warfare. These figures (Timaeus, Critias, Hermocrates), then, may serve as their own kind of exempla, enlivened models of the sort Socrates requested—able to study philosophy and political science at the highest level of complexity and capable, too, to bring that philosophy to life. We will see a similar claim made of Cicero’s character Scipio in the coming pages. Further, Cicero’s characters think that, as Socrates does here, discourse on the ideal city is somehow incomplete if not combined with a real-life embodiment of that city (whether past, present, or future).

To return: Critias breaks in and changes the tenor of the conversation in an unexpected way. Critias interrupts the conversation and presents an elaborate story of ancient Athens and its contest with Atlantis (to be finished in the *Critias*, which Plato left incomplete). Famously, he says it’s a strange one (ἀτόπου)—but that it’s also *true* (ἀληθοῦς):

Critias: Let me tell you this story then, Socrates. It’s a very strange one, but even so, every word of it is true (λόγου μάλα μὲν ἀτόπου, παντάπασί γε μὴν ἀληθοῦς). It’s a story that Solon, the wisest of the seven sages, once vouched for ... The story is that our city had performed great and marvelous deeds in ancient times, which, owing to the passage of time and to the destruction of human life, have vanished. Of all these deeds, one in particular was magnificent. It is this one that we should now do well to commemorate and present to you [Socrates] as our gift of thanks. In so doing we shall also offer the goddess a hymn, as it were, of just and true praise (ἐν τῇ πανηγύρει δικαίως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς) on this her festival. (*Ti.* 20e-21a)

Critias then relates a story supposedly told to Critias’ father, Critias, through his father, Dropides, who heard the story firsthand from Solon. The story tells of a conversation between Solon and a wise Egyptian priest in which the priest tells Solon about the founding

¹³ See Morgan 270.

of ancient Athens.¹⁴ In it, ancient Athens and Egypt are compared and lauded, both being said to have been founded under Athena's dual love of war and wisdom. (*Ti.* 22d-24d) In addition, the priest mentions some similarities in societal structure, especially in the division of social classes—e.g., the elevation of a priestly class, the institution of a warrior class, a class of artisans, etc. Critias then remarks on the marvelous agreement between the philosophical conversation of the day before—among Socrates and the others on the ideal city—and the story related by Solon of ancient Athens.

Supposedly (though we are not given a full picture of what that story from yesterday looked like), the city decided upon as ideal by Socrates and the others looked just like the city of ancient Athens described by Solon. Critias continues:

[Critias:] What I've just related, Socrates, is a concise version of old Critias' [Critias' grandfather] story, as Solon originally reported it. While you were speaking yesterday about politics (περὶ πολιτείας) and the men (τῶν ἀνδρῶν) you were describing, I was reminded of what I've just told you and was quite amazed as I realized how by some supernatural chance your ideas are on the mark, in substantial agreement with what Solon said. (*Ti.* 25e)

Zeyl's translation emphasizes the possible divine implications of *tuche* (chance, fortune), pointing to the seriousness with which Critias entertains the wondrous alignment of the ideal constitution (*politeia*) and its leaders (*andres*) to the city of ancient Athens. Building on this unexpected harmonization of philosophical discourse and Solon's ancient wisdom, Critias then finally introduces his plan for these ancient Athenians he's described, and Socrates expresses his approval:

[Critias:] We'll translate the citizens and the city you described to us in mythical fashion (ἐν μύθῳ) yesterday to the realm of fact (ἐπὶ τᾷληθές), and place it before us as though it were ancient Athens itself. And we'll say that the citizens (τοὺς πολίτας) you imagined are the very ones the priest spoke about, our actual ancestors. The congruence will be complete, and our song will be in tune if we say that your imaginary citizens are the ones who really existed at that time ... Socrates: Well, Critias, what other speech could we possibly prefer to this one? ... And of course the fact that it's no made-up story (μὴ πλασθέντα μῦθον), but a true account (ἀλλ' ἀληθινὸν λόγον), is no small matter. (*Ti.* 26c-e)

Critias inverts our common notions of the mythical and the true in this passage.¹⁵ He says that it was the philosophical discourse of the day prior which was in fact a display of the city *in myth* (ἐν μύθῳ) and that his own eventual recounting of the deeds of ancient Athens will establish the city in fact (τᾷληθές). He again emphasizes that Critias and Timaeus' joint labor will produce a pleasing harmony (ἁρμόσουσι). Socrates agrees on the said plan, bringing attention again to Critias' insistence that this is no *myth*, but a true account (ἀληθινὸν λόγον).

Critias' insistence throughout his speech—the special urgency with which he asserts its veracity—and Socrates' wholehearted approval of the plan have uncanny similarities with the determination of the characters presented in Cicero's *De republica*. Both sets of characters regard the veracity of these stories as crucial to the dialogic narrative, establishing the foundation for later stages in the discourse. Both regard as central that these cities of the ancestors maintained harmony through their order and stability. That they serve only as convenient myth, they might think, does not explain the pervasive power of the collective

¹⁴ For more on the depiction of the Egyptians in the prologue narrative, consult Voeglein 1948, Griffiths 1965.

¹⁵ A common inversion, of course, across Plato's works. See Catalin Partenie's introduction in Partenie 2009, Burnyeat 2009 in that same volume, also Mourelatos 2009, 2014.

memory and its permeation all the way to the present. John Gunnell, who produced one of the most original interpretations of the *Timaeus* prologue before renewed interest in the function of genre in the Atlantis myth, writes of this urgency:

Critias' journey back into the collective memory of the Greeks is above all to give virtual reality to the idea of the best society and to demonstrate the frailty of historical embodiment. The past of a dying Athens regained, and on the level of the myth the substance of Attic spirit is self-consciously revitalized and the temporal gap eliminated as in the choral lyric; this is a paean in memory of a city and its citizens once ripe with the fruit of the Idea ... Here, then, at the moment when time has run out ... the innate vitality has been expended and the eternal ceases to animate the temporal, the mythic motif of a return to the primordial time of the beginning asserts itself in the *Timaeus-Critias* nexus ... The origin of the story in Egypt points to Plato's continuing concern ... with this static culture ... which, as modern scholarship has confirmed, remained relatively unaffected by the upheavals that were so determinative for the Hellenic world. Egypt becomes Plato's symbol for a political order that, unlike the Attic states, stood beyond the reach of historical decline, and he turns to Egypt to posit the source of this account of the Hellenic past ... It is these old men who have within their lifetime witnessed the rise and fall of Athens and who now descend through *mnemosyne* and *mythos* to the beginning of the *aion* of the Attic civilization.¹⁶

Having established this regained "virtual reality" and its revitalized characters, Critias then outlines his own project for the unfinished *Critias* and begins to hand off the conversation to Timaeus, where Timaeus delivers the prolonged cosmological account of the universe and the human body and soul most commonly associated with the *Timaeus*. Critias promises to come back to the topic of his speech once the adequate groundwork has been laid by Timaeus.

I will close with a final passage from the prologue to the *Timaeus*, outlining how Critias and the dialogue participants do not think that neither Critias' introductory account regarding ancient Athens nor Timaeus' account of the origin of human beings nor Critias' story regarding Athens and Atlantis are somehow incongruent, but rather very much according to plan and arrive at the harmonization desired:

Critias: We thought that because Timaeus is our expert in astronomy and has made it his main business to know the nature of the universe, he should speak first, beginning with the origin of the world and concluding with the nature of human beings. Then I'll go next, once I'm in possession of Timaeus' account of the origin of human beings and your account of how some of them came to have a superior education. I'll introduce them, as not only Solon's account but also his law would have it, into our courtroom and make them citizens of our ancient city—as really being those Athenians of old whom the report of the sacred records has rescued from obscurity—and from then on I'll speak of them as actual Athenian citizens. (*Ti.* 27a-b)

Here Critias makes explicit the plan for the *Timaeus-Critias*: the account of the ancient Athenians having been delivered, Timaeus will now establish the origin of the cosmos and the nature of the human beings, whereupon Critias will translate these human beings and the story of their education into the actors of the ancient Athenian citizens, all to accomplish what Socrates asked for in *Ti.* 19b, namely, to provide a living model. The *Critias* will complete the task, showing the city of ancient Athens engaging Atlantis in a battle for survival.

¹⁶ Gunnell 1968, 172-173.

What is the methodological account sketched in these passages? As we shall see more fully delineated in my next section, I think Socrates and his companions in the *Timaeus-Critias* are exploring the possibility of a sort of model-informed ideal political theory, importantly adapted from the methodology in Plato's *Republic* with which we are more familiar. There, the theoretical model (*paradeigma*) upon which the philosophers construct the ideal city and introduce reform are the Forms (*Rep.* 7; see 484c). Here, in the context of the investigation laid out by Socrates and Critias, the *paradeigmata* are directly translated to enlivened models, namely, the city of the ancient Athenians.

What advantage does this methodological move present? Jonny Thakkar, in his discussion of the "beautiful city" in his recent *Plato as Critical Theorist*, lays out the motivations for both types of models succinctly, building on Plato's image of the philosopher-founders as painters of constitutions (*Rep.* 501b-c1):

Although goodness is an existing model, it is obviously not available to sensory perception in the way an existing triangle would be. When philosopher-painters look away from their canvases toward goodness, what then is the object of their perception? ... To look toward the past, rulers would have to speak to eyewitnesses, consult historiography, and dig up old documents; to look toward goodness, they would have to engage in dialectical investigation, working out the form of a given object in light of its place within a chain of parts and wholes ... [W]hen we speak of goodness as a perfect harmonic order, a cosmos, we do thereby picture it in a certain sense: we construct a theoretical ideal that is visible to our mind's eye. If all goes well, we will have what Socrates calls a 'clear model in our souls' (484c). Although this mental picture is by no means equivalent to the thing itself, we can make cognitive progress by investigating it and thereby testing our understanding ... Generalizing ... we can say that theoretical models allow us to visualize our understanding and thereby test and expand it.¹⁷

Thakkar gives voice to considerations similar to those presented by Proclus and Porphyry above: that the virtuous city considered now to be actualized serves as a real, sensory model which thus has attendant advantages. For one, it exists or has existed (and so has indeed gone from potency to act) and it functions as a clearer perceptible model for testing our understanding, besides. Medieval Islamic commentators touch on both points. Averroes in the third treatise of his commentary on the *Republic* notes that the first four caliphs achieved good governance through imitation of the model of virtue contained in the rule of Muhammad.¹⁸ The ancient Persians, too, achieved virtuous government in the distant past.¹⁹ Similarly, Alfarabi in *The Philosophy of Plato* describes the purpose of both the *Critias* and *Epinomis* as realizing the "city in deed" so as to complete the project of the *Republic* (9.33-35). In contemporary scholarship, G.R.F. Ferrari sees this sort of proto-Aristotelian logic at work in *Republic* 9 in Socrates' descriptions of why the philosopher will engage in politics at all: It will be the greatest (*megiston*) achievement for the philosopher, saving himself and his country, to actualize his political achievement (even if it fails to be as *kalon* as the imagined city in speech).²⁰

¹⁷ Thakkar 2018, 142.

¹⁸ Averroes, *Commentary on Plato's Republic* 3.89.28-31. Also see 2.79.8-10, where Averroes describes the virtuous cities of the early Persians, further examples of idealized ancient rule.

¹⁹ Averroes, *Commentary on Plato's Republic* 2.798-10, *Rhetoric*, 137.7-138.4 (cited in Averroes 1974).

²⁰ Ferrari 2005, 107, 118.

I don't focus here on Timaeus' comment that the account of creation and the universe contained in the *Timaeus* will constitute an *eikos logos/muthos* (a 'likely account/story').²¹ Rather, so far and throughout this essay I have and will continue to focus on Socrates' and Critias' proposals for the participants' eventual return to a discussion of this retrospectively ideal city and how *this* is meant to function as an instructive *muthos* in the argument of the *Timaeus-Critias*.

To do this, at this point it helps to turn to Cicero's aims in *De republica* 1-2, where, I think, we will see a much more fleshed out picture of "retrospective ideal political philosophy" (RIPP), an interpretive lens which may help us make sense of some of Plato's motivations here in the *Timaeus*.

3. Scipio's Project in *De Republica* 1 and 2

As I made clear in my introduction, the principal aim of this section will be to establish a clear thematic connection between the form, content, and methodology of Cicero's *De republica* and the introductory prologue to Plato's *Timaeus*. Before I discuss the resonances between the project I have just outlined in the *Timaeus-Critias* and what we find in the *De republica*, I will address an obvious question: How familiar with the *Timaeus* was Cicero, anyway?

Happily, that Cicero was well-acquainted with the *Timaeus* is beyond doubt. It receives substantive philosophical attention at four different places in the Ciceronian corpus.²² In addition, most notably, Cicero drafted a partial translation of the *Timaeus* sometime between June 45 and December 43.²³ However, Cicero's translation covers *Ti.* 27c-47b, which, crucially, does not include the prologue to the dialogue—none of Socrates' introductory comments on method and his hopes for the conversation, nor Critias' speech on ancient Athens, Egypt, and Atlantis, nor Timaeus' transition to his own speech, are included.

The partial nature of Cicero's translation, however, likely does not result from unfamiliarity with the entirety of the Platonic text. David Sedley convincingly argues that the *Timaeus* is partial by intent, being part of a planned dialogue project on Pythagorean and Peripatetic cosmology (to be staged between Publius Nigidius Figulus and Cratippus).²⁴ Chalcidius' Late Antique Latin translation of the *Timaeus*, in contrast with Cicero's, does include the prologue, giving us some evidence of its continuous availability throughout antiquity.²⁵

Despite Cicero's general familiarity with the *Timaeus*, the burden of proof, then, is on the case made for the similarity of methodology sketched in these two projects. This is what I hope to establish over the next few paragraphs.

I begin with a brisk introductory overview of Cicero's *De republica*. Though coming to us in a fragmentary state, we can get a good sense of its structure from the preserved books and fragments through the textual evidence available to us.²⁶ It is a work ordered around certain central questions concerning good governance and its relation to the healthy, happy lives of both citizens and politicians within a state (*res publica*). These questions turn out to be (in the order presented in the text of the *Rep.*): What is the best form of government (Book 1)? Has this form of government ever been seen in the world (Book 2)? Is justice required for a city to be a city (Book 3)? Who is the ideal statesman, *rector rei publicae* (Book 4)? How is

²¹ For helpful introductions to the large scholarly literature, see Betegh 2009, Burnyeat 2009, McBride 2005, Mourelautos 2009. The cosmological account is referred to as both *muthos* and *logos*: *eikōs muthos* at 29d, 59c, 68d; *eikōs logos* 30b, 48d, 53d, 55d, 56a, 57d, 90c; cited in Partenie 2018.

²² At *Fin.* 2.102 (*Ti.* 39); *Sen.* 44 (*Ti.* 69d); *Nat. D.* 2.32 (*Ti.* 89); *Tusc.* 1.20 (*Ti.* 69c). For this listing, see Long 1995, 44, n. 14.

²³ For dating, see Sedley 2009, 189.

²⁴ Sedley 2009, especially 199-204. See, too, Reydam-Schils 2013 and White 2015.

²⁵ For more on the differences between Cicero's and Chalcidius' translations, see White 2015, starting at 253.

²⁶ A full summary of the aims and subtleties of the work are outside the scope of this essay. The best contemporary scholarly introduction and analysis are found in Atkins 2013b and J.G.F. Powell's introduction in Rudd 2008.

he educated (Book 5)? How will he lead and why will he enter politics at all (Book 6, which contains the famous *Somnium Scipionis*)?

As in Plato's *Republic*, the discussion of these questions takes the form of a (somewhat) organic question-and-answer philosophical dialogue (with intervening bits of more protracted exposition by Scipio, the main dialogue participant, and, distinctive to Cicero's style, prefaces to books 1, 3, 5 in his own voice), all contained in six books.

Cicero begins the *De republica* in his own voice, arguing against perceived opponents to political service (presumably, the Epicureans) and defending his own decision to enter into political life (and emphasizing his considerable influence and achievement).²⁷ (*Rep.* 1.1-12) He mentions this achievement and dual expertise (in both political matters and philosophy) as reasons that he should craft a treatise on political principles (*rationes rerum civilium*) (1.13):

Since I have had the good fortune to achieve something of note in government, and also possess a certain ability in expounding political principles (*in explicandis rationibus rerum civilium*) not only as a result of experience but also through my enthusiasm for learning and teaching (*studio discendi et docendi*) I am not unqualified for this task. This is not true of most authorities; for some of my predecessors have been highly accomplished in theoretical discussion, without any discernible achievement in practice; others, with a creditable practical record, have lacked analytical skill.²⁸ (*Rep.* 1.13)

But he does not there give an overall plan for the work—statements to that effect are found in the text of the discussion itself he “recalls” between Scipio Aemilianus and his associates at Scipio's countryside villa during the Latin holidays.

The first of these comes from Laelius, Scipio's best friend and close advisor, who gives us the clearest and most succinct statement of the overall shape of the *De republica*. His comment as to where the discussion will lead is particularly useful in that it is not itself a statement on *method*, which, as we shall see, will be something Scipio's comments will often express.²⁹ Laelius' initial comment on the direction of the discussion instead simply tells us what the dialogue is *about* and where it will end up.

But the initial discussion in the *Rep.* before Laelius asks for a new direction is curious, and already brings to the fore uncanny resemblances with the *Timaeus-Critias* project. In some ways, it is a sort of inversion of the prologue to Plato's *Timaeus*. Instead of discussing politics from the outset, as we might expect from the title of the work, Scipio and his companions begin their philosophical discussion on the nature of the universe, only moving on to political matters after Laelius' continued prodding. They remark on the bad omen of the “two suns”, and Philus notes the importance of the study of physics and cosmology to the study of political problems:

Don't you think it relevant to our homes to know what is going on and taking place in the house—not the one surrounded by our walls but this whole universe (*mundus hic totus*) which the gods have given us to share with them as a dwelling-place and fatherland? After all, we must remain ignorant of many things if we are ignorant

²⁷ Cicero notes that such a combination is exceedingly rare. One example Cicero finds is Demetrius of Phalerum. Throughout the Ciceronian corpus, Cicero compares himself to Demetrius, disciple of Theophrastus and lifelong Peripatetic philosopher, who maintained his studies and literary output in the midst of a busy and successful political career in Athens. Cicero praises his style and life on numerous occasions, notably but not limited to *Brut.* 8, 9, 37, 82; *Off.* 1.1.3; *Fin.* 5.9; *Rep.* 2.3.

²⁸ Translations throughout are from Rudd 2009 with minor typographical changes by the author. The Latin text is drawn from the 2006 OCT critical edition (Powell).

²⁹ See *Rep.* 1.70 for one of Scipio's more general programmatic remarks (but still seems to outline his method).

of these. I myself, yes, and even you, Laelius, and indeed all who aspire to wisdom, take pleasure in learning about and pondering the physical world. (*Rep.* 1.19)

Interestingly, Scipio, at first, continues in this line of thought. He shows himself to be equally interested in the cosmos and in politics, relating stories of political figures using scientific explanations of celestial phenomena among common people to quiet the anxieties and emotions of unruly populaces. (1.23-25) Anticipating the cosmic visions contained in the last book of the *De republica*, the so-called *Somnium Scipionis*, Scipio remarks on the insignificance of human matters (*rebus divinis*) when one has contemplated the divine realm (*regna deorum*) or eternity (*aeternum*). (1.26)

After continuing to criticize this initial exchange between Scipio, Tubero, and Philus for being too concerned with celestial matters at the expense of national safety, Laelius suggests that the persons present direct their attention to matters more clearly affecting the state (particularly, as Laelius says, the Gracchan land reforms have almost divided the state in two [1.31-2]). I draw from an exchange between Mucius and Laelius:

Mucius: So what do you think we should learn, Laelius, in order to achieve what you require?

Laelius: Those skills which make us to serve the community (*eas artes quae efficiant uti sui civitati simus*). That, in my opinion, is the finest duty that wisdom has, and the greatest proof and function of moral excellence (*id enim esse praeclarissimum sapientiae munus maximumque virtutis vel documentum vel officium puto*). So then, to make sure that we spend this holiday in discussions that are primarily of benefit to the state, why don't we ask Scipio to tell us what form of government he regards as best (*optimum statum civitatis*)? Then we'll go on to other questions. After clarifying them, we will come step by step, I hope to these very problems, and will get a systematic understanding (*rationem*) of the difficulties that now beset us. (*Rep.* 1.33)

Here Laelius gives us a rough picture of the sequence of contents in the *De republica*. Owing to the state of crisis in which the Roman state finds itself in, Laelius proposes that the dialogue participants spend their time talking about something which could serve the ailing state. First, Laelius and the others will ask Scipio—someone who is both successful and practiced in politics and himself learned—what he thinks the best form of government (*optimus status civitatis*) is (which, as it turns out, will make up the subject matter of Books 1 and 2). Then, other questions will be entertained. These turn out to be questions relating to the justice's relationship to the state (Book 3); the nature of education (Book 4); the ideal statesman (Book 5); and the challenges and rewards of the statesman (Book 6). The result of this discussion, Laelius says, will be a *ratio* of the problems that face the Roman republic (and, presumably, answers to said problems). These dangers, he thinks, are the ones he has just had reason to mention: civic discord and the threat of total governmental collapse. (1.31-2)

We shall see that Scipio's answer to Laelius' request—to discourse on the *optimus status civitatis*—takes a curious turn, quite in line with the methodology for ideal retrospective political philosophy outlined by Socrates and his companions in the *Timaeus-Critias*. In fact, it turns out that ancient republican Rome becomes the very *exemplum* of the *optimus status civitatis*, analogous to ancient Athens' transformation into a sort of living model in the speech of Critias.

After Laelius asks Scipio for this philosophical exposition, in *Rep.* 1.37-69 Scipio more or less continues in a familiar, abstracted theoretical discussion on the ideal constitution. He remarks on the benefits and demerits of each of the simple forms of government in relation to property distribution, freedom, equality, and stability. He then concludes that the so-called "mixed" constitution, which incorporates something of each of the simple forms in its structure of political offices and powers, is best (fairest and most stable). (1.69)

We might expect Scipio to further elaborate in abstract philosophical terms on why he thinks the mixed constitution is best. Instead, he stops himself, and suggests that his treatment of the topic so far has been incomplete. Their discussion has lacked a particular example—an actualized ideal city. Scipio says:

... I shall move on to matters which are familiar to everyone, and which indeed we have long been working towards. I hold, maintain, and declare (*sic decerno, sic sentio, sic adfirmo*) that no form of government (*nullam omnium rerum publicarum*) is comparable in its structure (*constitutione*), its assignment of functions (*discriptione*), or its discipline (*disciplina*), to the one which our fathers (*patres*) received from their forebears and have handed down to us. So, if you approve (because you wanted me to talk on a subject which you yourselves knew well), I shall describe its nature (*qualis sit*) and at the same time demonstrate its superiority (*optimam esse ostendam*). Then, after setting up our constitution (*nostra re publica*) as a model (*exemplum*), I shall use it as a point of reference, as best as I can, in all I have to say about the best possible state (*de optimo civitatis statu*). If I can keep this aim in view and bring it to a conclusion, I shall have amply fulfilled, I think, the task which Laelius assigned me. (*Rep.* 1.70)

Scipio suggests that a treatment on the best state that excepts such an example is in some sense incomplete or less good than it could be. (And, as I think we've seen, this point is echoed in Socrates' desire expressed toward the beginning of the *Timaeus*, discussed in section 1). But in Book 1 this methodological point is not fully developed.

It is made clearer with the programmatic statements in Book 2 of the *De Republica*, where Scipio begins his historical and anthropological analysis of the Roman people. Scipio means to put forward a political treatise that differs with respect to *methodology* from that adopted by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, but *desired* and *adopted* by the Socrates of the *Timaeus* and his companions. This methodology (which I have called a kind of *retrospectively-oriented* ideal political philosophy) consists in this: his characters set out to combine both i) abstracted, ideal philosophical discussion on the best constitution with ii) an historical instance of the constitution thus described. This is made even clearer in the next two passages from Cicero's *De republica* that I'll discuss.

In the first passage, Scipio begins his retelling of the history of the Roman people. Scipio says:

Accordingly in my discourse I shall go back, as Cato used to do, to the "origin" of the Roman people (I gladly borrow his actual word). Moreover, it will be easier to carry out my plan if I describe for you the birth, growth, and maturity of our state (*nascentem . . . crescentem . . . adultam*), which eventually became so firm and strong (*firmam atque robustam*), than if I deal with some imaginary community (*quam si mihi [rem publicam] aliquam . . . finxero*), as Socrates does in Plato (*apud Platonem Socrates*). (*De rep.* 2.2-3)

We had a glimpse of this earlier. Here, Scipio says that his discourse on the ideal state will be *better served* by interludes on Roman history and cultural development—following a narrative course of birth, adolescence, and maturity in the Roman state—than if he restricts his discussion to an "imaginary community" (Rudd's loose translation) as Socrates does in Plato's *Republic*. Contrarily, as we have seen in the prologue to Plato's *Timaeus* (and sketched in the *Critias*), Socrates and his companions engage in just this sort of project in those two works.

This point of contrast with Plato's method in the *Republic* (but, again, in concert with the methodology adopted in Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*) is made even clearer later in Book 2. Scipio begins:

You appreciate, then, don't you, that it was thanks to the good sense (*consilio*) of one man [Romulus] not only that a new people came into being but that, when he departed, it was not a baby crying in its cradle, but rather a youth on the verge of manhood.

Laelius: Yes, we are aware of that, and also of the fact that at the outset you are using a novel method of exposition (*nova ratione*) which is not to be found in any Greek treatise (*in Graecorum libris*). The doyen (*princeps*) of writers [Plato] on this theme chose a stretch of virgin territory (*aream ... praeclaram*) where he could build a state to his own specifications (*arbitratu suo*). It was a remarkable state no doubt, but quite out of touch with men's lives and habits (... *sed a vita hominum abhorrentem et moribus*). His successors have presented their opinions about types and systems of political organization without reference to any definite model or form of constitution (*sine ullo certo exemplari formaque rei publicae*). It looks to me as if you intend to do both. For [1] in your opening remarks you prefer to attribute your discoveries to others rather than, like Plato's Socrates, to claim them for yourself; [2] in talking about the site of the city you discuss in theoretical terms [*ad rationem*] what Romulus did by chance or necessity; and [3] instead of wandering from one state to another you confine your discussion to a single example (*defixa in una re publica*). So carry on as you have begun. As you work your way through the other kings I fancy I can foresee the emergence of a fully-fledged state (*perfectam rem publicam*)."³⁰ (*Rep.* 2.21-22)

Here, as I have alluded to already, we have the retrospective ideal method for political philosophy laid out in its clearest expression. The method Laelius notes in Scipio's speech, in short, is a sort of inversion of the more familiar Platonic project of ideal political philosophy in the *Republic* (importantly *not* an inversion of the project I think contained in the *Timaeus-Critias*): he suggests that, in contrast to Socrates' *prospective* method adopted in the *Republic*, which assumes an imagined scenario of a new city's founding on an unoccupied tract of land by the dialogue participants (who turn out to be a very specialized set of people, namely, philosopher-founders), the philosophical treatment upon which they have embarked is instead retrospective. He notes that the benefits are multiple: Scipio avoids the problems associated with Plato's Callipolis, idealized without an existent model, making it *praeclaram* (excellent) while nevertheless abhorrent to morals and the life of real human beings; Scipio decides on one single constitution to draw from instead of a confusing catalogue of good states (*defixa in una republica*); he uses theoretical explanations to explain what Romulus did in the past, adding reasonable explanations to the foundations of the Roman state.

Scipio recapitulates this theoretical advantage for his mode of discourse later:

... [Plato/Socrates] constructed a state which was desirable rather than feasible (*civitatem optandam magis quam sperandam*). It was the smallest he could contrive, and, though not actually possible, it enabled the reader to see how politics worked (*quam minimam potuit, non quae posset esse, sed in qua ratio rerum civilium perspicere posset effecit*). I, however, if I can manage it, while using the same

³⁰ Laelius' comments here seem to be in tension with my thesis. Namely, that there is a likely resemblance between the prologue to the *Timaeus* and the *De republica* owing, in part, to Cicero's familiarity with the former. In that case, why would Laelius say that the method employed here seems to be *new* (*nova ratione*) and unlike Plato's Socrates? Ultimately, I think this apparent tension is just so: apparent. I think Cicero here probably means that Scipio's method is new and different from the approach adopted in the more well-known *Republic* by Socrates. Cicero may be imagining that Laelius has only read *some* Plato; he may be gesturing to the more well-known of Plato's treatises for the benefit of his audience; he may indeed for purposes of literary vanity and Roman patriotism wish to present his *De republica* as more original and un-Greek than it really is. For whatever reason, Cicero, a close reader of Plato, has Laelius focus on Plato's *prospective* political theory in the *Republic*, and not the retrospective political theory we see outlined in the *Timaeus-Critias*.

principles as he deduced, will try to show them operating, not in a shadowy country of the mind, but in a very great nation. In doing so I shall touch, as though with a pointer, on the cause of every good and every evil in public life (*ego autem, si modo consequi potuero, rationibus eisdem quas ille vidit, non in umbra et imagine civitatis, sed in amplissima re publica, enitar ut cuiusque et boni publici et mali causam tamquam virgula videar attingere.*) (*Rep.* 2.52)

As Socrates desires for the ideal city engaging and excelling in real war and conflict in Plato's *Timaeus*, Scipio and Laelius want dialectical political philosophy that is informed by an existent model (whether of the city, constitution, statesman, or laws). But, rather than assuming that this model is to be sought in a distant, hoped-for future or in the realm of purely conceptual possibility (as we might think Socrates and his interlocutors do in the *Republic*), Laelius notes that Scipio has proposed a new kind of model for their philosophical treatment: namely, one preserved in history.³¹ This model will allow Scipio to point—in a way clearer to our senses and thus to our immediate understanding—as a *virgula* (a 'pointer') touches on parts of a page.³²

What, then, is this model for retrospective ideal political philosophy as sketched between these two works—Cicero's *Republic* and Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*?

4. Retrospective Ideal Political Philosophy (RIPP) in the *Timaeus-Critias* and *De republica*

We have now examined the passages central to my argument. To flesh out the *Timaeus-Critias* and *Republic*'s picture of RIPP in more detail, I will address a few of the central claims made by Laelius, Scipio, and Socrates here, as they make up the heart of my interpretive approach to both works. This approach centers on Cicero's claim (through Scipio and Laelius) that he puts forth a treatise on the best state that exceeds its predecessors in its superior methodology, and on Socrates' desire for a new kind of political treatise at the beginning of the *Timaeus*, to be fully realized in the *Critias*.

First, Laelius gives fuller expression to Scipio's earlier comments on the superiority of his method to Plato's in the *Republic* and *expands* the criticism to the whole of Greek philosophical and historical writing. He calls into question the "blank slate" approach to political theory that Socrates endorses in the *Republic*, and even makes a substantive criticism of it. As we saw, he suggests, that it is perhaps "to be hoped for," but not itself feasible.³³

But the real point of this criticism is made clear in the succeeding line, where he charges subsequent Greek philosophers with failing to provide a *definite* model, exhibited in history, as a referent to their theorizing. Scipio's mode of exposition, obviously, is not defective in this way, as Laelius notes. (Nor, of course, is the prologue to the *Timaeus* and the action of the *Critias*.) Accordingly, Scipio's and Critias' discussion of the best state make liberal use of examples from Rome's and Athens' own cultural and mythological history, and Scipio's treatment of the ideal city does not stray far from Rome's traditional political arrangement, once Rome has been introduced as the ideal.³⁴

³¹ Again, in concert with Asmis 2005.

³² Scipio does contrast this with the purely theoretical model (*imago naturae*) of the *optimus status civitatis* at 2.65-6 at the prodding of Tubero. Scipio says that a purely abstracted discussion on the best possible state is of course possible—building off the *imago naturae*—but that his *exemplum* of the Roman state was meant to aid our understanding for the reasons mentioned above in Book 2. Abstract philosophical discussion building off the *imago naturae* is, in some sense, inert. (In this passage, Scipio uses *imago* and *exemplum* nearly interchangeably.)

³³ This is made clear at *Rep.* 2.52. Ultimately this line of Cicero's thinking—substantive criticism of Plato's ideal in the *Republic*—will have little treatment in this essay. He does seem to think that the Callipolis suffers from infeasibility (2.52), but at other points he makes it clear that he does not mean to surpass Greek thinkers in their positive theorizing on the best state (1.36).

³⁴ See Asmis 2014. Asmis claims (in concert with my claims here) that Cicero aims to mythologize the state and persons of the ancient Roman republic.

Both Cicero and Plato in this way *mythologize* the origins of their home cities into ancient *utopias*. These cities are repeatedly suggested to be ideal in their political arrangement—exhibiting the defining features of ideal cities already arrived at via theory alone—but, as I said in my introductory comments, the facts surrounding these cities are beyond our current sense perception. Hence, these cities inhabit the realm of *myth*.

What, then, are the advantages of the mythologized approach to political philosophy?

Socrates in the *Timaeus* and Scipio in the *De republica* propose a retrospective approach to ideal political theory to *activate* the inherently inert model of the best state contained in Plato's *Republic* and Book 1 of Cicero's *De republica*. They think that an *exemplum* of an ideal *past* state best brings into relief the real-world possibility of the *optimum status civitatis*. Furthermore, with respect to illustrative and educative power the model contained in Critias' ancient Athens and Scipio's ancient Rome is easily superior.³⁵

With it, Socrates thinks we may very well witness ideal political theory actualized (just as we would want to see a charioteer complete and win a race, not just stand at the ready), and Scipio thinks he may be able to point out every element of the public good and public evil as easily as he might point out words on a piece of paper with a pointer. The mythological histories of ancient Athens and Rome crafted by Scipio and Critias, then, rather than serving as purely fanciful fables to be debunked, provide abundant illustrative resources to complete a philosophical treatment of politics. In fact, we ignore these enlivened models of the ideal state, contained in our collective mythological histories (whether in Critias' Athens or Scipio's Rome), at our own peril.

Cicero himself says as much in a fragment of the *De republica* contained in Augustine's *City of God* (which Augustine emphasizes is delivered in Cicero's voice itself 'Tullius non Scipionis'):

'On ancient customs and old-fashioned men the state of Rome stands firm.'
(*'Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque.'*) The compactness and truth of that line are such that the poet who uttered it [Ennius] must, I think, have been prompted by an oracle. For neither the men on their own (in a state which lacked such a moral tradition) nor the state on its own (without such men in charge) could have founded or long maintained so great and wide-ranging an empire (*nam neque viri, nisi ita morata civitas fuisset, neque mores, nisi hi viri praefuissent, aut fundare aut tam diu tenere potuissent tantam et tam fusa lateque imperantem rem publicam*). Long before living memory our ancestral way of life produced outstanding men, and those excellent men preserved the old way of life and the institutions of their forefathers. Our generation, however, after inheriting our political organization like a magnificent picture now fading with age, not only neglected to restore its original colours but did not even bother to ensure that it retained its basic form and, as it were, its faintest outlines (*nostra vero aetas, cum rem publicam sicut picturam accepisset egregiam sed iam evanescentem vetustate, non modo eam coloribus eisdem quibus fuerat renovare neglexit, sed ne id quidem curavit ut formam saltem eius et extrema tamquam lineamenta servaret*). What remains of those ancient customs on which he said the state of Rome stood firm? We see them so ruined by neglect that not only do they go unobserved, they are no longer known. It is the lack of such men that has led to the disappearance of those customs. Of this great tragedy we are not only bound to give a description; we must somehow defend ourselves as if we were arraigned on a capital charge. For it is not by some accident—no, it is because of our own moral failings—that we are left with the name of the Republic, having long since lost its substance (*nostris enim vitiis, non casu aliquo, rem publicam verbo retinemus, re ipsa vero iam pridem amisimus*). (Rep. 5.1-2)

³⁵ Cp. Asmis 2005, 2014.

We see the conservative dimension of Cicero's political thought on display in the above passage. This leaning, I think, helps to explain the philosophical moves made throughout the *De republica*. In addition, the political leanings of the characters are not surprising. Scipio and his companions are members of the conservative senatorial elite at Rome (as was Cicero even as a *novus homo* in the Senate); similarly, Plato, most of Socrates' allies in the dialogues, and, notably, Timaeus and Critias, are conservative and oligarchic in their politics.¹

Cicero's warning above—that traditions fade at our own peril—finds another analogue in the *Timaeus*, again bringing the conservative, retrospective ideal political philosophy of both works into clearer relief. In Critias' speech, he relates the speech of an Egyptian priest that Solon encounters on a trip to the ancient society. This priest both admonishes him and the Athenians for their cultural forgetfulness, and also informs him of the great achievements of Athenians past as an illustration of the damages done by their oblivion:

Now of all the events reported to us, no matter where they've occurred—in your parts or in ours—if there are any that are noble or great or distinguished in some other way, they've all been inscribed here in our temples and preserved from antiquity on. In your case, on the other hand, as in that of others, no sooner have you achieved literacy and all the other resources that cities require, then there again, after the usual number of years, comes the heavenly flood. It sweeps upon you like a plague, and leaves only your illiterate and uncultured people behind. You become infants all over again, as it were, completely unfamiliar with anything there was in ancient times, whether here or in your own region. And so, Solon, the account you just gave of your people's lineage is just like a nursery tale. First of all, you people remember only one flood, though in fact there had been a great many before. Second, you are unaware that the finest and best of all the races of humankind once lived in your region. This is the race from whom you yourself, your whole city, all that you and your countrymen have today, are sprung, thanks to the survival of a small portion of their stock. But this has escaped you, because for many generations the survivors passed on without leaving a written record. Indeed, Solon, there was a time, before the greatest of these devastating floods, when the city that is Athens today not only excelled in war but also distinguished itself by the excellence of its laws in every area. Its accomplishments and its social arrangements are said to have been the finest of all those under heaven of which we have received report. (*Ti.* 23a-c)

The Egyptian's warnings here regarding the cycles of flourishing and oblivion pick up on familiar Platonic themes (recall, for instance, the cyclical nature of politics as described in Plato's *Republic*). Nevertheless, striking here is the Egyptian's insistence that this cycle of generation and corruption has in fact obscured ancient Athens' already having achieved a Golden Age, a period when it was known to excel in war and have the best political constitution and laws. The Egyptians' record-keeping lets them know this—whereas the Athenians' carelessness with their history leaves them in the dark about their 'true nature' and genealogy, descended as they are from the "the finest and best race of people" (τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ ἀριστον γένος ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους) in those days. A similar fear of cultural forgetfulness permeates Cicero's warning in *Rep.* 5.

In the hands of Cicero and Plato, this anxiety (of cultural decay through ignorance and, perhaps, even open flouting of customs and traditions handed down from 'better days') becomes richly encoded into the methodology of both the *De republica* and *Timaeus-Critias* projects, not simply as a sort of unthinking, statist nostalgia, but as a response to genuine worry regarding the feasibility and realizability of ideal political proposals. That is, if such an *optimus status civitatis* has never existed, who's to say it ever will—or that it even resembles

³⁶ The political lives of individual characters in the Platonic dialogues are notoriously complex. For helpful summaries of Timaeus, Critias, and Socrates' entanglements, see Nails 2002.

actual, existing human governments? Instantiating the mixed constitution in the Roman republic as Scipio does, for instance, does not simply satisfy Cicero's conservatism: it, as he says, *fixes* his political theory on a particular example; focuses it.

To put it another way: For both Scipio and Socrates' companions in the *Timaeus-Critias* retrospective political philosophy provides a natural solution to the problems of practicability. That is, how ought we to *solve* our current political problems now that we have analyzed the nature of the state? We ought to use a model of that ideal state that has already existed (Athens, Rome) and reform based on that model (*exemplum, imago; muthos*, even).

This picture for political theory—as I have outlined it in these two works—brings to mind, of course, numerous other conservative methodologies for actual political practice. But it also has a happy resonance with other theorists within the republican tradition (of which Plato and Cicero are both a part). In particular, one is reminded of Machiavelli's reflections in the *Discourses on Livy*. There, Machiavelli notes that Rome's renewal coincided with efforts for it to be “taken back frequently to its origins” (*ritarla spesso verso il suo principio*).² Further (and on this point I conclude):

That all things in the world have a term to their lives is very true. But the ones that go through the entire cycle that heaven ordains for them are usually those not disordering their body but keeping it so ordered that it either does not change or, if it does change, it is healthy for them and not harmful for them. Because I am speaking of mixed bodies such as republics and religions, I say that those changes taking them back toward their origins are healthy for them. Hence, those that are better ordered and have a longer life can frequently renew themselves through their institutions, or else arrive through some event at such renewal outside of these institutions ... The way to renew them, as has been stated, is to take them back toward their origins. For the origins of all religions, republics, and kingdoms must have some goodness, thanks to which they regain their original prestige and expansiveness. (*Discourses* 3.1)

5. Conclusion

In this essay I brought these two texts into substantive dialogue to illuminate mysterious features of both. First, I presented and examined the introductory discussion of Plato's *Timaeus* (17a-28b). I showed how Socrates' desire for an actual model for ideal political philosophy precipitated Critias' utopian myth of the city of ancient Athens (and, eventually, the content and action of the *Critias*). I then introduced a similar methodology found in the *De republica*, where Cicero's Scipio discusses the ideal constitution and proposes ancient republican Rome as its *exemplum*—a *re publica defixa* (a ‘fixed republic’, as in, motionless or fastened).

But what are the advantages of this approach? Why did Plato and Cicero both adopt it in these works? I showed that this approach to political philosophy contains solutions to genuine philosophical problems regarding the realizability and feasibility of the ideal city, and offers solutions to even more general problems regarding the relationship between ideal models inert in their perfection and ideal models which have been actualized in the real world. I've called this methodology ‘retrospective ideal political philosophy’ (RIPP).

Most important: I've introduced a framework for understanding the obscure methodologies of both Plato's *Timaeus-Critias* and Cicero's *De republica*, two works whose underlying coherence has proven continuously mysterious. This piece brings greater understanding to both as works of political philosophy.

³⁷ Atkinson and Sices 2002, 259.

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Towards a ‘Political’ Tibullus: Ceres and Grain in Elegies Books 1 and 2

VICTORIA JANSSON

Abstract: This article argues that unfulfilled prayers to Ceres in Tibullus’ elegies are symptomatic of Rome’s grain crises at the end of the Republic and beginning of Empire. My approach includes philological, socioeconomic, and psychoanalytic analysis of the elegies, in which the poet examines the shifting definition of a ‘Roman’ in his day. I seek to demonstrate the ways in which the poet grapples with the political and economic forces at work during the most turbulent period of Roman history: a time when income inequality was roughly equivalent to that of the U.S. and E.U. today.¹

Keywords: Tibullus, elegy, literary theory, grain, Ceres, Lacan.

I argue that the elegies of Tibullus constitute a bold poetic program in which the author explores widespread social change. Though this article will demonstrate connections across the first two books of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, I focus on one aspect of the corpus evocative of a shifting political and economic landscape: the goddess Ceres. She is both representative of Tibullus’ desires and an obstacle to them. When the poet prays for divine guidance, he continually refers to her by attributes that seem designed to evoke contemporary crises in the production and distribution of grain. Tibullus yearns for the Ceres of Rome’s mythic agrarian past while making clear the impossibility of such desires. The depiction of her as “flaxen-haired” (*flaua*, Tib. 1.1.15), adorned with the “wheat crown” (*corona spicea*, 1.1.15-16), and equated to both *Spes* and *Pax* are suggestive of late Republican grain crises and the rise of Augustus. During this time, the grain supply, traditionally the sole property of family farms, became increasingly politicized, alienated from its production, measured, and distributed to citizens favored by the ruling class.² The inherent tensions within Tibullus’ depiction of Ceres typify the anxieties of his day and are crucial to understanding the elegies.

My approach relies on an understanding of the political and economic events of the poet’s age, during which time the meaning of a ‘farmer’ or a ‘Roman’ changed dramatically. My methodology also draws on the tools of Lacanian psychoanalysis, a strategy developed by Paul Allen Miller.³ The stylistic ‘difficulties’ that have hindered modern appreciation of Tibullus may in fact be best interpreted as the emergence of what Lacan called the Real: that which falls outside the realms of the Imaginary (the image of ourselves we project to society) and the Symbolic (the semantic systems shared by a community).⁴ Thus, we may illuminate moments of *aporia* in Tibullus’ corpus, which occur when traditional modes of understanding the world begin to give way to new ideologies. My discussion of the poet’s description of Ceres as *flaua* draws in particular on Lacan’s conceptualization of metonymy. A Lacanian framework reveals Tibullus to be a poet reckoning with a society that no longer recognizes his most cherished dream: that, in the words of Cato from nearly a century and a half earlier, that “when they praised a good man, thus they praised him, [as] a good farmer and a good husbandman” (*et virum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam bonumque colonum*, Cato, *Agr.* 2).

I first examine the poet’s programmatic opening reference to Ceres (1.1.11-16) and then trace her epithets and attributes thematically through the rest of the corpus (1.5.21-26;

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¹ Milanović 2019.

² This article follows the text of Maltby 2002. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

³ Fineberg 1991, Janan 1994, Miller 2004, and Oliensis 2009 have also fruitfully applied psychoanalytic theory to the study of Roman elegy.

⁴ Miller 2004, 5; Janan 2012, 377.

1.5.43-44; 1.10.45-52; 1.10.67-68; 2.1.1-8; 2.5.55-60; 2.5.83-88). Ultimately, prayers to Ceres serve to make clear that the old modes of exchange, production, and language, to which Tibullus' poetic voice aspires, are fast becoming obsolete in his day.

Ceres and the Domestic Farm in 1.1

The first appearance of Ceres occurs only fifteen lines into the corpus. Having presented the basis for his poetic program - that he does not care for wealth and prefers instead the simple country life - Tibullus describes these economic choices within the framework of traditional Roman religion. This first passage referencing Ceres is particularly important for understanding the poet's idealized conception of her. He worships her as the guardian of the domestic, self-sufficient, 'moral,' Roman farm. Yet she appears only in unfulfilled wishes, never explicitly appearing to or bestowing favors upon the poet. Thus, she is a symptom of the Real: representative of the independence and abundance that the poet hopes to achieve but can never reach due to the political and economic turmoil of contemporary Rome. Having rejected the pursuit of profit and military success as concerns for other men, he describes the quiet life he prefers (1.1.7-16):

ipse seram teneras maturo tempore uites	
rusticus et facili grandia poma manu,	
nec Spes destituat, sed frugum semper aceruos	
praebeat et pleno pingua musta lacu:	10
nam ueneror, seu stipes habet desertus in agris	
seu uetus in triuio floridaserta lapis,	
et quodcumque mihi pomum nouus educat annus	
libatum agricolae ponitur ante deo.	
flaua Ceres, tibi sit nostro de rure corona	15
spicea quae templi pendeat ante fores;	

I myself, a countryman, may plant the pliant vines in due time,
and full-grown fruit trees with a ready hand,
and may Hope not desert (me), but may she always provide
heaps of the fruits of the earth and rich must in a full vat;
For I worship, whether a tree trunk deserted in the fields,
or an old stone where three roads meet, has flowery wreaths;
however much of my fruit the new season matures,
it is placed as an offering before the god of the country.
Flaxen-haired Ceres, may there be a wheat crown for you from my farm,
which may hang before the doors of your temple;

In this passage, Tibullus characterizes himself as "a countryman" (*rusticus*, 1.1.8). He first describes the simple toils of farm work, then the deities whom he imagines oversee such labor. "For" (*nam*, 1.1.11) both connects the previous lines and transitions into his religious subject. The poet hopes that his habitual piety (1.1.11-44) will ensure the success of his agricultural labor (7-10). He begins in the subjunctive mood: "I may plant" (*seram*, 1.1.7), "may she not desert me" (*destituat*, 1.1.9), and "may she provide" (*praebeat*, 1.1.10). When discussing his regular religious observance, he changes to the indicative mood: "I worship" (*ueneror*, 1.1.11). This sudden switch to the indicative is deceptive, as Tibullus' dream remains firmly out of grasp.⁵ He proceeds from this dream of rural piety (1.1.11-44) to imagining domestic bliss with Delia (1.1.45-52) and her eventual grief at his funeral (1.1.59-68). At no point

⁵ Wimmel 1976 terms this use of the indicative an "Art Überkonjunktive" (a sort of hyper-subjunctive) because the poet has progressed beyond mere desire into vividly imagining the realization of these desires (Wimmel 1976, 21-22). For further discussion of the subjunctive in 1.1, see Ripsati 1945, 99; Wimmel 1976, 17, 28-55; Bright 1978, 130.

does the poet indicate that these aforementioned hopes have or ever will come to fruition. Furthermore, the object of this worship remains unnamed; “the god of the country” (*agricolae ... deo*, 1.1.14) seems deliberately vague.⁶

Ceres, then, is the first deity explicitly named in the Tibullan corpus (1.1.15), and thus accorded a certain pride of place. When mentioning the goddess by name, Tibullus returns to the subjunctive mood: he writes “may there be for you” (*tibi sit*, 1.1.15) rather than “there is for you” (*tibi est*).⁶ These alternating uses of the subjunctive and indicative complicate the poet’s assertion that piety has its just rewards in the simple country life. We may understand this as the emergence of the Real, which in poetry often consists of *aporia* and occurs when “a supposedly ironclad logic confronts an element incompatible with itself but that the principles of its own rationale cannot refute” (Janan 2012, 377).⁷ Ritual and sacrifice to the gods ought to ensure reciprocal benefits for worshippers. Tibullus’ prayers, however, largely go unanswered. The grammatical ambivalence that characterizes Ceres’ first appearance echoes throughout the corpus, as many of her attributes (golden hair, wheat crown, and associations with other divinities) also call into question the feasibility of the poet’s dream world.

Flaua Ceres

In this section, I examine how the adjective *flaua* complicates Tibullus’ picture of Ceres by linking her to contemporary political conflicts, the pursuit of gold, and the poet’s fickle mistress. The goddess is “golden” or “flaxen-haired” (1.1.15), referring to the golden-yellow color of wheat.⁸ The association of Ceres with agricultural fertility is particularly Augustan. Germanicus, Manilius, Ovid, Tibullus, and Vergil refer to her by a variety of such epithets, including “fecund” (*fecunda*), “fertile” (*fertilis*), “flaxen-haired” (*flava*), “crop-bearing” (*frugifera*), “begetter of crops” (*genetrix frugum*), “powerful in crops” (*potens frugum*), and “ruddy, grain-colored” (*rubicunda*).⁹ Furthermore, her name is often metonymy for “grain” or “bread.”¹⁰ Cicero makes the elision plain: “Grain we call Ceres” (*fruges Cererem appellamus*, Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.60). The equation of Ceres to grain itself connects her not only to abstract agricultural fertility but also to the finished product of farm labor as an economic unit ready for consumption. Although Tibullus imagines Ceres as a symbol of the idealized past, his diction is suggestive of contemporary worship of the goddess for her ability to feed citizens within Rome’s growing borders.

In the opening of 1.1, Tibullus rejects the pursuit of large-scale agriculture for profit: “Let some other man collect riches in tawny gold for himself / and own many *iugera* of tilled soil” (*diuitias alius fuluo sibi congerat auro, / et teneat culti iugera multa soli*, 1.1.1). He prefers a small, self-sufficient farm protected by the goddess Ceres. Yet the phrase *flaua Ceres* echoes the *fuluo... auro* (tawny gold, 1.1.1) of his initial rejection (Maltby 2002, 127). *Flaua* and *fuluo* are phonologically similar and both refer to a golden color deepened with brown or reddish tones. This may also chime with the first word of the poem, “riches”

⁶ Maltby 2002 and Ramsay 1887 have *sit*, following the codices of Ambrosianus, Vaticanus, and Guelferbytanus. Murgatroyd 1991 has *fit*, following the conjecture of Lambinus.

⁷ Citing Žižek 1992, 72.

⁸ Spaeth 1996, 20. *Flaua Ceres* occurs first in Vergil’s *Georgics*, in which the goddess looks favorably from the heights of Olympus upon a farmer who tills the soil (*multum adeo, rastris glabras qui frangit inertis / uimineasque trahit cratis, iuuat arua, neque illum / flaua Ceres alto nequiquam spectat Olympo*, Verg. *G.* 1.94-96). The epithet may be based on the Homeric ξανθή Δημήτηρ (golden-haired Demeter, *Il.* 5.500; see Maltby 2002, 127). Recasting a Greek epithet for Roman Ceres is perhaps not surprising considering that Hellenization of the goddess’ cult proliferated throughout the Republic and was commonplace by Tibullus’ time (Scheid 1995).

⁹ Spaeth 1996, 20.

¹⁰ “Ceres = ‘grain’; Verg. *G.* 1.29-30, 2.227-9; *Aen.* 1.177-9; Hor. *Carm.* 3.24.11-13; *Sat.* 2.2.123-5; Ov. *Am.* 1.1.9-10, 2.16.7, 3.7.31; *Ars Am.* 1.401; *Met.* 8.290-2, 11.112-3; *Fast.* 4.645-6, 917-9, 931-2, 6.381-3, 389-92; Manil. *Astr.* 2.658, 3.152, 629, 664-6.

Ceres = ‘bread’; Verg. *Aen.* 1.701-2, 7.112-3; Ov. *Fast.* 2.537-40, 3.665-6; Manil. *Astr.* 4.250-1, 5.279-84; Grattius 397-8” (Spaeth 1996, 20, 190).

(*diuitias*, 1.1.1), which is a cognate of Greek δῖος (bright, gleaming).¹¹ To further complicate the image, *fuluus* usually describes animals or land rather than money in early Augustan literature.¹² Tibullus thus characterizes this hated *fuluo... auro* with an epithet that readers might expect him to embrace because of its links to the natural world. He claims to worship a goddess of similar hue only ten lines later (*flaua Ceres*). We may better understand these interlinked terms (*flaua*, *fuluo*, *diuitias*) here as a metonymic representation of the poet's desires, as formulated by Lacan.¹³ In this schema, "metonymy" is not just a linguistic trope of substitution, but also a psychic function through which certain 'objects' of the mind are rendered unrecognizable to consciousness.¹⁴ In this passage, the poet uses descriptions of golden hair (*flaua*, 1.1.15), tawny gold (*fuluo... auro*, 1.1.1), and wealth (*diuitias*, 1.1.1) in an effort to regain the "lost object" represented by Ceres. Yet these descriptions fall short of describing her and contribute to a contradictory image of the goddess; she both evokes a world before exchange and contemporary economic turmoil. Tibullus begins his elegies by questioning the norms of economic life and renouncing them but continues to engage deeply with these concerns throughout the poem. These inherent contradictions reveal a deep ambivalence within the poetic persona as he fails to find his longed-for ideal outside the constraints of his social-historical reality.

In a later poem, Tibullus depicts Delia in Ceres' form, while lamenting his separation from and love for his mistress. The poet claims that he saved her from an illness with magic spells and religious devotion, but that she now loves someone else (1.5.19-24):

at mihi felicem uitam, si salua fuisses, fingebam demens, sed renuente deo: 'rura colam, frugumque aderit mea Delia custos, area dum messes sole calente teret; aut mihi seruabit plenis in lintribus uuas pressaue ueloci candida musta pede.	20
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All the while I was imagining wildly, if you had been saved,
 there would be a happy life for me, but a god refused:
 'I shall live in the country, and my Delia will be [there], guardian of the
 crops,
 while the threshing floor wears away the harvest in the burning sun,
 or she will watch over the grapes in full vats
 and the bright must having been pressed by swift feet.'

Although his prayers have ostensibly been answered (Delia survives), the poet still does not gain her love. Instead, Tibullus imagines Delia watching over the threshing of grain, a duty typically ascribed to Ceres, and the production of wine. She is a "guardian of the crops"

¹¹ Putnam 1973, 50; LSJ s.v. δῖος.

¹² O.L.D. s.v. *fulvus*, a, um: deep yellow, reddish yellow, gold-colored, tawny (mostly poet.). Cf. *corpora leonum* (Lucr. 5.902); *tegmen lupae* (Hor. Carm. 4.4.14); *canis Lacon* (Verg. Aen. 1.275); *cassid equinis iubis* (Hor. Epod. 6.5); *boues* (Ov. M. 12.88); *uitulus* (Plin. Nat. 22.5.5.9); *caesaries* (Hor. C. 4.2.60); *arena* (Verg. Aen. 11.642).

¹³ Lacan's conceptualization of metonymy combines Roman Jakobson's metaphoric and metonymic poles (Jakobson and Halle 2002, 90-96) with Freud's dream processes of condensation (Freud SE IV, 169-76) and displacement (Freud, SE IV, 305).

¹⁴ Prior to the mirror stage of early childhood, the subject inhabits a "metaphoric" world of wholeness (Lacan 2006, 53-55, 75-81). As adults, however, we essentially inhabit a "metonymic" world, in which our desires are never fully met, and language always fails to completely describe the object of our longing. The ending of the mirror stage is marked by two developments: the arrival of the father, who disrupts the mother-child bond, and the infant's discovery of language. Lacan posits that the most basic function of language is to communicate a "lack." While systems of communication grow more complex as the subject enters adulthood, language remains inherently empty, consisting of a chain of signifiers which repeat ad infinitum, never finding their signifieds (Lacan 2006, 20-21; 28-29; 31-32; 418-9).

(*frugumque... custos*, 1.5.21), just as the goddess is among the guardians (*custode*, 1.1.20) in the opening poem of the corpus. Yet a “guardian” (*custos*) often appears in elegiac poetry as an obstacle to the realization of the poet’s dream.¹⁵ Although the poet dreams about her as a guardian of his farm, the ending of the poem reveals that a sturdy door separates the poet from his beloved: “Alas, I sing in vain and her door does not open” (*heu canimus frustra nec uerbis uicta patescit/ ianua*, 1.5.67-68). The description of Delia as a *custos* emphasizes that she is a figment of the poet’s imagination: “I was imagining wildly” (*fingebam demens*, 1.5.19). He writes of both Delia (*fuisses*, 1.5.19) and Ceres (*tibi sit*, 1.1.15) in the subjunctive, which reveals less about their actual presence than his own wishes.¹⁶

It is also important to note that Tibullus describes only the finished products of his farm. The “threshing floor” (*area*, 1.5.22) seems to magically separate wheat from chaff without the necessary human toil of pulling a *tribulum* or turning over crops. The grapes have already been piled into vats (*plenis in lintribus uuas*, 1.5.23), and a disembodied “swift foot” (*ueloci ... pede*, 1.5.24) has already pressed the skins, seeds, and stems of fruit into must (*pressaue ... candida musta*, 1.5.24). In Tibullus’ imagination, Delia and Ceres both transform harvest-ready crops into salable goods through their mere presence. Delia functions less as a romantic prospect than as an avatar within the poet’s larger socioeconomic landscape. Ironically, this also ties Tibullus’ fantasy of self-sufficiency closely to the attitudes of Roman aristocrats who relied on the labor of enslaved persons. A patrician farm owner considered the people who performed labor to be an extension of himself, though he of course performed little to no manual work on the estate.¹⁷

Later in the poem, Delia is likened to Ceres in her appearance: “She did not [obtain my affections] with words, but our girl bewitched [us] with her face and soft arms and flaxen hair” (*non facit hoc uerbis, facie tenerisque lacertis/ deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis*, 1.5.43-44). This is the first time Tibullus uses *flauus* since 1.1.15, and the adjective links the poet’s mistress, who has “flaxen hair” (*flauis... comis*, 1.5.44) to the goddess Ceres, who is similarly identified as *flaua* (1.1.15). Yet likening Delia to Ceres indicates that the poet’s dream is impossible. Since his love affair with Delia is so tumultuous, Ceres may be similarly fickle. Tibullus longs for a family farm where he may live with his beloved in effortless abundance. Yet while he evokes agrarian imagery, he only writes concretely of commoditized end products and ignores the actual effort required for farming, which calls the poem’s realism into question. These contradictions can be understood as the emergence of the Real; while Tibullus wishes to write about the idyllic life of love and nature, he finds himself unable to do so coherently in a world when such ideas no longer have meaning.

De rure... corona spicea

In this section, I explore the image of the wheat crown (*corona spicea*), first by explaining its cultural associations and contemporary relevance, then by tracing Tibullus’ usage of it throughout the corpus. Tibullus associates Ceres with the *corona spicea* from her first appearance: she is honored “with wheat-sheaths from the country” (*de rure corona/ spicea*, 1.1.15-16). Offering wheat-sheaths to Ceres’ temple may seem an uncomplicated image at first. The first sheaths of wheat in a harvest year (the *praemetium*) were a traditional sacrifice to the goddess: “They were accustomed to sacrifice the *praemetium* of grain ears, which they had harvested first, to Ceres” (*praemetium de spicis, quas primum messuissent, sacrificabant Cereri*, Fest. s.v. *sacrima*, 319 Müller). Other contemporary poets write of it as an offering

¹⁵ Papakosta 2012, 351.

¹⁶ He writes in a similar way about Delia’s supposed enthusiasm for the country life in the second poem of Book 1: “If only I might be able to yoke the oxen with you, my Delia, and graze the flocks on the customary mountain” (*ipse boues mea si tecum modo Delia possim / iungere et in solito pascere monte pecus*, 1.2.73-74).

¹⁷ Thibodeau 2011, 27-33.

in thanks for a good harvest.¹⁸ A closer examination, however, reveals that the *corona spicea* alludes not only to traditional Roman religion, but also to political propaganda of the Late Republican period and the emerging influence of Augustus on cult practice. Much like Ceres' depiction as *flaua*, this image suggests the rupture of Symbolic and Imaginary representation and calls into question the religious and political norms of Tibullus' day.

As Cairns 1999 rightly notes, Tibullus uses the terms *spica* or *spiceus* far more frequently than the other elegists. These terms appear in the Tibullan corpus six times,²⁰ while both Propertius¹⁹ and Ovid²⁰ use *spica* or *spiceus* only twice. This is particularly remarkable considering the relative sizes of Propertius' and Ovid's corpora compared to that of Tibullus.²¹ While Tibullus' rustic theme may account in part for his preference for the word, its repetition is best interpreted as another emergence of the Real in the corpus. The *corona spicea* is suggestive of political struggles over the grain supply during the Late Republic and early Empire, which we may observe on contemporary coin types and other iconographical forms. In an effort to consolidate power, prominent Romans sought to depict themselves as benefactors of the *annona* through visual representations of Ceres crowned with the *corona spicea*.²² The obverse of a denarius of Q. Cornificus dated to 44-42 BCE²³ and a similar denarius belonging to C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus dated to 48 BCE²⁴ are two such examples.²⁵ Furthermore, representations of the *corona spicea* increased dramatically on propagandistic coin types of individual, charismatic leaders during the Civil Wars.²⁶ Both Caesar and Octavian, who wielded and legitimized their political power by reforming the grain supply at Rome, employed the image of Ceres on coins.²⁷ Upon becoming princeps, Augustus depicted himself with the *corona spicea*, as on a bust held today in the Vatican Museum.²⁸ One of the most popular coin types minted during this time depicts Augustus on one side of the coin and sheaths of wheat on the obverse.²⁹ The emperor also depicted members of the royal family (particularly Livia) as the goddess Ceres. Such widespread propagandistic efforts make it probable that the public perceived Augustus as responsible for the grain supply at Rome.

The *corona spicea* was also the symbol of the cult of the *Fratres Arvales*, an ancient convivial society composed of twelve priests who offered annual sacrifice to the gods to ensure a good harvest.³⁰ Pliny writes that farming was held in the greatest honor in the early days of Rome (*apud priscos*, Plin. Nat. 18.6).³¹ Accordingly, Romulus himself established the *Fratres Arvales* who secured the *pax deorum* necessary for agricultural activity. Importantly, the insignia of the cult was the *corona spicea* (Nat. 18.6):

¹⁸ The phrase first occurs in the *Georgics* (*spicea... messis*, 1.314), though the imagery is present in Roman material culture from the fourth century BCE (Spaeth 1996, 11). Ovid, for example, writes that during the annual festival of Ceres, matrons "[gave] wheat-sheath garlands, the first of their fruits" (*primitias frugum dant spicea serta suarum*, Met. 10.433). Cf. Hor. Carm. Saec. 30; Ov. Am. 3.10.36, Fast. 4.616, Met. 2.28; Prop. 4.2.14.

¹⁹ Prop. 4.2.14; 4.6.74.

²⁰ Ov. Am. 2.10.3; 2.10.36.

²¹ "Propertius would have had to use *spica/spiceus* 19 times and Ovid 46 times in his erotic elegy and 44 times in his non-erotic elegy to match Tibullus' relative frequency" (Cairns 1999, 220-1).

²² Spaeth 1996, 16.

²³ Spaeth 1996, 16. Bronze denarius, Africa: RRC 509.5; BMCRR Africa 27. See also Le Bonniec 1958, 376 and 576-7. For more representations of Ceres with *corona spicea* and stalks of wheat, see Spaeth 1996, 188.

²⁴ This denarius depicts Ceres in the wheat crown, standing in a chariot drawn by two serpents: seemingly a reference to the Eleusinian attributes she shared with Demeter. Augustus was initiated into the Mysteries twice (Cass. Dio 51.4.1, 54.9.10), perhaps as part of a coordinated attempt to depict himself as a pious leader.

²⁵ Spaeth 1996, 18.

²⁶ Rickman 1980a, 259-60.

²⁷ Spaeth 1996, 20-23.

²⁸ Hall of Busts, no. 274.

²⁹ Alföldi 1956, 93; Spaeth 1996, 23-25.

³⁰ Plin. Nat. 18.6; Gell. 7.7.8; Cairns 1999, 226ff.; Maltby 2002, 127.

³¹ Text is taken from Rackham 1959. All translations are my own.

Aruorum sacerdotes Romulus in primis instituit seque duodecimum fratrem appellauit inter illos Acca Larentia nutrice sua genitos, spicea corona, quae uitta alba colligaretur, sacerdotio ei pro religiosissimo insigni data; quae prima apud Romanos fuit corona, honosque is non nisi uita finitur et exules etiam captosque comitatur.

The priests of the fields [the Arval priesthood] were among the first Romulus established at Rome, and he appointed himself the twelfth brother among them, (the others being) the sons of Acca Placentia, his nurse; to this priesthood was bestowed the wreath of wheat-sheaths (*spicea corona*), which was tied together with a white fillet, as a most reverent distinction; which was the first *corona* at Rome, and this honor does not end unless with life, and is retained even in exile or captivity.

The story that Romulus himself founded the *Fratres Aruales* links the *corona spicea* to a mythical past, in which Romans were simple farmers. This emblem is “most reverent” (*religiosissimo*, *Nat.* 18.6): surely high praise from Romulus, the descendant of *pius Aeneas*. Pliny asserts that the *corona spicea* is the first crown among later military *coronae* awarded to distinguished members of the Roman army (*prima apud Romanos fuit corona*, *Nat.* 18.7). Nevertheless, the *corona spicea* seems to have been unique. The recipient would hold such an honor until death, regardless of any circumstance; receiving such a distinction in some way changed their very nature. This image of the *corona spicea* thus informs the Roman moral imagination. Men such as Pliny who likely never farmed their own fields claimed that their ancestors did as part of their ethical self-portraiture. In the following section, Pliny elaborates on the importance of small landholders in particular, while condemning the fact that his contemporaries practice conspicuous consumption above all else (*Nat.* 18.7):

bina tunc iugera p. R. satis erant, nullique maiorem modum adtribuit, quo seruorum paulo ante principis Neronis contento huius spatii uiridiariis?

In those days, two *iugera* of land were enough for a citizen of Rome, and he [Romulus] allotted a larger portion to no one; which citizens [today], who just a little time before were the slaves of Nero, would be content with tree-gardens in the same space?

Pliny contrasts the greed of his contemporaries with the simple honors pursued by early Romans. Refashioned into elegiac couplets, the sentiment would not feel out of place in Tibullus’ corpus. Two *iugera* of land is enough (*satis*, *Nat.* 18.7) for a Roman citizen; the phrase may be interpreted to mean either that a Roman citizen would be content with this size, or that the possession of two *iugera* qualified one for Roman citizenship. Pliny conveys both moral and economic authority on the topic, and accordingly relates that the highest honor one could earn in the ‘ideal’ Roman society was the *corona spicea*. The term in Tibullus may thus be considered to have a moral sense; it is the marker of a ‘good Roman’ who is content with a small farm. In keeping with his propagandistic representations of the *corona spicea* on coin types, Augustus is said to have revived the cult of the *Fratres Aruales* in 29/ 28 BCE (Scheid 1990, 690-9; Cairns 1999, 229) and to have designated many members of the imperial family as *sacerdotes*. Tibullus’ patron, Messalla, was also a founding member of the revived brotherhood under Augustus.³²

What should we make, then, of Tibullus’ references to the *corona spicea*? Cairns argues that Tibullus’ motif of the *spica* is intended “to provide support for Augustus’ policy of ‘religious’ revival, behind which lay echoes of a traditional concept of the ideal Roman citizen as a *rusticus paterfamilias* living in harmony with the divine.”³³ I offer a different interpretation: that the poet’s lexical fixation with *spica* is best interpreted as a symptom of

³² Cairns 1999, 225.

³³ Cairns 1999, 225

the Real. It is true that Tibullus draws upon much of the same iconography as Augustus. Messalla and the emperor may well be implicated in passages on the *corona spicea*, particularly considering the patron's entrance halfway through the very first poem (1.1.53) and continued references to him throughout the corpus. Yet, to assume that any overlap in imagery is a tacit endorsement of the princeps is too simplistic. Augustan iconography frequently borrows from and contradicts earlier political ideology. The identification of one man as *rusticus paterfamilias* for the whole of Rome goes against Republican values - both those of patrician agricultural supremacy and plebeian attempts to even the economic playing field. Tibullus incorporates these conflicting images into his poetic program again and again, always intertwined with allusions to the cult of Ceres. Cairns himself admits that the presence of Ceres is problematic for a pro-Augustan reading of *spica/spiceus*: "Indeed Ceres is so closely associated with the *spica* in Tibullus and elsewhere that, if we knew nothing about the Arvals' *spicea corona*, we might have presumed that Tibullus' interest in *spica/spiceus* was linked with the cult of Ceres."³⁴ I think that the best reading of Tibullus is one inclusive of his entire poetic program, rather than favoring the cult of the Arvals over that of Ceres. A highly educated, literate man, Tibullus could readily draw upon earlier Republican and contemporary history. These shifting ideologies emerge in the corpus as the inherently contradictory image of *flava Ceres* crowned with the *corona spicea*. She is depicted as both the patron goddess of Republican independence and a signifier of the emerging imperial regime.

The *corona spicea* reappears in 1.10, in which Tibullus is dragged off to war (*nunc ad bella trahor*, 1.10.13). The occasion provides the opportunity to revisit many of the same themes as 1.1: the rejection of military violence (1.10.1-4; cf. 1.1.3-4) and greed (1.10.7-8; cf. 1.1.1), praise for the simplicity of an idealized rustic life (1.10.11-12, 19-29; cf. 1.1.5-14, 21-50), and veneration of the Lares (1.10.15; cf. 1.1.20). Similarly, the *corona spicea* appears only in the first and last poems of Book 1. In this latter poem, it serves to make clear the poet's realization that he cannot simply opt out of society. Nevertheless, the poet expresses longing for a semi-mythic past when he might have appeased the Lares by offering a grape or *corona spicea* to them (*hic placatus erat, seu quis libauerat uuam/ seu dederat sanctae spicea sarta comae*, 1.10.22). The aspiration for a "simpler" time of religious belief is in keeping with hopes expressed throughout the corpus. In this poem, however, Tibullus acknowledges that traditional offerings are useless. He is compelled into military service regardless of these desires; he laments "now I am dragged to war" (*nunc ad bella trahor*, 1.10.13). The repetition of the *corona spicea* draws the reader's attention to these incongruities, while making clear the impossibility of a life divinely protected from politically motivated violence.

In 2.1, the invocation of Ceres during the Ambarvalia, a celebration held in her honor in May, reminds the reader once more of the political meanings behind the *corona spicea*. As in the opening poem of Book 1, Augustus and Messalla haunt the margins of these lines. The *Fratres Arvales* performed a "lustration of the field" (*lustratio agri*, Cato, *Agr.* 141), which both ancient and modern authors have associated with the Ambarvalia.³⁵ Tibullus entreats the goddess for her participation: "Encircle your temple with wheat-sheaths, Ceres" (*spicis tempora cinge, Ceres*, 2.1.4). Ceres here bears the attributes of the *Fratres Arvales*, who wear the *corona spicea* as a mark of their brotherhood. These contemporary political

³⁴ Cairns 1999, 228

³⁵ Le Bonniec 1958, 141-8; Pascal 1988; Maltby 2002, 359. Evidence that the *Fratres Arvales* celebrated the Ambarvalia includes the etymological similarity of *arualis* and *ambarualis*, Vergil's description of Ceres at the ceremony - perhaps as a valence of Dea Dia (Verg. *G.* 1.343-50) - and the probable celebration date in May. For a full explication of associations between the Ambarvalia and the *Fratres Arvales* in 2.1, see Pascal 1988. Although the evidence is ultimately circumstantial that the lustration ceremony to Dea Dia and the Ambarvalia were connected, I argue that the many poetic allusions throughout the corpus, culminating in 2.1, nevertheless suggest the presence of the *Fratres Arvales*. The elegies do not purport to be a factual, historical calendar of Roman festivals, so we should not hold them to that account, but instead read them as one artist's reckoning with the world around him.

associations, while implicit, build upon the poet's previous allusions to burgeoning Augustan influence. Furthermore, while a cursory reading of 2.1 might give the impression of an annual, rural festival, such lustrations were also frequently used to cope with political or religious emergencies, such as a series of terrible prodigies (Livy 21.62) or lightning striking the temples of Jupiter and Minerva (Tac. *Ann.* 13.24).³⁶ Setting the poem at a lustration festival raises the possibility that recent circumstances have demanded such an atonement. This further complicates the rustic ideal by hinting at disruptive incursions of the Real.

The poet's final reference to the *spica* occurs in 2.5, in which Tibullus celebrates the induction of Messalinus into the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. This is one of Tibullus' more explicitly political poems; not only does it celebrate the son of the poet's patron, but also alludes to the assassination of Caesar (2.5.67-78) and to Rome's growing empire (2.5.51-64). The occasion at first appears celebratory: "When the laurel has given good signs, rejoice, cultivators" (*laurus ubi bona signa dedit, gaudete coloni*, 2.5.83). Close analysis, however, reveals its tone to be ambivalent, yearning for a lost age of domestic cultivation while witnessing the rise of a global empire that will make such dreams impossible. The poet offers these words of encouragement to *coloni*, which may refer either to farmers (the moral and economic foundation of Roman Italy) or colonists³⁷ (oftentimes retired soldiers sent to till the foreign lands they had conquered in the name of Rome). The provision of farm settlements for Roman soldiers was a motivating factor in many Late Republican grain crises. For example, after making an impassioned appeal on behalf of veterans and the lower classes,³⁸ Tiberius Gracchus was assassinated in 133 BCE following patrician outrage against his *Lex Sempronia agraria*. After the murder, a delegation travelled to the temple of Ceres at Henna after consulting the Sibylline Books, "from which it was found that it is necessary to placate most ancient Ceres" (*ex quibus inventum est Cererem antiquissimam placare oportere*, Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.108). Scholars have interpreted this delegation either as an apology to the plebs for the murder of their tribune³⁹ or as a patrician legal justification of the assassination under the law on attempted tyranny.⁴⁰ On either account, this appeal to Ceres was a religious act carried out for political purposes. One might also remember that Tiberius' brother Gaius was assassinated in 121 BCE for trying to pass similar legislation on the grain provision. The cult of Ceres served as the stage on which this ideological deadlock was enacted again and again throughout the Republic.

Ceres embodies this tension between foreign conquest and urban grain demand in 2.5. Her appearance may be read alternately as a goddess of cultivated crops and of imposing 'civilization' in far-off lands. The poet assures the farmers that Phoebus portends good things and that "Ceres will stuff your storehouses full of wheat-sheaths" (*distendet spicis horrea plena Ceres*, 2.5.83-88). *Horreum* is a technical term indicating a storehouse for the preservation of grain,⁴¹ which played an important role in the supply and distribution of cereals to the capitol throughout Rome's history.⁴² Some *horrea* were massive in size and labor force due to the tremendous undertaking of providing grain for Rome's citizens.⁴³ Many of these storehouses were consolidated under state apparatuses after Augustus' rise

³⁶ *OCD*² 626.

³⁷ *OLD* s.v. *colonus*.

³⁸ Gracchus advocated for the passage of the *Lex Sempronia agraria* by depicting himself as the defender of Roman soldiers, who risked death in war but owned no land: "They fight and die to support others in wealth and luxury, and though they are styled masters of the world, they have not a single clod of earth that is their own" (ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἄλλοτρίας τρυφῆς καὶ πλοῦτου πολεμοῦσι καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσι, κύριοι τῆς οἰκουμένης εἶναι λεγόμενοι, μίαν δὲ βῶλον ἰδίαν οὐκ ἔχοντες (but they, Plut. *Vit. Ti. Gracch.* 9.5; trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 1921).

³⁹ Le Bonniec 1958, 367-8; MacBain 1982, 38-39.

⁴⁰ Spaeth 1990.

⁴¹ *OLD* s.v. *horreum*. Attestations of *horrea* largely occur in technical prose works, rather than poetry; see Cic. *Agr.* 2.33.89; Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.8; Caes. *B.C.* 3.42.4.

⁴² Rickman 1980b, 267-8.

⁴³ The *Horrea Galbana*, for instance, began at the southern end of the Aventine Hill and occupied approximately 225,000 square feet, possibly as far east as the Porta Ostiensis and as far west as the Tiber River (Rickman 1980a, 23).

to power, despite having begun under private ownership in the second century BCE.⁴⁴ While taxation of the provinces provided for a portion of the *plebs frumentaria*, shortages in tributes owed by Roman provinces such as Egypt necessitated private donations. Augustus himself described providing grain *ex horreo et patrimonio meo* (from my own *horreum* and patrimony, Aug. *Res Gest.* 18) at great personal expense in the *Res Gestae*.⁴⁵ The emperor's private stores came in part from land confiscated in the proscriptions early in his reign, such as the one Tibullus himself may have undergone if we consider his reference to "fields, once prosperous, now impoverished" (*felix quondam, nunc pauperis agri*, 1.1.19), as well as from later foreign conquest undertaken by the unwilling poet himself and his patron, Messalla.⁴⁶ Thus, Augustus acquired direct control of huge swathes of land and could manipulate agricultural production in order to maintain political support. The poetic persona professes to love a fantastical Rome of small farms overseen by Ceres, yet continually alludes to the expansionism and political upheavals of his day, fretfully urging: "Then go far from the stables, wolves!" (*a stabulis tunc procul este, lupi!*, 2.5.88). The poet clearly recognizes a threat to the old gods and ways of life. Despite his fixation on recovering the idyllic Ceres, Tibullus is only conversant in the realities of Late Republican economics - proscriptions, expansion, taxation, and assassination.

Ceres, Spes, and Pax

Throughout the corpus, Ceres is conflated with two other goddesses who were central to Augustan propaganda: Spes and Pax. These complicated images reveal anxiety over the grain supply, increasing Augustan influence in cult worship, and military expansionism. Tibullus links Ceres to "hope" (*spes*, 1.1.9) first through repeated references to the *spica*, which were thought to be etymologically related. Varro asserts "from 'hope' (*spes*) come 'sheaths of wheat' (*spicae*)" (*a spe spicae*, Varro *Ling.* V 37). The emperor was associated with the cult of Spes personified. The day on which he assumed the *toga virilis* was recorded as a "supplication of Hope and Youth" (*supplicatio Spei et Iuventuti*, *CIL* 10.8375). Furthermore, contemporary coin types suggest that Augustus sought to depict himself as the 'hope' of his people.⁴⁷ Cairns 1999 has argued that this constitutes further evidence of a pro-Augustan agenda tied to the poet's interest in the *Fratres Arvales*. This thesis again ignores the complex associations between Spes and agriculture, which begin in the opening of 1.1: "May Hope not abandon [me], but may she always provide heaps of crops and rich must in a full vat" (*nec Spes destituat, sed frugum semper acervos / praebeat et pleno pinguis musta lacu*, 1.1.9- 10). These lines connect Spes not only to Augustan policy and propaganda, but also to Tibullus' rustic dreamworld, and prime the reader for the first appearance of Ceres only five lines later.

The last elegy in the corpus further stages the associations between Augustus, Ceres,

⁴⁴ Rickman 1980a, 22-24. "The family-built warehouses of the late Republic did not survive in private ownership for long after the establishment of the Principate. One by one they seem to have been absorbed into the property of the Emperors to be used for the public weal" (Rickman 1980a, 23).

⁴⁵ Augustus at first intended to do away with the *annona* (Suet. *Aug.* 42.3), having distributed vast amounts of grain during the Civil Wars to shore up power. After years of poor harvests (Suet. *Aug.* 42.3) and magisterial failures to distribute enough grain, however, the emperor reluctantly came to dispense the *annona* as an imperial duty (Suet. *Aug.* 41.2). From 18 BCE onwards, he personally subsidized the grain supply: "From the consulship of Gnaeus and Publius Lentulus onwards, whenever the taxes did not suffice, I made distributions of grain and money from my own granary and patrimony, sometimes to 100,000 persons, sometimes to many more" (*ab eo anno quo Cn. et P. Lentuli consules fuerunt, cum deficerent vectigalia, tum centum milibus hominum tum pluribus multo frumentarios et nummarios tributus ex horreo et patrimonio meo edidi*, Aug. *Res Gest.* 18; trans. Erdkamp 2005).

⁴⁶ Erdkamp 2005, 221; Thompson 1987, 558ff.

⁴⁷ Clark 1983, 83ff. This thesis is supported by coinage from the provinces, such as a coin of Augustus from 16 BCE bearing the legend "The Hope of the Colony of Pella" (*SPES COLONIAE PELLENSIS*). Pella consisted largely of Roman veterans, which suggests that Roman citizens, not just far-flung subjects of the empire, were familiar with iconographical associations between the princeps and the cult of Spes. Admittedly, much of the material evidence in the city of Rome for the *Spes Augusta* comes from after Augustus' death, such as her first appearance on a sestertius of Claudius in 41 CE (*RIC* 64). See also Grant 1946, 41.

and Spes. The poet begins by contrasting the themes of love and war, as is typical in Roman elegy, before praising Hope as the reason for his continued existence (2.6.19-28):

iam mala finissem leto, sed credula vitam
 Spes fouet et fore cras semper ait melius. 20
 Spes alit agricolas, Spes sulcis credit aratis
 semina quae magno faenore reddat ager.
 haec laqueo uolucres haec captat hirundine pisces
 cum tenues hamos abdidit ante cibus.
 Spes etiam ualida solatur compede uinctum: 25
 crura sonant ferro, sed canit inter opus.
 Spes facilem Nemesim spondet mihi, sed negat illa:
 ei mihi, ne uincas, dura puella, deam.

I would have finished my troubles in death, but credulous Hope cherishes life
 and always says that tomorrow will be better.
 Hope nourishes farmers, Hope entrusts seeds to ploughed furrows,
 which the field may return with great interest.
 She captures birds in a snare, fish with a rod
 when the bait in front conceals the slender hooks.
 Hope even consoles one conquered by a mighty chain,
 his legs cry out at iron, but he sings at his work.
 Hope promises that Nemesis (will be) courteous to me, but she declines:
 ah me, do not overcome the goddess, cruel girl.

The tone of this poem may seem at first “uneven.”⁴⁸ While in the rest of the poem Tibullus despairs of the love of his mistress, the appearance of Spes reads as almost sentimental. We may better understand Spes’ function, and the poem as a whole, by paying close attention to its economic diction. Spes is a patron goddess of farmers (*Spes alit agricolas*, 2.6.21). She is involved in the financial risks of planting seeds without any guarantee of a harvest (*Spes sulcis credit aratis / semina quae magno faenore reddat ager*, 2.6.21-22). These lines remind the reader of the economic instability of agriculture, perhaps made more turbulent by the rise of large state-controlled farms. Furthermore, Spes is favorable to conquered peoples (*Spes etiam ualida solatur compede uinctum*, 2.6.25). Although the prisoner is in shackles, he sings while working: a small consolation. These lines are in keeping with the *topos* of *seruitium amoris* common to Roman elegy but may also allude to military campaigns of Tibullus’ day. The final couplet, however, reveals the failure of Spes, calling into question the powers ascribed to her in the preceding lines. Her promises are ultimately in vain, as the power of the poet’s mistress in Book 2, Nemesis, supersedes that of the goddess (*Spes facilem Nemesim spondet mihi, sed negat illa*, 2.6.27). The poet’s depiction of Nemesis runs contrary to that of his idyllic farm; she is always far off in the city, clothed in foreign luxuries. Her name, too, is derived from Greek νέμω, meaning “to deal out, distribute, dispense... of herdsman, to pasture or graze their flocks,”⁴⁹ which hints at economic and agricultural functions. Spes-Ceres, guardian of the small Roman farm, is no match for foreign imports made possible by military conquest.

Just as Ceres is associated with Spes in the last poem of Book 2, the goddess is also linked to Pax, the personification of Peace, in the last poem of Book 1. This conflation is not unheard of in the Roman poetic imagination since agricultural production usually flourished during peacetime.⁵⁰ Tibullus, however, alludes to a peace dependent upon widespread violence necessitated by provision of the *annona*. He prays “But come to us, nourishing

⁴⁸ Maltby 2002, 465.

⁴⁹ LSJ s.v. νέμω.

⁵⁰ Spaeth 1996, 20.

Peace, and grasp the wheat sheath, and may fruits flow forth from your shining bosom” (*at nobis, Pax alma, ueni spicamque teneto, / profluat et pomis candidus ante sinus*, 1.10.67-68). The reference to the *spica*, as well as the suggestion of both agricultural and female fertility, reminds the reader of Ceres. Furthermore, Pax is *alma*, a common epithet for Ceres in Augustan literature.⁵¹ *Alma* also recalls a fragment of Lucilius linking Ceres to the plebs and grain supply: “Nourishing Ceres is failing, and the plebs do not have bread” (*deficit alma Ceres, nec plebs pane potitur*, Lucilius 200 Marx).⁵²

Tibullus further expands upon the image of Pax-Ceres in such a way that recalls the tumultuous political struggles for the grain supply and Roman conquest (1.10.45-50):

interea Pax arua colat. Pax candida primum	45
duxit araturos sub iuga curua boues.	
Pax aluit uites et sucos condidit uuae,	
funderet ut nato testa paterna merum.	
Pace bidens uomerque nitent, at tristia duri	
militis in tenebris occupat arma situs.	50

Meanwhile let Peace cultivate the fields. Shining Peace first
led oxen beneath the curved yoke to plow.
Peace cherished the vines and established the juice of the grape,
so that the father’s jar pours out wine for the son.
The hoe and the ploughshare gleam in Peace, but rust
occupies the sad weapons of the harsh soldier in the shadows.

Peace first established the agricultural customs carried out under Ceres’ auspices in 1.1: ploughing (*duxit araturos sub iuga curua boues*, 1.10.46; cf. *stimulo tardos increpuisse boues*, 1.1.30), viticulture (*Pax aluit uites*, 1.10.47; cf. *ipse seram teneras maturo tempore uites*, 1.1.7), wine making (*sucos condidit uuae*, 1.10.47; cf. *pleno pinguia musta lacu*, 1.1.10), and crop cultivation (*Pace bidens uomerque intent*, 1.10.50; cf. *nec tamen interdum pudeat tenuisse bidentem*, 1.1.29). At first, Rome seems to have recovered from war; sad weapons (*tristia... arma*, 1.10.49) now are rusted (*occupat... situs*, 1.10.50). These lines are suggestive of the Civil Wars from which Rome had only just emerged as Tibullus wrote his first book of elegies. The poet lives in a world of ceaseless war (*nunc ad bella trahor*, 1.10.13), dreaming of rustic peace. Indeed, following the Civil Wars, the empire became increasingly dependent upon foreign provinces for the grain dole, among other matters of fiscal policy, and turned to the acquisition of new lands through military conquest.

In a different poem, Tibullus describes the Sibyl’s vision of Rome’s idyllic prehistory. Although the Roman state was founded upon pastoralism, its growth is predicated upon conquest (2.5.55-60):

carpite nunc, tauri, de septem montibus herbas	55
dum licet; hic magnae iam locus urbis erit.	
Roma, tuum nomen terris fatale regendis,	
qua sua de caelo prospicit arua Ceres,	
quaque patent ortus et qua fluitantibus undis	
Solis anhelantes abluunt amnis equos.	60

⁵¹ In the *Georgics*, perhaps the closest contemporary parallel to Tibullus’ elegies, she is *alma Ceres* (nourishing Ceres, Verg. G. 1.7.) See also Ov. *Met.* 5.572, *Fast.* 4.547.

⁵² Some scholars (Giovenale 1927; Van Berchem 1935; Le Bonniec 1958; Nash 1968; Simon 1990) believe that the *annona* was administered from the temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera in the ancient Forum Boarium. Against this view are Merlin 1906; Platner-Ashby 1929; Coarelli 1988; Richardson 1992; Spaeth 1996.

Graze now, bulls, on the grass from the seven hills
 while it is permitted; here soon this will be the place of a great city.
 Rome, your name is fated to rule lands,
 wherever Ceres looks from heaven upon her fields,
 where dawn lies open, where in flowing waves
 the river washes the heaving horses of the Sun.

The Sibyl provides a glimpse of Rome's utopian past before it vanishes forever. She encourages bulls to graze on the canonical seven hills of the city "while it is permitted" (*dum licet*, 2.5.56). This will soon be replaced by "the place of a great city" (*magnae ... locus urbis*, 2.5.56). Though Rome's beginnings were agricultural, this will not be the case for much longer. The poet then asserts that Rome's success reaches to the limits of arable land: "Rome, your name is fated to rule lands, wherever Ceres looks from heaven upon her fields" (*Roma, tuum nomen terris fatale regendis, / qua sua de caelo prospicit arva Ceres*, 2.5.57-58). This is a contradictory image. Tibullus has already established Ceres as the overseer of small, domestic farms, which are about to be supplanted by a great city. Yet as long as there is land to be cultivated, it seems, Romans will conquer it. Rome is fated to rule external territories (*terris*, 2.5.57).⁵³ In the following lines, the extent of Roman territory expands to reach the far east (*quaque patent ortus*, 2.5.59) and, finally, the ends of the earth (*anhelantes abluit amnis equos*, 2.5.60).⁵⁴ Although Tibullus begins Book 1 by appealing to Ceres to protect his modest farm, she appears in the end of the corpus as a signifier of military expansionism. Tibullus is unable to escape the political and economic conditions of contemporary Rome, which is indeed fated to rule more and more lands as long as political power depends upon the provision of grain for the Roman masses. This passage marks yet another emergence of the Real; unable to reconcile the mythical, agrarian Rome with contemporary political and economic conflict, the lines collapse into contradictions and double meanings.

Conclusion

Appearances of Ceres in the Tibullan corpus often consist of conflicting allusions and images. Though the poet worships her as the custodian of the small, self-sufficient, politically-independent family farm, he subconsciously admits that such fantasies are impossible. The poet creates for us a dreamlike world in the very moment when his dreams are subsumed by political ideology and violent economic transformations. This article argues for an entirely new interpretation of the poet: one who can fruitfully be read as engaged with the changing society around him. The corpus is in fact a valuable resource for our study of the most turbulent years in Roman history. While devoid of those dates and facts that characterize traditional historiography, Tibullus nevertheless offers a tangible account of what it meant to be a Roman at the end of the Republic and beginning of Empire.

The Graduate Center, City University of New York
 vjansson@gradcenter.cuny.edu

⁵³ *OLD* s.v. *terra*. The word can mean 'earth' or 'soil', which are certainly in Ceres' sphere of influence. Yet in the plural, as here, it more probably refers to 'lands' or 'nations.'

⁵⁴ Maltby notes that *amnis* refers to Oceanus, "the river that was thought to encircle the earth" (Maltby 2002, 450). Cf. Hom. *Il.* 14.245, *Od.* 11.639; Verg. *G.* 4.233.

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Lector Intende, Laetaberis: A Research-Based Approach to Introductory Latin¹

DANIEL LIBATIQUE and DOMINIC MACHADO

Abstract: In the 2019-20 academic year, we undertook a full redesign of our introductory Latin curriculum at the College of the Holy Cross in order to provide students with a more meaningful encounter with the Latin language. We primed our students to work with real, unedited Latin texts within their first year of study by highlighting Latin grammatical concepts that were frequent, complex, and unfamiliar to English speakers, which meant introducing topics like the passive voice, the subjunctive, third-declension adjectives, and indirect statement that are foundational to the Latin language much earlier than we had previously.

Keywords: Latin pedagogy; second language acquisition; Hyginus; corpus linguistic analysis; passive voice; subjunctive; third-declension adjectives; indirect statement.

In the 2019-20 academic year, we undertook a full redesign of our introductory Latin curriculum at the College of the Holy Cross in order to provide students with a more meaningful encounter with the Latin language. We primed our students to work with real, unedited Latin texts within their first year of study by highlighting Latin grammatical concepts that were frequent, complex, and unfamiliar to English speakers, which meant introducing topics like the passive voice, the subjunctive, third-declension adjectives, and indirect statement that are foundational to the Latin language much earlier than we had previously.

Introduction

In the 1970s, foreign language teachers began to develop an approach to second-language acquisition (SLA) that prioritized the ability of their students to communicate effectively in the target language. While the factors that contributed to this change were various and vast -- including Noam Chomsky's deconstruction of structuralist views of language², changing immigration patterns in Europe and the United States that resulted in the need for millions to learn a different language³, and the democratization of education⁴ -- the so-called communicative approach revolutionized second-language pedagogy and quickly replaced the grammar-translation model that had dominated language teaching since the 18th century. One of the major curricular changes implemented as a result of the communicative turn was

¹ The work underpinning this article began in Fall 2019 when the two of us were charged with teaching and reworking our introductory Latin sequence, and we presented our initial findings at the 2020 CANE Annual Meeting. The work that appears here has been enhanced significantly through our conversations with Neel Smith and the tremendous insights provided by the anonymous reviewer. We are also thankful to Aaron Seider and the editorial assistants at *NECJ* for their careful review of the manuscript at various stages in the process.

² Chomsky (1965), 3-4, criticized more traditional models of language learning by drawing attention to the difference between linguistic competence and performance. Hymes (1972) offered an important modification to Chomsky's division, asserting that it was more fitting to speak of communicative competence rather than its linguistic counterpart (cf. also Savignon (1983)).

³ Savignon (2007) discusses the impact of the European Union and its predecessors in adoption of the communicative language teaching. The other major waypoint was the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 that led to the migration of large numbers of non-English speaking populations to the United States.

⁴ Mitchell (1988), 13-14, discusses how the shift was tied to the move away from foreign language learning as a preserve of the elite.

the organization of material around thematic and cultural topics instead of individual points of grammar.⁵ The intention of this curricular change was to give students exposure to the contexts of the language that they were learning and, thereby, provide them with knowledge of not just the rules of the language, but also the particulars of the different settings in which it was used. Grammar and syntax were left to be learned naturally, decoded as part of a larger deductive process of understanding a second language through context.⁶

However, as researchers began to study the efficacy of the communicative language approach in the 1980s and 1990s, they found that this method of grammatical instruction was inherently flawed.⁷ The assumption that key grammatical and syntactical ideas could be inferred deductively in the context of specific thematic and cultural contexts was incorrect; deductive learning only worked so far as the grammar and syntax of the second language matched expectations set by the learner's first language.⁸ To solve this problem, scholars suggested that teachers employing a communicative approach had to be more intentional about the way that they introduced the grammar and syntax of the target language and laid out three criteria for organizing such material in curricular design: frequency, complexity, and familiarity.⁹ Grammar and syntax, it was argued, needed to be introduced in a way that maximized student exposure to the most common elements of the language (frequency), those that would take the most time to learn on account of their difficulty (complexity) and differences with the learner's first language (familiarity).

As Jacqueline Carlon has recently observed, these core concepts of curricular design, however, are not only relevant for teachers taking the communicative approach to language - they have important implications for the study of historical languages as well.¹⁰ Carlon contends that if ancient language teachers intend to prepare students to read texts in the original language, they should be cognizant of the salient features of the texts they plan to read and design a syllabus that gives students ample practice with the most frequent, complex, and unfamiliar points of grammar that they will meet therein.¹¹ In the paper that follows, we demonstrate that the vast majority of current resources for Latin language pedagogy, particularly those used in introductory college-level courses which attempt to prepare students to read real Latin texts over a two-semester period, have yet to answer Carlon's clarion call. We then move on to outline the approach that we used to design a syllabus according to these heuristics of frequency, complexity, and familiarity, drawing attention to similarities between our methodology and other novel pedagogical approaches to ancient language study. We conclude by sharing the results of our experimentation and plans for the future.

Case Study: The Passive Voice

In our experience teaching Latin over the last decade, one key concept that our students have found difficult is the passive voice, particularly translating the Latin passive into English. To some degree, it is unsurprising that native English speakers struggle with translating the passive voice; 21st century English employs the passive voice less frequently than historical

⁵ Rosenthal and Sloane (1987) is emblematic of the shift towards thematic and cultural organization of CLT-based syllabi.

⁶ The most famous explication of this view of grammar is Krashen and Terrell's Natural Order Hypothesis (1983).

⁷ For a detailed discussion of these findings, see Herschensohn (1990).

⁸ Klein (1986), 3-33, provides a detailed discussion of the problems inherent in assuming that second-language acquisition occurs in the same way as first-language acquisition.

⁹ E.g. Canale and Swain (1980), 32: "Criteria such as degree of complexity, generalizability and transparency with respect to functions" and built-in "repetitions of grammatical forms in different functions." Herschensohn (1990), 454: "A syllabus should take into account information concerning frequency of grammatical structures...and the relative difficulty of these structures in the target language."

¹⁰ Carlon (2013), 106-122.

¹¹ Carlon (2013), 109-111, lays out in detail a set of instructional principles to follow in order to meet these goals.

Latin texts.¹² Moreover, while passive forms in Latin consist of one or two words, its English translation may feature up to four words (e.g., *amabatur* = “she was being loved”). These essential differences between the two languages bring us back to our SLA-based criteria for syllabus design: in teaching the passive voice to native English speakers, Latin teachers are dealing with a concept that is highly frequent in the target language, unfamiliar to their students, and somewhat complex.¹³ It thus makes sense from a curricular perspective to introduce the passive voice early so that students would have ample opportunity to practice with a complex and unfamiliar concept of central importance to the target language.

However, many popular Latin textbooks do not introduce the passive until nearly halfway through the course. For instance, the 7th edition of *Wheelock’s Latin* presents passive verbs in Chapter 18 (out of 40), and likewise, Shelmerdine’s 2nd edition of *An Introduction to Latin* teaches the concept in Chapter 14 (out of 32).¹⁴ If we were to map the chapter structure of these textbooks onto a two-semester introductory sequence,¹⁵ it would mean that students would not learn the passive until the end of the first semester. The delaying of the passive voice signifies on a practical level that students will work almost exclusively with the active voice in the first semester and, as a result, internalize the active voice as normative in Latin. This mismatch between presentation and the realities of historical Latin texts creates false expectations for our students about how the language works. Moreover, in these textbooks, the passive voice is introduced in close proximity with other unfamiliar and complex topics like the subjunctive, thus providing students with less time engaging deeply with how these concepts function in Latin.

A comparison to introductory Greek textbooks may prove to be useful here.¹⁶ While Wheelock and Shelmerdine postpone consideration of the passive voice to the midpoint of their respective chapter progressions, many Greek textbooks introduce the middle/passive much earlier, often within the first quarter of their total chapter loads. The inclusion of a third voice in Greek, the middle, complicates the picture slightly but negligibly. Donald J. Mastronarde’s *Introduction to Attic Greek* introduces the present middle/passive in Unit 11 of 42; Anne Groton’s *From Alpha to Omega* builds upon the present, imperfect, and future active by introducing their middle/passive or middle counterparts in Lesson 11 of 50. Hardy Hansen and Gerald M. Quinn’s *Greek: An Intensive Course* and Maurice Balme and Gilbert Lawall’s *Athenaze* bifurcate the middle and the passive but still introduce both relatively early; Hansen and Quinn explore pure passives in Unit 5 and middles in Unit 7 of 20, while *Athenaze* switches the order, introducing middles in Unit 6 and passives in Unit 10 of 30.¹⁷ The most strikingly early introduction of the middle/passive comes in C.A.E. Luschnig’s *An Introduction to Ancient Greek*, which introduces it concurrently with the active in the very first of the textbook’s 14 Lessons. In all instances, the middle/passive is introduced much earlier than in Wheelock or Shelmerdine, a fact that affords Greek students more time to practice with and internalize the voice system. This comparison seems all the more striking when we consider how Latin verbal forms exhibit only one of two voices: active or passive. All the more, a Latin approach to verbal voice that shrinks or eliminates the distance between the introduction of active and passive verbs would serve to underscore the fact that they are simply two sides of the same coin.

¹² Mahoney (2004), 103, estimates that 32.7% of Latin verbs are in the passive voice. By contrast, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Modern Usage (1994), 720, notes that studies of the incidence of passive voice in English-language periodicals have shown that its usage never exceeds 13%.

¹³ Carlon (2013), 109, expresses a similar general sentiment: “Providing explicit grammatical instruction (EI) can be effective in helping students cope with complex structures in the second language (L2), particularly those that have no parallel in their first language (L1).”

¹⁴ We are using Wheelock and Shelmerdine as examples because these are the textbooks that we have most commonly used in our teaching experience and because of the frequency with which they are used at the college level. We will include other textbooks in common use in introductory Latin sequences in the sections to follow.

¹⁵ See Figure 1 below.

¹⁶ Major and Stayskal (2011), 28-30, outline a similar way of treating voice in ancient Greek.

¹⁷ These 30 units are split amongst two separate books; Book I includes units 1-16, while Book II includes units 17-30.

It might be suggested that Latin textbooks delay the introduction of the passive voice to avoid overloading students with forms to memorize. We will return later in this paper to a strategy that can be employed to manage memorization of verbal forms, but for now it is worth noting that there are a number of ways that one might introduce the passive voice early without significantly increasing students' cognitive load or altering an existing curriculum. For instance, once the present active system is introduced to students, learning the forms of the present passive system represents a relatively small cognitive load - students must simply learn the system's personal endings (-r, -ris, -tur, -mur, -mini, -ntur) and some minor vowel changes.¹⁸ As the present active system is often the first verbal system taught to students, adopting the above strategy would give students very early exposure to the active/passive distinction. Moreover, as additional tenses and moods are introduced, teaching the active and passive together would offer a number of opportunities to reinforce the important differences between them throughout the course of the year.

Target Text: Hyginus' *Fabulae*

To incorporate important topics like the passive voice into our introductory Latin sequence earlier than textbooks like Wheelock or Shemerline would have introduced them, we decided to eschew those traditional textbooks and build our first-year Latin curriculum from scratch. Without a textbook to scaffold the progression of topics and vocabulary throughout the year, we needed to think beyond a chapter-to-chapter or module-to-module approach to understand at a macrocosmic level how we could build topics from solid foundations towards higher-level structures. As previously discussed, the order of topics matters because the more time a student spends with a concept, the more proficient they will become at applying it. We will return to this point later when we compare the timings of our presentations of other important grammatical topics with those in traditional textbooks.

In following the criteria of frequency, complexity, and unfamiliarity, we decided that we wanted to foreground and draw on real Latin texts for assignments and grammatical practice rather than create artificial exercises and passages. As Carlon has argued, textbook exercises do little in terms of improving students' understanding of how the language works; rather, they highlight specific grammatical points apart from their larger context.¹⁹ This guiding principle led to our formulation of a year-long goal: we wanted our students to be able to read a real, unedited Latin text by the end of their first year of Latin with appropriate lexical and contextual help. The promise of an activity that normally has to wait until the second year of study was, we hoped, a way to engage students and perhaps improve enrollment retention from our introductory to intermediate sequence. The introduction of real Latin at an early stage gets students invested by having them directly apply the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax that they are learning to the actual words of the ancients, rather than to manufactured and self-contained textbook or workbook exercises. This approach necessarily would not begin with unedited texts right away; we planned to adapt parts of the chosen work to target specific grammatical structures and vocabulary at different stages throughout the academic year in class and in assessments. Eventually, we would build to that final assignment of reading a real, unedited text.

The choice of target text, then, was paramount. We needed an author that not only used grammar and vocabulary that was reasonably accessible to first-year Latin students but also wrote on topics that would engage and interest them. We also wanted to prioritize texts and authors that are not typically included in the Latin "canon," the type of author who would not necessarily appear in a regular intermediate Latin course or an advanced undergraduate seminar. For reference, Holy Cross' intermediate prose class has used Livy

¹⁸ See Major and Stayskal (2011), 25-26, 40, for a discussion on the value of consolidating verbal endings for student learning.

¹⁹ Carlon (2013), 108.

and Caesar in the past, among others, and our seminar offerings have included Roman letter writers, Roman comedy, Latin elegy, Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Horace, early Christian literature, and Ovid.

The choice of author and text would also dictate our ordering of grammatical topics and vocabulary. What constitutes “Latin” varies from author to author in terms of morphology, vocabulary, and syntax, so we needed specificity in our choice and a deliberate focus on using the grammar and vocabulary contained within it in its proper context. For example, the Latin noun *anime* would most likely be parsed as the masculine vocative singular of the noun *animus*, *animi*, m., in a classical text like Plautus. However, in manuscripts of the Latin Psalms, the *-e* ending might stand for *-ae*, which would make *anime* the feminine genitive singular, dative singular, nominative plural, or vocative plural of the noun *anima*, *animae*, f.²⁰ Thus, we could avoid these various possibilities by focusing on a single text or author. However, the frequency of important complex and unfamiliar topics in our target text that would largely square with the frequency of important complex and unfamiliar topics in Latin texts more generally would also give our students a solid base of knowledge if they continued into higher levels of Latin learning, like our intermediate sequence and advanced seminars.

After taking all of these factors into account, we decided to use the *Fabulae*, “Stories”, of Hyginus, the Augustan-era mythographer. The *Fabulae* are a collection of almost 300 self-contained prose units that describe various Greco-Roman myths, characters, and genealogies. The choice was ideal in a number of ways:

- 1) The work is modular by virtue of its discrete narratives. It was therefore relatively easy to pick and choose specific *fabulae* to demonstrate grammar and to adapt for assignments and assessments without losing context; our students would not necessarily need the knowledge of another passage to understand the story within the one at hand.
- 2) The majority of the stories exhibit a relatively simple narrative structure, with most at a length of less than ten sentences. In each tale, a third-person perspective narrates what happens to certain characters, with few if any deeper levels of narratological framing beyond occasional direct speech (though indirect speech is ubiquitous).
- 3) The grammar is not particularly simple, but neither is it inaccessible. It includes many important concepts that we hope to have our introductory students practice as a foundation for later language learning, including adjective-noun agreement, indirect statement, gerunds and gerundives, participles, relative clauses, and subjunctive verbs in dependent clauses.
- 4) The mythological subject matter is engaging. It might even capitalize on individual students’ prior knowledge of myth through media like Percy Jackson or Classics courses in translation.

In sum, Hyginus offered an engaging, digestible, and approachable text for our students and an adaptable and fruitful source on which to base our introductory Latin curriculum.

Frontloading Frequent Topics and Splitting Paradigms

After deciding on the author and text, we, with the help of our colleague Neel Smith, used a morphological parser²¹ to analyze the text of Hyginus and identify its most frequent vocabulary and grammatical constructions. A higher frequency for a particular topic, as well as the complexity of and unfamiliarity with its components to native English speakers,

²⁰ Smith (2019).

²¹ The tools used to analyze Hyginus are available at <https://lingualatina.github.io/analysis/> and may be adapted to any digital text that can be parsed. This link is current as of late January 2021. If it is no longer functional, please feel free to email either author for the current one; our email addresses are available on the Holy Cross Classics faculty website: <https://www.holycross.edu/academics/programs/classics/faculty-staff>

signaled that we needed to introduce that concept early in our syllabus. As suggested above, the most frequent concepts that the morphological parser identified are often left until relatively late in traditional textbooks. These concepts’ belated introductions or the compression of such material in these textbooks are missed opportunities for students to spend more time practicing them.

The following table lists seven Latin textbooks in use throughout college-level introductory Latin classrooms, their total number of units, and the unit in which each textbook introduces a grammatical concept that we will discuss in the following sections of this article: passive voice, subjunctive mood, third-declension adjectives, and indirect statement. The last row indicates our approach in terms of total number of class meetings across one academic year (in the absence of a textbook with chapter divisions).

Table 1. Summary of textbooks, total number of units in each, and unit number in which certain topics are introduced.²²

Textbook	# of Units	Passive	Subj.	3rd Decl. Adjs.	Ind. St.
1. Wheelock	40	18	28	16	25
2. Shelmerdine	32	14	24	10	19
3. Oxford	31	16	19	5	23
4. Keller & Russell	15	3	7	8	11
5. Dickey	61	27 (dep.) 32 (pass.)	13	21	19
6. English & Irby	36	17	26	3	24
7. <i>LLPSI</i>	35	6	27	12	11
8. Our approach	80	5-8	29-32	1-4	25-28

As discussed previously, we wanted to introduce the passive voice early in our year’s progression of topics. **Figure 1** illustrates in black the points at which the passive voice is introduced in each approach; the row number corresponds to the textbook’s number in **Table 1**. For the sake of generalization and simplicity, we have assumed a roughly four-month semester (as illustrated in the header row, September through December) and an even split of chapters or class meetings between a fall and spring semester.²³ The fall semester then includes, for example, the first 20 of Wheelock’s 40 chapters, the first 16 of Shelmerdine’s 32 chapters, and the first 40 of our roughly 80 class meetings throughout the academic year.

²² For ease of reference from this point on, we will refer to each textbook by commonly used names for the series among teachers, whether by authorial last name(s) (Wheelock, Shelmerdine, Keller & Russell, Dickey, English & Irby) or textbook title (Oxford [Latin Course, College Edition], *LLPSI* = *Lingua Latina Per Se Illustrata*). Full citations for all textbooks can be found in the Works Cited.

²³ For textbooks with an odd number of units (Oxford, Keller & Russell, Dickey, and *LLPSI*), we included the odd chapter in the fall semester.

Figure 1. Introduction of the passive voice in each approach (refer to **Table 1** for the row key).

September					October					November					December				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1		5		9		13		17		21		25		29		33		37	

Wheelock, Shemerline, Oxford, Dickey,²⁴ and English & Irby postpone the passive voice until the end of the first semester. Keller & Russell and *LLPSI* exhibit relatively early introductions of the passive voice, but both separate the active and passive voice with other new grammatical material in between.²⁵ By contrast, we introduced the passive within the first eight class meetings of our first semester concurrently with the active voice. In accordance with the recommendations of Major and Stayskal for learning ancient verbal systems, we highlighted the structural similarities between the active and passive voice to highlight how verbs work in Latin on a broader scale.²⁶ Indeed, both the active and the passive voices rely on the same principles of conjugation, and segmenting the passive from the active, instead of introducing them at the same time as flip sides of the same coin, risks overcomplicating the picture for students and reducing the amount of time they can spend with the topic.

Let us return here to the question of memorization management that we introduced earlier. It is no doubt an intimidating prospect for teachers to introduce and students to learn both the active and passive voice so early in the semester, and this is part of the reason why textbooks like Wheelock and Shemerline delay the passive voice and separate material by voice, tense, and mood. In such a schema, grammatical concepts and their forms are introduced and explained in digestible chunks (i.e., chapters). But as we have seen, this method has the disadvantage of delaying key forms and concepts and reducing the amount of practice that students have with them.

Our analysis of Hyginus, in combination with insights from Content-Based Instruction (CBI), suggested another way to manage the cognitive load of memorization, while giving students exposure to a broader set of grammatical and syntactical constructions. As an approach to second-language acquisition, CBI argues that the teaching of grammar and syntax should be “use-oriented” and scaffolded in relation to the broader objective of learning the language, in our case, the reading of Hyginus.²⁷ Because Hyginus’ narrative relied almost exclusively on third-person singular and plural verbs - they account for 91.3% of finite verbal forms that appear in the *Fabulae* - there are plenty of passages from Hyginus that students could read knowing only third-person forms.²⁸

²⁴ Dickey actually introduces deponent verbs first in Unit 27 and then true passives in Unit 32.

²⁵ For example, Keller & Russell introduces the dative case and first/second declension adjectives between active verbs (sections 5-9 of Chapter II) and passive verbs (sections 21-23 of Chapter III), while *LLPSI* separates introductions of active verbs in Capitulum III and passive verbs in Capitulum VI with numbers, imperative mood, accusative case, ablative case, and prepositions.

²⁶ Major and Stayskal (2011), 25, argues that the problems with textbooks can be reduced “to three basic tendencies: 1) a focus on the exceptional rather than emphasis on the regular; 2) multiplication of charts and descriptions rather than stressing basic, common principles of construction; and 3) mixing the problems of morphology and semantics rather than separating, as much as possible, the difficulties of form from difficulties of meaning.” Interestingly, Major and Stayskal actually recommend the postponement of the active/passive distinction in Greek due to the presence of the middle voice.

²⁷ Brinton et al. (1989), 2; Wesche (1993), 42.

²⁸ Parsed words = 18191; Conjugated verbs = 3536; Third-person = 3229 (singular = 2621, plural = 608); Second-person = 284; First-person = 23. In percentages, third-person comprises 91.3% of all conjugated verbs, while second-person accounts for only 8% and first-person accounts for only 0.65% (!) of all conjugated verbs.

Consequently, we decided to focus, at first, only on the third-singular and plural of various tense, voice, and mood combinations, saving the first- and second-person until the second semester. Instead of learning six forms for each tense-voice-mood combination, students only had to learn the two third-person forms. This does not preclude showing the entire paradigm; we gave them access to all forms in any one tense-voice-mood combination but insisted on their immediate internalization of the third person. Here our approach aligns once again with that of Major and Stayskal who argue that reducing the number of verbal forms that students are required to memorize can actually enhance their learning.²⁹ Economizing person-number combinations enabled students to focus their mental energy on learning more tense, voice, and mood combinations, particularly those that were unfamiliar to them as English speakers. As a result, we were able to cover all voices, tenses, and moods by the end of the first semester, which helped us to introduce the students to a wider array of syntactic structures than they would have met at a comparable stage in other textbooks. This strategy allowed us to afford students more time with the frequent, complex, and unfamiliar over the course of the first semester.

At the beginning of the second semester, we introduced the first- and second-person in the context of reviewing these verbal forms. Students had little difficulty learning and recognizing these new forms. The speed with which they picked up these forms was unsurprising, when viewed from the perspective of frequency, complexity, and familiarity. While many of Latin’s tense, voice, and mood combinations are unfamiliar to English-language students, Latin’s person-number combinations are exactly the same ones employed in English. Moreover, the rules of formation and translation largely remain the same as for the third-person.

This splitting of the paradigm was essential for early introductions of other important topics that exhibit the trifecta of frequency, complexity, and unfamiliarity. Chief among them was the subjunctive mood. Not only are English-language students generally unfamiliar with the wide variety of subjunctive usages, but it is very frequent in Latin texts: in Hyginus, 25% of all verbs are in the subjunctive mood.³⁰ **Figure 2** illustrates the points at which the subjunctive is introduced in each approach,³¹ with the calendar shifted to the last two months of the fall semester and first two months of the spring semester (the bolded line in the middle indicates the semester split):

Figure 2. Introduction of the subjunctive mood in each approach (refer to **Table 1** for the row key).

November					December					January					February				
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
21	25	29	33	37	41	45	49	53	57	61	65	69	73	77	81	85	89	93	97

Wheelock, Shelmerdine, English & Irby, and *LLPSI* introduce the subjunctive almost halfway through the second semester; Oxford introduces it a bit earlier, closer to mid-January, but still within the second semester. This timing ensures that students will have three months at most

²⁹ Major and Stayskal (2011) also extoll the potential benefits of reducing the number of principal parts that students are required to memorize.

³⁰ See <https://bit.ly/hyginus> for the data and calculation methods.

³¹ Dickey’s introduction of the subjunctive in Unit 13 places it around mid-October, just outside of the calendar slice on display here.

to internalize the forms, rules, and syntax that the subjunctive involves.

Our approach, governed by the types of subjunctives that Hyginus tends to use, takes a similar tack but with different focuses and methodologies. By utilizing mainly the third-person, we were able to focus on how the subjunctive generally functions, rather than being bogged down by paradigm memorization. We limited our first semester subjunctive topics to the formation of each tense, identification, and sequence of tenses with one independent (deliberative) and one dependent (temporal / circumstantial clauses) use. As we began to tackle more intense uses of the subjunctive, like conditions, in the second semester, our students were already familiar with the subjunctive, and we built upon that pre-existing knowledge rather than introducing everything subjunctive-related in one fell swoop.

Further Topic Rearrangements

Generally, third-declension adjectives are introduced as a discrete concept at varying points throughout the first semester (**Figure 3**; note the fall semester headings): late in Wheelock and Keller & Russell; around mid-semester in Shelmerdine, Dickey, and *LLPSI*; and relatively early in Oxford and English & Irby. The key word, however, is “discrete”; in all of these approaches, third declension is separated from consideration of the first and second declensions by at least one chapter designation. The closest, English & Irby, introduces first and second declension nouns and adjectives in Lesson 2 but then third declension nouns and adjectives in Lesson 3. The largest separations occur in Wheelock and Keller & Russell; the former introduces third-declension adjectives in Chapter 16 but first-second declension adjectives in Chapters 2-4 (a space of 11 chapters and about two and a half months), while the latter’s separation spans from Chapter III to Chapter VIII (a similar span of about two and a half months).

Figure 3. Introduction of third-declension adjectives in each approach (refer to **Table 1** for the row key).

September					October					November					December				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	

In our approach, we introduced third-declension adjectives within the first four

class meetings and at the same time as first- and second-declension adjectives. While a similar objection may be posed here as to the passive voice, namely overloading students with forms to memorize, similar methods of amelioration can be applied: for example, splitting paradigms; beginning with only the nominative and genitive forms of adjectives in each category; and adding the accusative, dative, and ablative forms into the mix when concepts like direct objects, indirect objects, and ablatives of agent are introduced later in the semester.³²

An adjective must agree with its noun in gender, case, and number, and we decline adjectives in a few different ways to form a match depending on the adjective’s dictionary entry (and thus declension grouping, like third-declension, and sub-group, like three-termination). When we framed third-declension adjectives as simply a component of this larger concept of adjective-noun agreement, students were receptive and able to practice with the larger concept rather than focusing solely on its individual manifestations.³³ It was especially important to introduce and foreground the larger concept of adjective-noun agreement given English speakers’ unfamiliarity with adjective declension and noun matching. The concept of frequency also dictated this approach, as our students would naturally see noun-adjective agreement in virtually every Latin sentence that they will read.

Similar considerations apply to indirect statement. **Figure 4** illustrates the points at which the concept is introduced in each approach (note the fall-spring semester split):

Figure 4. Introduction of indirect statement in each approach (refer to **Table 1** for the row key).

November					December					January					February																
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30												
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24																
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24																
5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12																	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27														
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27														
21		25		29		33		37		41		45		49		53		57													

While Wheelock, Shelmerdine, Oxford, Keller & Russell, and English & Irby introduce indirect statement in the second semester, we, along with Dickey and *LLPSI*,³⁴ introduce it around the midpoint of the first, after our students acquire the requisite knowledge to form each construction or conjugation. An indirect statement pairs an accusative with an infinitive after a verb that indicates an action performed with the head (saying, thinking, and so on). So, after our students learned how to conjugate main verbs, decline into the accusative case, and identify infinitives from a verb’s dictionary entry, they were equipped to learn and practice with indirect statement. The introduction of the topic in the first semester also leverages the recent acquisition of the requisite material; if we postponed indirect statement until the second semester, after the interval of a winter break in which concept retention is often difficult, we would have had to review the distinct components of indirect statement before introducing the concept as a whole.

Again, the guiding principles of frequency, complexity, and unfamiliarity dictated this early introduction of indirect statement, a very frequent construction whose terminology and formation are largely foreign to English-speaking students. An English indirect statement maintains the same structure as a regular main clause and is often introduced by “that”

³² Mahoney (2004), 102, has shown that Latin cases show up with somewhat similar frequency (the dative is the least common at 11.4% and nominative is the common at 23.9%).
³³ Carlon (2013), 110, for instance, eschews the teaching of 3rd neuter i-stem nouns due to their infrequency.
³⁴ We will analyze this point of coalescence along with others at the end of this section.

(e.g., “He says **that *she is happy***”); the shift into an accusative-infinitive structure (*dicit eam laetam esse*) requires a reconfiguration of expectations that a student must practice both recognizing and composing. So, this early introduction of indirect statement allows them to practice working with this frequent, complex, and unfamiliar construction for a longer amount of time than they would have received in many of the existing textbook approaches.

At this point of the article, it is clear that our approach has more in common with some textbooks than with others. In particular, Dickey, Keller & Russell, and *LLPSI* also frontload some of these important concepts.³⁵ Comparisons of our methodologies or goals may prove illustrative. Dickey bases her textbook on ancient colloquia, “short dialogues and narratives for [Latin] reading and speaking practice ... composed by native speakers of Latin specifically for learners;”³⁶ thus, both of our approaches prioritize the language as written and spoken by the ancients themselves. But while she patterns her progression of topics on how Latin was actually taught in antiquity, our approach relies more on insights gained from SLA. Keller and Russell take an approach more similar to ours: “We have tried to create a beginning Latin book that relies primarily on the ancient authors themselves as the means by which students may learn about Latin syntax and style.”³⁷ Our approach, however, delineates the source material more narrowly, to the level of a single author, since what constitutes “Latin syntax and style” can change from author to author.³⁸ Reading Pliny the Younger, for example, does not necessarily prepare a student for the idiosyncrasies of syntax and vocabulary in Cicero, though, of course, any practice with the language is better than none. *LLPSI* takes an inductive approach that illustrates grammar through narrative. While our narrative-based assessments, like long-form translation assignments,³⁹ serve to reinforce rather than inductively introduce grammar and syntax, the concept of working through coherent narratives (in our case, ones extremely close to or unedited from Hyginus) rather than disparate sentences in textbook exercises aligns our approaches. On a broader level, as more secondary school Latin programs utilize the tenets of CBI, especially through textbooks like *LLPSI*, our college-level curriculum offers a Latin learning environment that may be more familiar to students with a high school background and that could provide an entry into pedagogy that draws on CBI concepts without a fully communicative approach (i.e., instruction entirely in Latin).⁴⁰

Creating a Vocabulary List

So far this article has focused primarily on our presentation of grammatical concepts, but it is also important to say a few words regarding our presentation of vocabulary. Much recent work has highlighted the importance of vocabulary acquisition to creating reading fluency.⁴¹ Attempts have also been made to quantify the lexical knowledge required to achieve reading fluency and to create vocabulary lists that fit with this data.⁴² There are, however, some problems with this approach. As we mentioned above, trying to reconstruct “Latin,” a language used in a number of circumstances over a period of nearly two thousand years, is a bit of a fool’s errand. There were numerous forms of Latin, each deployed according to the specificities of genre, context, and time period.

³⁵ The timings of topics in these three textbooks line up with ours twice each: Dickey - subjunctive and indirect statement; Keller & Russell - passive voice and subjunctive; *LLPSI* - passive voice and indirect statement. Oxford and English & Irby each have one point of temporal similarity with our approach (both in introducing third-declension adjectives), but one point of connection is probably more coincidental than two.

³⁶ Dickey (2018), xi.

³⁷ Keller and Russell (2004), xvii.

³⁸ Smith (2019).

³⁹ On which see below, pp. 48-50.

⁴⁰ We are indebted to *NECJ*’s anonymous referee for this insightful point.

⁴¹ Major (2008), 1-24; Clark (2009), 67-108; Carlon (2013), 109.

⁴² Major and Clark suggest 80% as the threshold for fluency. The most prominent frequency lists include Dickinson College’s (<http://dcc.dickinson.edu/vocab/core-vocabulary>) as well as Haverford College’s (<https://bridge.haverford.edu/select/Latin/>).

Preliminary research by our colleague, Neel Smith, allows us to understand the extent of this problem as it pertains to constructing frequency lists.⁴³ By looking at word frequency across distinct corpora, Smith argues that while Latin texts do, in fact, share a universal core vocabulary of 300 to 400 words (primarily consisting of prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and a select group of verbs or nouns), the next most frequent words are highly corpus-specific. A simple example is illustrative of Smith's larger thesis. While *consul* is the 321st most frequent word in Latin according to Dickinson College's frequency list, it does not show up once in canonical texts like Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Vergil's *Georgics*. If one's goal is to read these two texts fluently, learning the word *consul*, in spite of general frequency in Latin texts, is of no value. Rather, it is more valuable when reading the *Metamorphoses* or the *Georgics* to know the meaning of *hedera*, a word that, while far less frequent in the general Latin corpus, shows up eight times in these works.

We structured our vocabulary list for the course in light of these observations. In the first semester, we introduced students to the 300 most frequent words in Hyginus' *Fabulae*, focusing particularly on words that appeared prominently in broader-based Latin frequency tables. In the second semester, we changed our tack to an even more corpus-specific approach, prioritizing words that showed up most frequently in our chosen selections of Hyginus to prepare our students to read these passages. It should be noted that our approach towards vocabulary, once again, dovetails well with the precepts of CBI discussed above, particularly its injunction to introduce new material as needed. Moreover, such an approach ensures that vocabulary that is introduced will be continuously used and, therefore, more likely to be remembered.

On a broader level, these insights offer a useful set of guidelines for vocabulary building in a college Latin curriculum. First and foremost, it reminds us of the importance that should be accorded to ensuring that students are very familiar with the core words that appear in nearly all Latin texts. Second, it suggests that our students' reading ability will be enhanced by adopting a text-specific vocabulary approach. Developing a corpus-specific vocabulary helps our students to build up "implicit knowledge" of the texts with which they are engaging, a necessary precursor to reading fluency. Moreover, this approach applies beyond the introductory level. By centering corpus-specific vocabulary in intermediate and advanced classes, we not only stand to help our students to achieve fluency with these texts more quickly, but also to rid ourselves of preconceived notions of what words students should know. By explicitly fostering student knowledge of corpus-specific vocabulary at every level, we can significantly expand the range of their vocabulary over the course of their four years in college.

The Results

How did reorganizing our curriculum affect student outcomes? To assess the impact of our curricular changes, let us have a brief look at both the nature and results of two assignments, one from the first semester and one from the second semester, that we gave to our students. Because our goal was to prepare students for reading Hyginus by the end of the second semester, one of our methods of assessment was long-form translation assignments based on various *fabulae* of Hyginus.⁴⁴ These assignments required students not only to translate the relevant passage into English but also to answer a series of grammatical questions about its contents. Of course, it was initially not possible to give students an unedited text of Hyginus, so we adapted certain passages to fit their current skill set. In adapting the passages, we followed one guiding principle: we sought to change as little as possible from Hyginus' text in order to give students maximal exposure to reading "real" Latin. As such, we favored omitting phrases that contained grammatical concepts with which students were not yet familiar rather than paraphrasing these clauses in a more simplistic manner. Moreover, we

⁴³ Smith (2020).

⁴⁴ All of our long-form translation assessments can be found at the following site: <https://libatique.info/CANE2020/>. See above, n. 21, if this link is no longer functional.

provided a number of grammatical and lexical glosses to minimize what we would have to omit from these passages.

Below is the passage that we used in the final translation assignment of the first semester, due on December 4, as well as the original passage from Hyginus on which it was based.

Student passage:

Cum Achivī decem annōs Troiam capere nōn possent, Epeus equum mirae magnitudinis ligneum fēcit et in eō sunt collecti Menelaus, Ulixēs, Diomedes, Thessander, Sthenelus, Acamas, Thoas, Machaon, Neoptolemus. et in equō scripsērunt “DANAI MINERVAE DONUM DANT”, castraque transtulērunt Tenedo. Cum id Troianī vidērunt, arbitratī sunt hostēs abisse; Priamus imperāvit equum in templum Minervae duci. Cum vātēs, Cassandra, diceret equum habere hostes, fidēs et data non est et equum pro templō posuērunt. Achivī ex equō apertō a Sinone exiērunt portarūque custodēs occidērunt et Troiam sunt potiī.

Cum clause with subjunctive

Passive verbs

Indirect statement

Hyginus, *Fabulae* 108 (*Troianus Equus*)

Achivi cum per decem annos Troiam capere non possent, Epeus ~~monitu Minervae~~ equum mirae magnitudinis ligneum fecit eoque sunt collecti Menelaus Ulixes Diomedes Thessander Sthenelus Acamas Thoas Machaon Neoptolemus; et in equo scripserunt DANAI MINERVAE DONO DANT, castraque transtulerunt Tenedo. Id Troiani cum viderunt arbitratī sunt hostes abisse; Priamus equum in arcem Minervae duci imperavit, ~~feriatique magno opere ut essent, edixit; id~~ vates Cassandra cum vociferaretur inesse hostes, fides ei habita non est. ~~Quem in arcem~~ cum statuissent et ipsi noctu lusu atque vino lassi obdormissent, Achivi ex equo aperto a Sinone exierunt et portarum custodes occiderunt ~~sociosque signo dato receperunt~~ et Troia sunt potiī.

Position or word change

Word deleted

As the annotations demonstrate, the passage that the students translated was minimally edited. We excluded parts of the original passage that included grammatical and syntactic structures that students had not yet met, such as fourth declension nouns (*monitu Minervae*), indirect command (*feriatique...edixit*), and the ablative absolute (*signo dato*). The majority of editorial changes were small changes to reduce confusion and test vocabulary: we moved *cum* to the initial position to reduce confusion regarding the newly introduced concept of temporal clauses; we added punctuation marks to give students a better sense of sentence structure; and we replaced a few words (*arcem*, *vociferaretur*, *inesse*) with synonyms that students had recently learned (*templum*, *diceret*, *habere*). We also changed the case of one noun (*Troiam*) for ease of identification, given the variety of cases that the verb *potior* can take as object. There were two grammatical glosses included: we noted that the list of names (*Menelaus...Neoptolemus*) in the first sentence were all in the nominative case and provided a translation for the ablative participial phrase (*ex equō apertō a Sinone*).

To perform well on this assessment, students needed to display a mastery of a wide array of frequent, complex, and unfamiliar grammatical and syntactic structures. Students had to be able to identify and translate regular and periphrastic passive forms (bolded in the

above passage), including those that were separated by an adverb (*data non est*). Moreover, they had to be able to differentiate these forms from similar-looking active forms of deponent verbs (*arbitratī sunt; sunt potitī*).⁴⁵ Students also had to identify and translate indirect statements (marked in black highlighter above) within the context of a larger sentence and work with dependent *cum*-clauses featuring subjunctive forms (italicized above).⁴⁶

Across three sections of twenty students, our students showed mastery of these concepts; they scored an average of 93.4% in Dominic's 20 person section and 88.23% among Daniel's 40 students.⁴⁷ We should note that these scores reflect the average grade of our students after they were allowed to revise their initial translation assignment.⁴⁸ If they so chose, students could earn back half the points they lost on the assignment by correcting their mistakes.

We assigned long-form translation assignments every two weeks throughout both semesters. While most assignments exhibited the low-level or minor changes and adaptations described above, the overarching goal of the redesign was to have our students engage with unedited Latin texts by the end of the year. As a means of further reinforcement, we used passages from Hyginus that we assigned as compositions in the first semester as the basis for translation assignments in the second semester.⁴⁹

For their final assignment due at the end of the spring 2020 semester, we tasked our students with translating an almost completely unedited passage from the *Fabulae* that combined the end of 106 (the ransom of Hector's body) with all of 107 (the Judgment of the Arms):

Achillēs Hectorem occidit, **astriumque ad currum** traxit circā mūrōs Troiānōrum. quem **sepeliendum** cum patrī nōllet dare, Priamus, **Iovis iussū, duce Mercuriō**, in castra Danaōrum vēnit, et filiī corpus, aurō repensum, accēpit, **quem sepultūrae trādidit**. Hectore sepultō, cum Achillēs circā moenia Troiānōrum vagārētur ac diceret sē solum Troiam **expugnāsse**, Apollō irātus, **Alexandrum Parin sē simulāns**, talum, **quem mortalem habuisse dicitur**, sagittā percussit et occidit. Achille occisō ac **sepultūrae** trāditō, Ajax, quod frāter patruēlis eius fuit, postulāvit ā Danaīs ut arma **sibi** Achillis darent; quae eī **irā Minervae** abiurgāta sunt ab Agamemnone et Menelāo et Ulixī data. Ajax, furiā acceptā, per insāniam pecora sua et sē ipsum occidit eō gladiō, quem ab Hectore **mūnerī** accēpit, dum cum eō in aciē contendit.

Notes

astrium ad currum = "bound to the chariot" (**astrium** = perfect passive participle from **astringō**; supply "him" as direct object of **traxit** for this participle to modify)

sepeliendum > supply **ad** before **sepeliendum**

Iovis iussū = "at the order of Jupiter"

duce Mercuriō > ablative absolute (with an understood form of **esse**)

quem sepultūrae trādidit = "whom Achilles handed over for burial" (take **filiī** as the antecedent of **quem**)

expugnāsse = **expugnāvisse**

Alexandrum Parin sē simulāns = "pretending that he was Alexander Paris"

⁴⁵ Students were explicitly asked in the grammatical analysis of the assignment about *arbitratī sunt* and its characterization.

⁴⁶ Students were asked to parse *possent* and explain the reason behind its mood.

⁴⁷ It should be noted that because Holy Cross frequently rotates LATN 101/102 instructors, it is difficult to compare the performance of students in 2019-20 with previous iterations of the course.

⁴⁸ Here too, our strategies align with Carlon's recommendation to make corrections a student-based process (Carlon (2013), 111).

⁴⁹ The retention rate from LATN 101 to 102 at Holy Cross is close to 100%, so we could be confident that most students had seen these passages before.

(modifying **Apollō**)
quem mortalem habuisse dicitur = “which is said to have been mortal” (take **talum**
as the antecedent of **quem**)
occidit > supply “Achilles” or “him” as the direct object
sepultūrae = “for burial”
sibi > refers back to Ajax as the subject of the verb of demanding
irā Minervae = “because of Minerva’s anger”
eō > translate as a demonstrative adjective modifying **gladiō**
mūnerī = “as a gift”

The single lexical change that was made was a switch of a demonstrative *ille* to the proper name *Achillēs* in order to provide context at the beginning of the passage. There were minor editorial changes (e.g., with punctuation) to help our students more clearly understand and utilize phrase and clause boundaries. We provided glosses and grammatical help as necessary that covered unfamiliar constructions (for example, the syncopation of *expugnāvisse* into *expugnāsse*; *sepultūrae* and *mūnerī* as datives of purpose); we also provided vocabulary entries for the items that had not appeared in our various vocabulary modules throughout the year.

In all, our students were prepared to read at an intermediate level with the aid of a commentary and lexicon within their first year of study. Our students performed consistently well on this final assignment, especially if we consider the exigencies of the coronavirus pandemic and assignment assessment policies particular to each section of students. Dominic’s students averaged 80.4%; they were allowed one submission without revisions. Daniel’s students averaged 94.5%; they were allowed one submission and one revision, the latter of which would add back up to half of the points that they lost on the first submission. The average across all sections, then, was 87.45%.

The high-level performance of these students reveals the benefits of our curricular re-organization. Due to the frontloading of frequent, complex, and unfamiliar concepts, students gained experience with material by the end of the first semester that they normally would not have seen until the second semester had they followed the majority of textbook approaches. Furthermore, by learning this material, they were able to engage substantively with real Latin texts at an earlier point in the course. By the end of one year of study, they built a solid enough foundation of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to accomplish translation and analytical tasks that usually must wait until their second year of Latin.

In her framing of Latin pedagogy in light of SLA theory, Carlon has drawn attention to the importance of enhancing “implicit knowledge,” the ability to analyze and comprehend the target language quickly and easily, as a means to unlocking a student’s ability to read texts. Early exposure to and constant practice with concepts that show up frequently in Latin texts allowed our students to internalize the most common structures and forms of the language quickly and enabled them to access the text of Hyginus without significant difficulty. The introduction of new and more complex concepts represented minor modifications to an already substantial and functional body of knowledge.

Conclusion

Our redesign of the introductory Latin curriculum at the College of the Holy Cross upends traditional modes of language instruction by prioritizing and frontloading frequent, complex, and unfamiliar grammatical constructions and vocabulary, as determined by a morphological analysis of a real Latin text. As a result, our students were able to spend more time with concepts like the passive voice, the subjunctive mood, third-declension adjectives, and indirect statement, which not only prepared them to complete various long-form assignments with real, unedited Latin but also provided for them a solid foundation and knowledge base to take into higher levels of language learning.

Those higher levels of language learning, like our intermediate sequence, are

necessarily impacted by the introductory level redesign. This year, the 2020-2021 academic year, we bifurcated our first semester of intermediate Latin into two sections: LATN 213, composed of students who have completed our introductory sequence; and LATN 199, composed of students entering into our language sequences with high school Latin experience. Both fall intermediate sections focused on prose and then streamed into a single intermediate section in the spring, LATN 214, which focused on poetry (still ongoing).

LATN 213 offered us the chance to capitalize on the foundations that we laid in the introductory sequence. We were able to retain seven students from the introductory sequence, a significant improvement over past years in which generally two or three students would continue from introductory Latin into the intermediate level. We reinforced what they learned and took their knowledge in new directions with different target texts that provided practice with the concepts that were less prioritized in the introductory sequence. For example, the target text for this past iteration of LATN 213 was Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae* or *Letters*. In addition to providing fruitful source material for discussing daily life in Rome and important historical and social events like the eruption of Vesuvius and the rise of Christianity, the *Epistulae* also helped our students practice concepts like first- and second-person verbs, which were introduced in the second semester of the introductory sequence. LATN 199, on the other hand, offered students who have had some high school Latin (more than one year and less than four) an intensive version of our one-year sequence.⁵⁰ Not only did this course offer these students an opportunity to review and, on occasion, meet for the first time important grammatical and syntactic structures, but it also served to standardize to some degree the concepts, terminologies, and structures with which all of our intermediate Latin students should have had practice before entering LATN 214. We are hopeful that this model will allow us to accommodate students from all learning backgrounds into upper-level courses and to help them develop a lifelong appreciation of how a foreign language works in the future.

Now that we are in the second year of LATN 101 and 102 with this approach, we will continue to evaluate the efficacy of this approach and how students who have completed the introductory sequence fare in the years to come. We have made our grammar modules, exercises, vocabulary lists, and reference charts available at <https://lingualatina.github.io/textbook/>.⁵¹ We invite not only feedback and corrections but also widespread use and adaptation of the materials contained therein, which are available under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license.⁵²

Daniel Libatique
College of the Holy Cross
dlibatq@holycross.edu

Dominic Machado
College of the Holy Cross
dmachado@holycross.edu

⁵⁰ Students with AP credit or with four or more years of Latin were directed to our advanced-level courses.

⁵¹ See above, n. 21, if this link is no longer functional.

⁵² <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

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Caesar and Genocide: Confronting the Dark Side of Caesar's Gallic Wars

KURT A. RAAFLAUB

Abstract: Julius Caesar's military achievements, described in his *Gallic War*, are monumental; so are the atrocities his army committed in slaughtering or enslaving entire nations. He stands accused of genocide. For today's readers, including students and teachers, this poses problems. It raises questions, not least about Caesar's place in the Latin curriculum. Applying modern definitions of "genocide," is he guilty as accused? If so, is it justified to condemn him of a crime that was recognized as such only recently? Without condoning Caesar's actions, this paper seeks fuller understanding by contextual analysis, placing them in the context of Roman—and ancient (if not almost universal)—customs of imperial warfare. It emphasizes the complexity of historical persons and events, juxtaposing Caesar the brutal conqueror to Caesar the clement victor, who established clemency among a ruler's cardinal virtues.

Key words: Caesar, *The Gallic War*, conquest of Gaul, war atrocities, genocide, Cicero, Rome's brutal wars, clemency, teaching Caesar.

1. The Massacre of the Usipetes and Tencteri: Caesar's Worst War Atrocity in Gaul

To lead the readers *in medias res* and help them gauge the scope and nature of the war atrocities Caesar and his army committed in the course of the Gallic War, I begin by discussing what is probably the worst example.¹ According to Caesar's report, in the winter of 56/55 BCE two German nations, the Usipetes and Tencteri, crossed the lower Rhine into Gaul, escaping the harassment of the dominant Suebi.² They spent the winter in villages whose owners they had killed or expelled. By the spring, welcomed by Celtic and German nations living along the Rhine, they moved south. These nations included clients of the Treveri who maintained close contacts with Germans across the Rhine and whose loyalty Caesar had already found questionable. Moreover, his earlier experiences with the German warlord Ariovistus, whom he had defeated in 58, and deeply ingrained Roman fears and prejudices had predisposed him against Germans. Hence, he believed, these German migrants could not be trusted and were likely to cause troubles among the fickle Gauls.³

From his first encounter with envoys of the two nations Caesar portrays their leaders, like Ariovistus, as utterly arrogant and treacherous. In negotiations for a peaceful settlement Caesar demanded that the Germans leave Gaul but tried to make this more palatable to them by suggesting a union with the Ubii, his allies across the Rhine, which would enable all of them better to resist the Suebi. Twice they requested more time for their response, which hardened his suspicion that they were not negotiating in good faith. So did an unprovoked attack by their cavalry during a truce. He detained their leaders, who

¹ More examples will be described in section 4. For definition and discussion of the concept of "genocide," see section 6. Unspecified source references are to the *Bellum Gallicum* (BG). BC = *Bellum civile*. Translations from Caesar's works are taken from the *Landmark Julius Caesar* (Raaflaub 2017).

This paper was offered in earlier versions at the 2017 Summer Institute and the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of New England, at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians, and in 2018 and 2019 at various universities and colleges in Germany and the USA. I owe thanks for useful feedback and good advice to audiences at these events and particularly to Elizabeth Baer, Deborah Boedeker, Joseph Frechette, Ian Hochberg, Jon E. Lendon, Dominic Machado, Amy Martin-Nelson, Hans-Friedrich Mueller, Aaron Seider, Karin Suzedail, Mark Thatcher, David Yates, and the anonymous referee of the *NECJ*. The paper received its final shape in the summer and fall of 2020 in the USA. This is the perspective underlying allusions to "our time" and "our country." I welcome readers' comments.

² "Nation" translates *civitas*; for the advantage of using this term vs. "tribe" or "people," see Pelling 2011: 211.

³ 4.1.1–2; 4.4–6; Treveri: 2.24.4–5; 3.11.1–2. Ariovistus: 1.30–54. For Roman fears of German invaders, see below at n. 166.

had come to apologize for the incident, and immediately went on the attack, completely surprising and terrifying the Germans.⁴

Their fear was obvious from their screams and chaotic running around. Our soldiers, spurred on by the betrayal of the previous day, burst into the camp where those of the enemy who could quickly seize their weapons resisted for a short time... Meanwhile the masses of other persons—women and children, for the Germans had left home and crossed the Rhine with their entire families—began to flee in every direction. Caesar sent the cavalry to run them down. When the Germans heard shouts rising behind them and saw that their people were being slaughtered, they threw their arms away... and rushed out of the camp. When they reached the place where the Rhine and Meuse run together, they lost any remaining hope of getting away. A great number of them were killed. The rest threw themselves into the river and perished there, overcome by panic, exhaustion, and the power of the current. Every last one of our men survived, and only a few were wounded.⁵

The number given for the enemy (430,000) certainly is far too high—a feature typical of ancient war reports to make the danger and the victor's achievement appear even larger.⁶ But the number does not matter here; nor is it important that parts of the two nations survived, because more escaped the massacre than Caesar was told or because they were not present at the scene of the final massacre or had never participated in the migration to Gaul. What matters is the cold-blooded attack on an unsuspecting enemy with the undisguised intention of destroying two entire nations, men, women, and children, and the general's gloating about having achieved this without any loss among his soldiers.

This drastic episode drew the attention of Caesar's enemies in Rome. They convinced the Senate to appoint a committee to investigate Caesar's policies in Gaul, although it is unknown whether this committee was actually sent off.⁷ Cato the Younger even demanded that Caesar be extradited to the victims as an atonement for the crime he had committed by arresting envoys and violating a truce—accusations that Caesar's narrative carefully refutes. Cato's proposal was, of course, influenced by partisanship but not unprecedented; presumably he chose this moment for his attack because Caesar's action more than any other seemed to violate even the loose Roman norms on such matters.⁸ In view of the magnitude of Caesar's victory, his supporters easily suppressed Cato's demand.⁹ Yet the controversy continues to this day: scholars critical of Caesar's methods in his Gallic wars have focused not least on this episode to accuse him even of genocide.

2. The Balance Sheet of Caesar's Conquests: Questions and Approaches

The genocide accusation, featuring in recent research on genocide, was picked up by Nico Roymans, a Dutch archaeologist, who found in a dry riverbed in far northern Gaul, in a setting that seems to fit Caesar's description, a large deposit of skeletal evidence, including

⁴ 4.7–13.

⁵ 4.14–15.

⁶ See Brunt 1971: 694–97; Henige 1998; Stangl 2008; Pelling 2011: 211, 253. On the importance of numbers, see below at nn. 112, 125.

⁷ Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 24.3.

⁸ See Powell 1998: 124–32 for Caesar's highly defensive narrative, and below at n. 88 for “norms of war.” Precedents: Pelling 2011: 252.

⁹ Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 51.1–5; *Caesar* 22.1–7; Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 24.3; Drogula 2019: 199–200. Gelzer 1968: 132 n.1 suggests that, reacting to these attacks when writing his full report, Caesar may have “strengthened the allusions to the malicious breaches of faith by the Germans.”

women and children.¹⁰ For various reasons, this identification seems questionable.¹¹ Yet the issue of genocide must be taken seriously and forces us to confront what I call “the dark side” of Caesar’s Gallic wars.

So does the balance sheet of Caesar’s nine-year conquest of Gaul. It is most depressing. According to Plutarch and Appian, one million Celts died, another million were enslaved.¹² Casualties among the noncombatant population probably were higher but cannot be estimated more precisely. In his triumph in 46 Caesar listed the number of soldiers killed in all his battles (thus not only in Gaul) as 1,192,000.¹³ Despite the numbers Caesar gives of Gallic military levies and losses, it is impossible to estimate the population of Gaul in Caesar’s time with any precision. Reasonable estimates by modern scholars run up to 8 or even 10 or 12 million. If this is correct, the percentage of casualties mentioned by the sources amounts to between 16 and 25% of the total.¹⁴ This by far surpasses even the figures of the two countries most affected by World War II, Germany (c. 9%) and the Soviet Union (c. 13.7%).¹⁵ To calculate Caesar’s losses is impossible because he rarely gives those figures.¹⁶

It was not only the Roman sword that inflicted death on the Gallic population. Large parts starved to death because the harvests were confiscated or destroyed and their settlements and farmsteads burned, or they froze to death when the legions drove them out of their settlements in winter and burned down buildings, villages, and towns. Huge forests were systematically felled because Caesar’s army needed firewood and lumber to build fortifications, bridges, and entire fleets, or tried to prevent nations from using them as refuges. Herds of cattle and pigs were driven from the fields and devoured.¹⁷ About an episode in 53 Caesar writes: “Even if for the moment some people succeeded in remaining hidden, it seemed that after the army’s departure they would still necessarily perish from complete lack of supplies.”¹⁸ The Roman army’s march through enemy territories turned these into landscapes of war and terror.¹⁹ Ernst Badian writes: “Requisitions of food and punitive devastations completed a human, economic, and ecological disaster probably unequalled until the conquest of the Americas.”²⁰ The material and financial exploitation of Gaul also had a disastrous, though often underestimated, impact on the population.²¹

My concern in this paper is how to assess the accumulation of violence that, from our perspective, is highly disturbing and has not received the attention it demands. It poses a serious problem that I formulate here from a teacher’s perspective, although it should affect every reader. How do we come to terms with Caesar’s actions in view of the values we may hold and want to pass on to the next generation? How do we deal with an author

¹⁰ Roymans and Fernández-Götz 2015; Quesada-Sanz 2015. The final excavation report has not yet been published. Genocide research: n. 67 below.

¹¹ Raaflaub and Ramsey 2017: 31–33.

¹² Plutarch, *Caesar* 15.5; Appian, *Roman History* 4 (*Celtic Wars*) 1.2.

¹³ Pliny, *Natural History* 7.92.

¹⁴ For details, including the estimates for the population of Gaul, see Will 1992: 96–98. For comparison, the war dead on both sides of the American civil war numbered at least 620,000 out of a combined population in 1861 of 31 million (that is, 2%).

¹⁵ Germany: c. 6.3 million out of a total population of 69.3 million within Germany’s 1937 borders. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties#Nazi_Germany (accessed March 19, 2021); Overmans 2004; Overly 2015. Soviet Union: almost 27 million out of a total population of c. 197 million in June 1941. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties_of_the_Soviet_Union#Total_population_losses (accessed March 19, 2021); Ellman and Maksudov 1994; Haynes 2003.

¹⁶ Exceptions: 6.44.1 (two cohorts: c. 600); 7.51.4 (700); *BC* 3.71.1–2 (960); 3.99.1 (200). The ambush of 15 cohorts (more than 5,000 men) by the Eburones in 54 (below at n. 52) was Caesar’s highest loss in all his wars. The narrative implies that Roman casualties at Bibracte (1.26.5) and the Sabis River (2.25) were high. Very low numbers, contrasted with high enemy losses, are presented with pride (4.15.3; *BC* 3.53.1–2; 3.99.1, 4).

¹⁷ Based on Will 1992: 98.

¹⁸ 6.43.3.

¹⁹ Hill and Wileman 2002; Will 1992: 98.

²⁰ Badian 2012: 758. I thank Michael Meckler for this reference.

²¹ See below at n. 24.

who perpetrated these actions and describes them without any reluctance? Although there are good reasons to find Caesar's writings interesting and valuable, this problem compels us to ask: how do we justify teaching Caesar as one of the most important authors in our Latin curriculum? I intend in this paper to suggest some ways to tackle this problem and to make positive use of a very negative reality.²²

I will first sketch Caesar's situation in 58 and the political necessities under which he operated in Gaul (section 3). I will then establish in more detail the sad record of the atrocities he committed there, summarizing the most relevant events (4) and assessing the overall picture of Caesar the brutal conqueror (5). Looking at the authoritative definitions of "genocide" and "war crimes," I will conclude that they are clearly applicable to several of Caesar's war atrocities, although I will also point out the difficulty of condemning Caesar of crimes that were recognized as such only two millennia later (6). I shall argue that the simplest solution for dealing with this problem, namely to eliminate Caesar from the Latin curriculum, is perhaps not the best (7). I will then explain Caesar's atrocities in their broad historical context (8), and emphasize the complexity of historical persons and events, juxtaposing Caesar the brutal conqueror to Caesar the clement victor (9). In concluding, I will consider Caesar's actions even more broadly in the context of the function of genocide in ancient warfare (10). In a brief appendix I will address the issue of "migrants" that has special significance for readers familiar with some of the most urgent challenges in our own time.

I expect that some readers will criticize me for trying to find excuses for Caesar's actions. I therefore declare now once and for all, with utmost emphasis, so-to-speak in capital letters, that I do not intend to play down, condone, or explain away Caesar's atrocities. Analyzing is not the same as condoning. When dealing with historical events and persons, we *must* be able to look at the full picture from all sides. In this sense, I ask my readers to consider this paper an invitation for a continuing discussion.

3. The Background: Caesar in 58 BCE and the Helvetian Campaign

Caesar's situation at the beginning of 58 BCE was dire.²³ True, with the support of his allies, Pompey and Crassus, he had in 59 reached the consulship. He had seen to it, as promised, that their primary political agendas were realized. For himself he had secured five-year governorships over three provinces that in a broad arc covered the entire north of Italy: Transalpine Gaul (roughly modern Provence), Cisalpine Gaul (the Po Valley from the Alps to the Adriatic), and Illyricum (along the north-eastern coast of the Adriatic). But he had paid a steep price for all this: his bills had met stiff resistance in the Senate and been passed in the assembly only through much violence, his reputation among Rome's senators was lower than ever, his leading opponents threatened to drag him through the courts as soon as he was no longer protected by official immunity, and he was in deep financial trouble. When he assumed his governorships, he was desperately looking for an opportunity to fight a major war, mainly for two reasons.

One was his need for money. Caesar lacked substantial family wealth and was notoriously indebted. Urbanization was spreading rapidly in gold- and metal-rich Gaul, and the sack of towns promised great rewards. In addition, Italy was hungry for ever more slaves, and the slave traders and booty merchants following Roman armies offered instant profits.²⁴ I cannot discuss here the material and financial plundering of Gaul that enriched Caesar, his officers, his army and supporters, Roman officials and senators, and the population at large. Nor shall I talk about the building program in Rome that Caesar financed with the gold, booty, and slaves of Gaul. Caesar himself mentions the slaves and rarely the plunder, Hirtius offers brief insights, and later sources summarize the essentials.²⁵ Suffice it to quote Wolfgang

²² See further section 7.

²³ For Caesar's career, see Gelzer 1968; Meier 1995; Goldsworthy 2006; Gruen 2009.

²⁴ 2.33.6–7; Rowan 2013, 2017; Ralston 2017. Generally: Will 1992: 66–72.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Caesar* 15.5, 20.2–3; Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 26.2–3, 54.2; Dio Cassius 42.49; 43.39.4. Slaves: 2.33.7;

Will who writes sarcastically: “We can’t read Caesar’s thoughts but we can read his balances. When the governor left his provinces, both the population of Gaul and the gold price in Italy had fallen by a quarter.”²⁶

More important for this paper’s purposes is Caesar’s ambition to emulate Pompey. After conducting far-reaching campaigns in the east and finally defeating Rome’s nemesis, Mithradates VI of Pontus, Pompey had in the late 60s reshaped Rome’s eastern frontier. By annexing vast territories to create new provinces and establishing dependent principalities (client kingdoms), he had created a broad security cordon.²⁷ He thereby set the bar of public accomplishment at a new level. Whoever in the future wanted to compete for a position of pre-eminence in the senatorial aristocracy had to establish a comparable record of achievement. More than ever, the path to the top led through success on the battlefield.

In 56, only three years into the Gallic wars, debates began in the Senate about the renewal of Caesar’s governorships. In his speech *About the Consular Provinces*, Cicero formulated a striking vision. Its outline, I am certain, was conveyed to him by one of Caesar’s agents. In essence, Cicero argued, through his conquests and new provinces Pompey had created a safe boundary for Rome in the east. Caesar was pursuing the same goal in the north. By expanding the frontier to the ocean, taming the fierce and war-hungry nations in Gaul, and bringing them under Roman control, he was establishing a safe, peaceful, and well-ordered world.²⁸ Cicero was tapping here into the Roman ideology of what moderns call “defensive imperialism,” that is, the justification of imperial expansion with the need to enhance Roman security. Another aspect of this ideology is summarized by Cicero’s statement, “Our people has now gained power over the whole world by defending its allies.”²⁹ This was precisely how Caesar justified his intervention in Gaul.³⁰

At any rate, Gaul was interesting. It offered opportunities. Wars had been fought with Gallic nations in and near the province of Transalpine Gaul until the late 60s. Further wars were expected, but then the threat subsided. In 60, Cicero wrote about a consul who expected to be appointed governor of one of the Gallic provinces, [He] “is an excellent consul. I have only one criticism: he is not over-happy at the news of peace in Gaul. He wants a triumph, I suppose.”³¹ The right to celebrate a triumph, with a magnificent parade of the army through the city and up to the Capitol to render thanks to Jupiter, was the greatest honor the Senate could bestow on a victorious general.³² Caesar had this ambition too. Forced by the machinations of opponents who wanted to prevent his consulship, Caesar had in 60 chosen this office over a triumph for victories in Spain. He was determined not to miss a second opportunity. Controlling through his provinces the entire northern frontier, he trusted that somewhere troubles would erupt that would justify his intervention. And so they did.

Plans of the Helvetii (a Celtic nation living in today’s Switzerland) to migrate to the west of Gaul had been known before, but when news arrived in Rome in the spring of 58 that they had actually set a firm date to assemble, Caesar pounced. He rushed to Genava (Geneva, on the border between his Transalpine province and Helvetian territory), mobilized troops, and denied the Helvetians’ request to migrate peacefully through the province. After trying in vain to break through Caesar’s barricades, they changed their route and avoided the province altogether, depriving Caesar of a cause for war. But he was not to be denied. He hurried to Cisalpine Gaul, returned with five legions, and crossed into

3.16.4; 7.89.5. Plunder: 7.11.4–9, 28.4; 8.24.4; Hirtius, 8.4.1, 5.3, 24.4, 27.5, 36.5. See Rambaud 1966: 168–72; Will 1992: 98–104.

²⁶ Will 1992: 66 (my trans.).

²⁷ On Pompey’s career, see Greenhalgh 1981; Seager 2002. Mithradates: Mayor 2010.

²⁸ Cicero, *De provinciis consularibus* 19–20, 30–34.

²⁹ Cicero, *Republic* 3.34–36, esp. 35 (trans. Harris). On defensive imperialism, see Harris 1979: 163–254.

³⁰ 1.11.

³¹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.20.5. Trans. Shackleton Bailey 1978a (modified). Here and elsewhere content in square brackets condenses wording that does not need to be quoted in full, or makes the quote better understandable.

³² See Beard 2007 and discussion below at n. 125.

independent Gaul. There he collected complaints of locals about Helvetian transgressions and was duly asked for help by the Aedui, long-standing Roman allies. Moreover, he claimed, the Helvetians' plan to settle right next to the Roman province would expose it to intolerable danger by a most warlike and aggressive hostile nation.³³ (Probably few of Caesar's readers knew enough about Gallic geography to realize that the Helvetians' intended settlement area, on the Atlantic coast north of the Garonne, was more than 200 miles from the province's border, while in their previous homeland they had been its direct neighbors!)

Thus armed with plenty of justifications that to any Roman must have sounded compelling enough, Caesar embarked on the Helvetian war. Act One consisted of the unprovoked massacre of the Tigurini, one of the Helvetian tribes, who had played a part in defeats inflicted by the Cimbri and Teutoni upon Roman armies some fifty years before. Caesar presents this as an act of revenge for a long-ago defeat in which a consul and an ancestor of Caesar's wife had been killed—Rome's and Caesar's personal honor were now restored.³⁴ In Act Two Caesar was met by a Helvetian leader to explore conditions of a settlement. Caesar offered peace if the Helvetii submitted hostages, offered compensation for the damage they had done during their march, and returned to their country. The proud (or, in Caesar's view, arrogant) Helvetian declined. Act Three consisted of a fierce battle, provoked by the Helvetii and finally won by the Romans (though with heavy losses), in which the greater part of the Helvetian migrants perished. In Act Four the survivors surrendered, exhausted after three days of flight with no supplies, and were sent back to their country.³⁵

Caesar reports that in the Helvetian camp tablets were found with the names of all the migrants. Their total, he says, was 368,000, out of whom 92,000 bore arms. 110,000 returned home—around a third!³⁶ That there were tablets can hardly be doubted—many witnesses must have seen them. Their explanation is debated. The numbers look artificial and are certainly vastly exaggerated. Modern scholars think of a total of perhaps 80,000 migrants, 20,000 of whom were combatants.³⁷ What draws attention more than numbers is Caesar's way of proceeding. He found or created a cause for war, even if the enemy tried to avoid it, and then pursued victory with single-minded determination. Peace was possible, but only on Caesar's terms!³⁸

This is the Caesar driven by fierce ambition and held back by few scruples. We will find this pattern in several cases of conquest atrocities discussed below. As Suetonius formulates it, "He lost no opportunity of picking quarrels—however flimsy the pretext—with allies as well as hostile and barbarous tribes, and marching against them."³⁹

4. An Overview of Caesar's Worst War Atrocities

The massacre of the Tigurini eliminated a substantial part of the Helvetian force.⁴⁰ Otherwise, Caesar fought the Helvetii to prevent their migration, not to annihilate them. To form a fuller assessment, we now need to survey his other war atrocities in more detail.

³³ 1.2–11; "right next": 1.10.2.

³⁴ 1.12.

³⁵ 1.12–28.

³⁶ 1.29. The number of survivors sent home should be augmented by those of the 32,000 Boii who had joined the Helvetii and were allowed to settle among the Aedui (1.28.5, 29.2).

³⁷ 92,000 is exactly one quarter of 368,000. Pennacini 1993: 984, at 1.29 n.2, lists numbers given by other ancient sources and some scholarship on this issue; see also the discussion in Walser 1998: 72–74; Pelling 2011: 222–24. Some scholars (whose arguments are summarized by Walser, and Walser himself in Walser 1998: 37–88, 150–81, 182–90) have radically challenged the entire campaign report. Despite many important observations, they go too far in trying to demonstrate wholesale fiction and massive distortion on the part of Caesar: there were too many witnesses (see at n. 61 below).

³⁸ See, however, below at n. 124.

³⁹ Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 24.3.

⁴⁰ See at n. 34 above.

With a view on genocide, I focus here on the most outrageous cases. Space limitations do not allow me to give a full survey of all episodes in which Caesar displayed cruelty in some form or other.⁴¹ Throughout we stay aware that we mostly depend on Caesar as our only source, that his characterization of his various enemies (peoples and leaders) is partisan and, with few exceptions, probably too negative, and that the narrative, though probably never grossly distorted, is tainted and bent throughout to serve Caesar's interests.⁴²

Episode 1: Still in 58, having defeated the Helvetians, Caesar was asked by Gallic leaders for help against the German warlord Ariovistus who had crossed the Rhine by invitation of Gallic nations but had turned against them and established a personal fiefdom in southeastern Gaul, tyrannizing the nations in his orbit. Caesar describes him as untrustworthy, deceitful, and arrogant, an obvious threat to Rome's Gallic allies and the safety of the Transalpine province. After much diplomatic and military maneuvering, Ariovistus' army was defeated. "Soon all the enemy turned in rout and did not stop running until they reached the Rhine River... There, a very small number... managed to save themselves... But our cavalry ran down all the others and killed them."⁴³ The total death toll supposedly was 80,000, including the German women and children.⁴⁴

Episode 2: The second year (57) began with a "conspiracy" of the Belgae, a large group of nations located in the north of Gaul. Alarmed by Caesar's invasion and his army's wintering in Gaul, they prepared to expel the intruder. According to Caesar's allies, close to 300,000 select troops had been pledged, a large part of whom were marching south.⁴⁵ Caesar thus claimed to react to aggression. Fickle, lacking discipline, and neglecting elementary logistics, the Belgae were defeated in a brave attempt to ford a river and then massacred in their chaotic withdrawal: "with no danger to themselves, our forces killed as many of them as they could in the course of the day."⁴⁶

Episode 3: Caesar then advanced rapidly and forced several Belgic nations to surrender without fighting, doing them no harm. The Nervii, fiercest of all, were defeated in a major battle, despite heroic resistance that brought Caesar's men to the brink of disaster.⁴⁷ The Atuatuca, their allies who had missed the battle and retreated, had concentrated their people and possessions in a heavily fortified town. They initially resisted but, frightened by the unfamiliar Roman siege machinery, surrendered, agreeing to offer hostages and hand over their weapons. Caesar spared them and protected them from abuse by his soldiers. But they had hidden many weapons; at night they tried a massive sortie but failed. Now Caesar considered them traitors and oath-breakers. The town was sacked, the booty, including 53,000 persons, sold to the traders.⁴⁸

Episode 4: At the end of 57, one of Caesar's legates (sub-commanders) had accepted the submission of nations living along the Atlantic and English Channel coast and, as usual, taken hostages. A few months later the Veneti and their allies detained Roman requisitioning officers, expecting to exchange them for the hostages. Caesar took their supposed violation of the sacred protection of envoys as a cause for war and, after their defeat, the justification for an exceptionally severe punishment of the Veneti. As a deterrent, "he executed all councilors and sold the rest of the people as slaves."⁴⁹ This justification is far-fetched—requisitioning officers are not ambassadors—and there are other reasons to question Caesar's narrative. Strabo maintains that the "revolt" of the Veneti was primarily a

⁴¹ Some examples will be discussed below at n. 75. On the way Caesar presents massacres, see Powell 1998.

⁴² On Caesar's tendentiousness, see Collins 1972; Raaflaub 2017: web essays HH and JJ, available at www.landmarkcaesar.com (accessed June 25, 2020). See also below at n. 61.

⁴³ 1.53. The entire campaign: 1.30–53.

⁴⁴ Plutarch, *Caesar* 19.12; Appian, *Roman History* 4 (*Celtic Wars*) 1.3. See further below at n. 160.

⁴⁵ Number: 2.4.

⁴⁶ 2.11.6.

⁴⁷ 2.16–28.

⁴⁸ 2.33.6–7. The entire campaign: 2.29–33.

⁴⁹ 3.16.4. The entire campaign: 3.7–16. For an in-depth criticism of Caesar's narrative, see Stevens 1952: 8–14, on which see Levick 1998.

war motivated by their determination to prevent Caesar from possibly invading Britain and interrupting their profitable trade with the Britons.⁵⁰

Episode 5 concerns the annihilation of the Usipetes and Tencteri, described at the beginning of this paper and further discussed below.⁵¹

Episode 6: In the fall of 54 Caesar stationed 15 cohorts (one and a half legions, more than 5,000 men) in a winter camp among the Eburones. Their leader, Ambiorix, repelled in a surprise attack on this camp, pretended that the Gauls had conceived of a common plan to attack all Roman camps on the same day so that no mutual support was possible. Still, because of Caesar's favors, he promised the Romans safe conduct to the boundaries of his territory. After an intense debate in their war council the Romans evacuated their camp. Their force was ambushed and destroyed almost to the last man.⁵²

Caesar leaves no doubt about Sabinus' grievous mistakes. But his anger and hatred turned against Ambiorix whom, we sense, he had considered his friend and whose betrayal he took very personally. In the summer of 53 he organized a systematic hunt for Ambiorix who narrowly escaped. The army burned the Eburones' villages and buildings, destroyed the harvests, drove off the herds, and killed whomever they could find. Those who survived would die of starvation.⁵³ In 51 Caesar returned. Since he no longer hoped to capture Ambiorix, he writes, "the next best thing Caesar could do for his honor and reputation was to devastate his territory to such a degree, destroying its inhabitants, buildings, and herds, that if chance left any of Ambiorix' people alive," they would never allow him to return to his nation.⁵⁴ The goal of all these actions was "that the nation and its very name would be eradicated for the terrible crime they had committed."⁵⁵

Episode 7: In the winter of 53/52, the Carnutes, hosts of the central sanctuary of the Druids, launched a pan-Gallic war against Caesar (soon to be Vercingetorix' war) by massacring the Roman traders who had settled in Cenabum, their main town.⁵⁶ A year later, after the Gallic disaster at Alesia and upon complaints of the Carnutes' neighbors, Caesar led two legions against them in the coldest winter.

[The Carnutes] scattered in flight and abandoned their villages and towns ... [Caesar sent light troops and cavalry] everywhere the enemy were reported to have been heading ... The Carnutes were overwhelmed by the hardships of the winter and their dread of the dangers surrounding them; driven from their homes, they did not dare stay anywhere for long, and during the harshest weather of the year they could not find any shelter in the woods. Scattered as they were, they lost a large part of their population, and the rest were dispersed among the nearby nations.⁵⁷

5. Caesar the Brutal Conqueror

This is Caesar the brutal conqueror. Considering that for nine years he was the sole decision-maker on monumental issues that affected life and death of his army and entire nations, all for the sake of his own (and Rome's) honor, prestige, and power, we may find it less puzzling that, at the end of his Gallic command, both forced by his enemies and in "an act of monumental egotism," he consciously and explicitly set his honor and political survival

⁵⁰ Strabo, *Geography* 4.4.1, barely hinted at in *BG* 3.8.1. The Veneti, like many other opponents of Rome, probably had no concrete understanding of the full Roman meaning of "surrender" (*deditio*) to which they had agreed (on which, see Livy 1.38.1–2; Polybius 20.9.10–11; Lintott 1993: 16–18).

⁵¹ At n. 163.

⁵² 5.26–37. This episode stands out not least because in both the war council and the ensuing disastrous battle Caesar's report emphasizes an exemplary contrast between good and bad leadership (represented by the junior commander Cotta and the senior commander Sabinus, respectively).

⁵³ 6.29.4–34.9; 6.43.

⁵⁴ 8.24.4–25.1.

⁵⁵ 6.34.8. Some Eburones still survived: Heinrichs 2008.

⁵⁶ 7.1–3.

⁵⁷ 8.4–5.

above the well-being of his nation by plunging it into the misery of civil war.⁵⁸

Yet he wrote the *Gallic War* while he expected to return to Rome at the end of his command. Its purpose was to prepare the Roman Senate and public for his resumption of an honored career there. In all the cases discussed above he carefully explains his reasons and decisions. Most of these explanations focus on his obligation to defend Roman allies and Roman honor and ensure the safety of the Roman province and, as the war progressed, the stability of Roman control over Gaul. We may wonder why justification was so important to him, especially when, as we shall see, his methods of seeking and ensuring victory, including his atrocities, fit long-standing Roman practices to which the public was thoroughly accustomed. The answer probably is not that he felt guilty and sought to present excuses but that the war he fought in Gaul was exceptionally public. Normally, what governors and army commanders did in their wars reached notoriety only if it was particularly outrageous and raised an unusual level of criticism and protest that was conveyed to Rome and prompted a Senate investigation. Caesar, however, had achieved a high level of notoriety and provoked powerful opposition in Rome long before he assumed his Gallic command. His enemies watched his every step and were even in touch with Ariovistus who claimed, Caesar says, that “if he killed Caesar, he would be doing a favor to many noblemen and leaders of the Roman people—which he knew from these people themselves, through their own messengers.”⁵⁹

We know that communications between Caesar’s camps and people in Rome and Italy (senators, officials, families, friends) were intense and not controlled (or controllable) by Caesar.⁶⁰ He acted virtually under the eyes of Rome. Incidentally, this is one of the strongest arguments supporting the essential veracity of his account. There were too many witnesses to allow him to get away with large-scale falsification. For the same reason, because he knew that his actions were constantly scrutinized, Caesar took great pains to avoid anything that could be misinterpreted as a breach of negotiations or a truce, and to justify his actions with arguments that would sound compelling to any Roman who was not his inveterate enemy.⁶¹

To be sure, since antiquity Caesar has been admired for his achievements. He was a superb general. In some fifty battles, fought in Gaul and all over the Roman empire, he was defeated only three times (twice on the same day). His military successes would not have been possible without his extraordinary qualities as a leader of men. He knew his soldiers, understood their needs, potential, and limits, and was able to combine strict discipline with a high level of tolerance. All this permitted him to expect and receive from them performance on the highest level, year after year.⁶² In addition, Caesar was a remarkable literary talent. Cicero appreciated him as a brilliant orator and, based on his *De analogia*, as an expert in language style and the purity of the Latin language.⁶³ His published war reports (the *Gallic War*) received high praise for their unadorned elegance and precision of expression.⁶⁴ His achievements and qualities as a politician are debatable. His uncompromising anti-conservative stance, lack of patience, quick anger, and readiness to do things alone if he ran into resistance made many enemies and prevented his lasting success. But he was one of very few senators in his time who were able to recognize the profound and urgent problems the Roman state was facing, and to propose solutions. Politically, he was in several ways a visionary.⁶⁵

Against all this stands his record of atrocities committed in Gaul. For centuries

⁵⁸ *BC* 1.7–9; Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 30; Plutarch, *Caesar* 32.7–8; Eckstein 2004 (quote: 279); for a fuller treatment, see Raaflaub 1974: 1–225.

⁵⁹ 1.44.12.

⁶⁰ Cicero’s correspondence with his brother Quintus, a legate in Caesar’s army, and many other items in Cicero’s letter corpus offer plenty of examples. See Shackleton Bailey 1972 and, overall, Osgood 2009.

⁶¹ See 1.46.3.

⁶² On Caesar as a general, see Goldsworthy 1998; Le Bohec 2001; Rosenstein 2009; Potter 2010; de Blois 2017.

⁶³ Cicero, *Brutus* 252–61. *De analogia*: Garcea 2012.

⁶⁴ Hirtius, *BG* 8 *praef.* 4–5; Cicero, *Brutus* 262. For discussions of all of Caesar’s works, see Grillo and Krebs 2018.

⁶⁵ See the biographies cited in n.23; in addition, Raaflaub 2010.

these acts were ignored or minimized, perhaps because many of Caesar's readers considered the brutality of war an unchangeable fact or took imperialism and its devastation of native populations for granted.⁶⁶ Today we are more sensitive in considering these problems. As said earlier, some scholars even accuse him of genocide.

6. "Genocide" and "War Crimes"

Before we accept this accusation we have to ask whether the label "genocide" is justified in this case. The term is modern, created by the historian Raphael Lemkin in reaction to Nazi crimes in German-occupied Europe, more specifically those we categorize as "holocaust crimes."⁶⁷ The term is also applied to the case of the Armenians earlier in the twentieth century, increasingly to that of native nations in America's conquest of the west and Spain's conquest of the New World and, more recently, to cases in Uganda, former Yugoslavia, Myanmar, and China.⁶⁸

The crime of genocide is defined by the *UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (adopted in 1948 and entered into force in 1951):

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with the intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁶⁹

The intention to destroy is thus crucial, while it matters less whether the intention was fully or partly realized. Importantly, of the four categories mentioned in the UN Convention, only "national group" fits Caesar's case, in the sense that his opponents and victims were Gallic and German nations. Despite the prejudices invoked by the term "barbarian" and despite Caesar's efforts to "otherize" Gauls and especially Germans through stereotypical negative character traits (the fickle Gauls, the arrogant, treacherous Germans), Caesar did not fight or annihilate Gauls or Germans because of their ethnic, racial, or religious difference from Romans.⁷⁰ Recognizing the lack of precision in the extant texts and the difficulty of applying to ancient events a modern definition that is based on legal concepts, some scholars propose modifications, such as "genocidal massacre."⁷¹

The case of the Eburones (section 4 episode 6) certainly meets the UN criteria, and here Caesar himself expresses the intended annihilation: "that the nation and its very name would be eradicated for the terrible crime they had committed."⁷² In the case of the Carnutes (episode 7) his choice of time (the coldest winter) and method of proceeding leave no doubt about his intention. Although different, the cases of Ariovistus (episode 1) and the Usipetes and Tencteri (described at the beginning) qualify as well. Caesar did not tolerate these Germans in Gaul. Since they refused his proposals and did not leave voluntarily, he destroyed them through military defeat and wholesale massacre.

⁶⁶ See James 2013 for corresponding tendencies among archaeologists.

⁶⁷ His texts are collected in Lemkin 2012. On genocide: Kiernan 2007, 2014; Bloxham and Moses 2010; Jones 2011; Rubinstein 2014; Carmichael and Maguire 2015; Konstan 2021; Taylor 2021. Genocide in antiquity: van Wees 2010, 2016. More generally, on Roman atrocities: Westington 1938; on Caesar's massacres: Powell 1998.

⁶⁸ See relevant chapters in Bloxham and Moses 2010.

⁶⁹ <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf> (accessed May 27, 2020).

⁷⁰ On Caesar and barbarians, see Burns 2003: 88–139; on Roman depictions of barbarians, Ferris 2000.

⁷¹ Quesada-Sanz 2015.

⁷² 6.34.8.

“Virtual killing” could be achieved by eliminating a group socially through collective enslavement: Orlando Patterson calls slavery “social death.”⁷³ If we include this in the definition of “genocide,” the Atuatuaci and Veneti, who broke their oaths of surrender, chose war, were defeated and sold collectively into slavery, are also victims of genocide.⁷⁴

Other cases do not fit the definition. The disastrous losses of the Helvetii, Belgae, and Nervii occurred in battles in two of which Caesar’s army suffered heavy casualties as well.⁷⁵ The massacre of the population of Avaricum (modern Bourges), including the aged, women, and children, and of thousands of additional defenders was caused, Caesar claims, by the soldiers who ran amok because of exhaustion and anger and in revenge for their compatriots massacred by the Carnutes at Cenabum.⁷⁶ Caesar had not ordered this—whatever he thought (and we might think) about it. As the UN definition shows, genocidal intention is crucial, and such intention requires a superior design or order.⁷⁷ Moreover, Caesar besieged Avaricum not to annihilate its population but to gain a major victory in an ongoing war, and Avaricum was only one of many towns of the Bituriges.⁷⁸

Nor does the case of the defenders of Uxellodunum in 51 fit the definition. There, the townspeople, relying on their town’s impregnable location, had taken in a band of some 2,000 Gauls whom Roman troops had deterred from raiding the Roman province. Caesar cut off the town’s water supply and forced it to surrender. Believing that, in order to be able to fully pacify the country, he needed to set a severe example to discourage imitators, he had the hands of all arms-bearing men cut off but allowed them to live.⁷⁹ The intention was punishment, not extinction.

The case of the Mandubii in late 52 is again different. Alesia, their town, was occupied by Vercingetorix and his army and besieged by Caesar. Running out of supplies, the defenders ejected all those who were useless as fighters, including the families of the Mandubii. Caesar refused to let them pass through his fortification and feed them. He was trying to starve Vercingetorix into submission and was unwilling to relieve his supply problems by allowing part of the population to escape. The Mandubii supposedly perished in the no man’s land between the town and Caesar’s fortifications.⁸⁰ As so often in history, innocent people here became the victims of a brutal war.

Still, in all these episodes Caesar’s willingness to tolerate or encourage brutality is abundantly clear. And, as we saw, without the slightest doubt Caesar can rightfully be accused of multiple cases of genocide. Needless to say, his actions in Gaul also violated much that is barred in modern conventions limiting abuses in warfare (the so-called Geneva Conventions adopted in 1929 and 1949), and represent “war crimes” as they are defined in Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in The Hague in 2002:

- (i) Willful killing;
- (ii) Torture or inhuman treatment...;
- (iii) Willfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;
- (iv) Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly; ...
- (vii) Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;
- (viii) Taking of hostages.⁸¹

⁷³ Patterson 1982. For further discussion, see Bodel and Scheidel 2017.

⁷⁴ Atuatuaci: 2.30–33; Veneti: 3.7–16. Collective enslavement as genocide: van Wees 2016: 20.

⁷⁵ Helvetii: 1.26.5, 29.3. Belgae: section 4 episode 2. Nervii: 2.28.1–2.

⁷⁶ 7.28.4–5. Supposedly, only 800 of 40,000 survived. Cenabum: above at n. 56.

⁷⁷ See van Wees 2010: 243.

⁷⁸ 7.15.1–2.

⁷⁹ 8.30–44.

⁸⁰ 7.78; Dio Cassius 40.40.2–4.

⁸¹ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf> (accessed May 28, 2020).

All this is undeniable. It is very important to fully realize it. We have every right to condemn Caesar for his appalling record of brutality in Gaul, even if, as we shall see, it is perhaps too simple to label him “a very bad man.”⁸² Seeing in 2020 statues defaced and falling that are tied to an abominable past of slavery and a civil war unleashed to preserve it, we might find it just that in a Belgian town a statue of Caesar suffered the same fate.⁸³ A call, presumably tongue-in-cheek, to rename the months July and August that, the author emphasizes, honor two of the most murderous despots in world history, appeared in July 2020 in a letter to a newspaper.⁸⁴

Yet we should also be aware that such modern judgements are based on ideas and agreements that emerged in history only after two millennia of further brutal warfare and some especially outrageous abuses.⁸⁵ After all, it took the horrendous suffering witnessed by Henry Dunant in 1859 in the aftermath of the battle of Solferino in northern Italy, one of the largest battles in history, to stimulate the foundation of the International Red Cross, and the mass-murdering world wars to create the League of Nations and the United Nations.⁸⁶ Nothing like this existed in the ancient world, even if in fourth-century BCE Greece various (ultimately unsuccessful) attempts were made to secure peace through large-scale international “common peace” agreements.⁸⁷ Greeks and Romans were also aware of “norms or laws of war” that were concerned with basic issues (such as the protection of heralds and ambassadors or the need to fight just wars) but, as Adriaan Lanni emphasizes, “did not encompass humanitarian ideals” and “were indifferent to considerations of mercy and the protection of noncombatants.”⁸⁸ Nor did they try to prevent the mass killing of defeated enemies which was in fact quite common.⁸⁹ And they did not apply to wars against “barbarians.”

7. Why Not Simply Eliminate Caesar from the Latin Curriculum?

The unsettling aspects of Caesar’s warmaking raise the stark problems that I sketched early in this paper and every reader of his works must confront. In particular, in the USA, together with Vergil, Caesar provides the Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum of high school Latin. For teachers the question of how to deal with this bloodthirsty author must be a challenge. Students on all levels, who, I hope, today are more critical of the material that is presented to them than they were in my own student years, will and should ask penetrating questions. And we, their teachers, should be able to answer them.

Of course, a simple solution that seems to be mentioned not infrequently would be to eliminate Caesar from the Latin curriculum. I fully understand those who advocate this solution. Right now, of course, high school teachers have no choice, but this must not keep us from thinking both about alternatives and about why it might still be worth reading Caesar. I

⁸² Thus Kulikowski 2020, reviewing O’Donnell 2019 who writes about the *Gallic War*: Undeniably, “this is a great work of literature, one of the greatest, and at the same time, ... it is a bad man’s book about his own bad deeds. I think it is the best bad man’s book ever written” (viii). See further sections 8–9 below.

⁸³ I thank Elizabeth Baer and Jennifer Yates for alerting me to this case: https://www.lavenir.net/cnt/dmf20200614_01483015/une-statue-de-jules-cesar-vandalisee-a-zottegem?fbclid=IwAR2j4vAxbIVNU29726Ci7kbNKESE7JZSdpXJb1IjaSvREj4mDdGg-b9-So (accessed July 20, 2020).

⁸⁴ https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/mailbag/letter-if-you-want-to-be-politically-correct-rename-calendar/article_f6206dc5-6385-58ec-b31e-76fdd2b4ce39.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share (accessed July 26, 2020). I thank Francis Oates for this information.

⁸⁵ Kiernan 1999 examines the suitability of the concept of genocide for pre-modern events.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Boissier 1985; Northedge 1986; Peters 2015, respectively.

⁸⁷ Common peace (*koinē eirēnē*): Ryder 1965; Jehne 1994; chapters by J. Wilker and P. Low in Wilker 2012: 92–117, 118–34.

⁸⁸ Lanni 2008: 470; see also Ober 1996; Bederman 2001: 242–63. On just war and the role of the priesthood of the *fetiales* in Rome, see Wiedemann 1986; Rich 2011. Rüpke 1990: 97–124, followed by Ando 2011, argues vigorously for a late republican invention of the fetial ritual and law and its subsequent retrojection into early Roman history.

⁸⁹ See van Wees 2011.

am concerned here with the latter and suggest that, by ignoring Caesar and thus choosing an “easy” way out, we miss an opportunity and avoid an important challenge.

For Caesar’s *Gallic War* is about much more than war and atrocities. Apart from the ethnographies that figure prominently in the AP selections, this work presents to us elements of a cultural portrait of Rome at the end of the Republic: it shows us an eminent Roman’s concept of what a general and statesman should be and what a Roman citizen ideally was, what his qualities were, and how he behaved—in sharp contrast to what “barbarians” (and, in the *Civil War*, Romans acting like barbarians) were.⁹⁰ Anticipating Anchises’ famous words in *Aeneid* 6 (quoted below), Caesar also lets us perceive his view of Rome’s cultural mission in the world: to conquer a chaotic and threatening barbarian world, to impose civilization (*mores*) on the defeated, and thus to create a well-ordered, peaceful world.⁹¹

These aspects may primarily be of historical interest, but they are significant in offering an inside perspective on the society that produced masterworks in literature (of all genres) and art (which influenced cultural achievements into our own time) and an empire that eventually provided the foundations for hugely consequential developments in religion, law, and other areas of civilization. In addition, these aspects invite critical analysis. I give but one example. One of the most fascinating ways in which the “program” of Rome’s cultural mission is highlighted in the *Gallic War* is the Gauls’ fight to preserve their ancestral liberty. Rather than suppressing this noble motive, Caesar lets Gallic leaders emphasize it frequently, culminating in the pan-Gallic war against Caesar in 52. At Alesia Critognatus, a respected leader but notorious for proposing cannibalism to ward off starvation, argues:

What do [the Romans] want, except to settle in the fields and cities of the Gauls and bind the people in slavery forever? ... They have never waged war for any other reasons than these ... Look at our neighbor ‘Gaul’ which has been reduced to a province, had its rights and laws transformed, been made subject to their government, and is oppressed by perpetual slavery.⁹²

Vercingetorix, offering after his defeat to be extradited to Caesar, insists that he has undertaken this war only “to serve the cause of the common freedom.”⁹³

Since freedom was a Roman value too, this aspect of Caesar’s narrative might well have raised sympathy for the Gauls.⁹⁴ Caesar surely was aware of this, and he does not miss opportunities to undercut such proclamations.⁹⁵ His main point, however, seems to be that the Gauls’ subjection for the sake of realizing a safe, peaceful, and orderly world required the suppression of their ancestral liberty: here a great value needed to be sacrificed for the sake of an even higher one.⁹⁶ Again we think of Anchises’ words in the *Aeneid*:

You, Roman, remember to rule the people with your command (*imperium*)—these will be your skills—to impose civilization (*morem*) on peace, to spare the subjected and to fight down the arrogant.⁹⁷

This resonates with us as we contemplate tensions between ideology and reality: in particular, we might think of the contradictions between our own country’s longstanding advocacy

⁹⁰ See Raafaub 2018: 22–27. Romans acting like barbarians: Raafaub 1974: 293–307. Ethnographies: Shadee 2017.

⁹¹ See at n. 96 below.

⁹² 7.77.14–16. “Our neighbor ‘Gaul’” refers to the Transalpine province.

⁹³ 7.89.1–2; see also, e.g., 5.7.8; 5.27.6; 7.1.5, and Hirtius in 8.1.3; Seager 2003: 22–26.

⁹⁴ On Roman concepts of freedom, see Wirszubski 1950; Bleicken 1972.

⁹⁵ Barlow 1998. Critognatus’ “barbaric” proposal of cannibalism (7.77.12–13) offers an example.

⁹⁶ Raafaub 2018: 22–23.

⁹⁷ Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.851–53 (my trans.). See also Cicero’s arguments in *On the Consular Provinces* (at n. 28 above).

of liberty, democracy, and human rights abroad and some imperial aspects of its foreign policies as well as the troubled history of failures to realize these ideals in attitudes and politics at home.

Caesar's text thus challenges us to think about ourselves while reading his text. The categorization of the enemy or "other" as "barbarians" involves a plethora of prejudices and notions of superiority vs. inferiority that, however they are expressed, we can trace in recent history and the present as well, of the world and our own country.⁹⁸ A thorough reading of Caesar's text in its context allows us to recognize and dissect the techniques of subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) propaganda and to become alert to its use in our media.

The same is true for Caesar's war atrocities. Again without condoning them, we should be aware that, in committing them, he was but a link in a long chain that stretched from the ancient Near East to Greece and Rome, and far beyond.⁹⁹ In fact, it reaches well into our own time. War is always brutal. Despite modern conventions and the efforts of world organizations, it still does not spare the innocent or refrain from wholesale massacres, even if their scale may stay below those reported by Caesar. So, rather than cutting Caesar from the Latin curriculum, we might use Caesar's text to help our students learn from negative examples, as they may already be used to doing in other cases, and raise their critical awareness of the immorality and inhumanity of war and of the fundamental injustice of extolling military might and its facile use as a political tool—as world leaders, including our own, have been prone to do. History cannot be a *magistra vitae* (life's teacher) if we look only at its edifying aspects but fail to confront its ugly faces.¹⁰⁰

Finally, to invoke only one analogy, if we banish Caesar from our curricula should we not also desist from reading the *Iliad* with our students because the thoughts and actions of both sides in that epic war focus on annihilating the other?¹⁰¹ Would it not be better to help our students enhance their critical thinking through insights gained from discussing this seminal and deeply humane work not least, but emphatically, against the inhumane aspects of its content?

8. Understanding Caesar's Atrocities by Contextualizing Them

When dealing with Caesar's war atrocities we need to gain a fuller understanding by placing them in their broad historical and cultural context. In doing so, I emphasize again that understanding does not mean condoning or justifying. We may disapprove of an ancient leader's actions, even most vigorously, while still trying to explain them from the perspective of their time and culture.

To begin with, the German holocaust policy was based on an ideology that was independent of war, although its realization was greatly facilitated by war. The Armenian genocide too had a long prehistory of persecution and oppression; it was not centrally linked to war, but exacerbated and facilitated by it.¹⁰² Unlike these and some other cases of modern genocide but comparable to those committed during Spain's conquests in the New World, all of Caesar's "genocidal actions" took place in the context of war.¹⁰³ Of course, this does not mean that war justifies genocide, but this context is relevant. Ancient wars, especially against foreign peoples, knew few moral constraints, and these concerned diplomacy rather than fighting and killing. Cato based his proposal to extradite Caesar to his victims not (or much less) on the massacre of the Usipetes and Tencteri as such than on the belief that he committed it and held envoys captive during a truce.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Caesar claims to have

⁹⁸ See above at n. 70.

⁹⁹ See below at n. 117.

¹⁰⁰ *Historia magistra vitae*: Cicero, *De oratore* 2.9.36.

¹⁰¹ See below at n. 118.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Longerich 2010; Hovannisian 1992, respectively.

¹⁰³ Genocide in Spain's New World conquests: Kiernan 2007: 72–100.

¹⁰⁴ See above at n. 7; esp. Plutarch, *Cato minor* 51.1–5, discussed by Powell 1998: 124–28, and Pelling 2011: 251 on Plutarch, *Caesar* 22.2–3.

reacted with extreme violence only when forced by enemy aggression, treason, the violation of oaths, or extreme challenges to his honor code. All his genocidal actions fit this pattern. Those of Ariovistus, the Atuatuaci, Veneti, Eburones, and Carnutes are obvious.¹⁰⁵ For example, it was not the initial resistance of the Atuatuaci but their violation of the conditions and oath of surrender that in Caesar's view deprived them of any further claim to mercy and justified their "virtual annihilation" by collective enslavement.¹⁰⁶

Only the case of the Usipetes and Tencteri (discussed in section 1) offers cause to hesitate. Caesar is adamant that here too the other side was guilty, not least of an unprovoked attack during a truce. Moreover, he had offered the two nations a way out of the confrontation that would have strengthened them in their defense against the Suebi. Still, Caesar's justification seems more specious, his presentation of some of the events evasive, and his prejudicial intention to destroy the enemy difficult to overlook.¹⁰⁷

Another aspect to consider is that Caesar was a typical Roman and lived in a society whose values and sensitivities differed greatly from those in our own time—even if, given the current deep and pervasive polarizations in many countries and especially in our own, it seems difficult to make general statements about values that are typical of our society and time. At any rate, the events that gave rise to the new term "genocide" and to the conventions discussed above (section 6) happened only in the mid-nineteenth and twentieth century.¹⁰⁸ Recent political and military actions, including some of our own country, reflect regrettably little respect for the ethical principles we might believe in. Undoubtedly and fortunately, modern sensitivities are more highly developed than ever, but if war crimes in Vietnam and Iraq have come under intense scrutiny it is probably the presence of journalists and social media in the war zones as much as moral revulsion in the military and among politicians that made investigations unavoidable. By contrast, although news from Gaul reached Rome by other channels as well, it was Caesar himself who reported the events to the Senate and large audiences in Rome and Italy in all their gruesome details.¹⁰⁹

The attitude of most senators toward such matters is illustrated well by Cicero who in 56 invoked the impact of Pompey's victories in the east as a model for Caesar's intentions in Gaul: "There is no people that has not been weakened to such an extent that it hardly exists anymore, or tamed so much that it holds its peace, or pacified so completely that it is happy about our victory and rule."¹¹⁰ We should note also that at the end of 55, the year that featured the crossing into German territory and Britain but also the extinction of the two German nations, the Senate decreed a record number of thanksgiving days in honor of Caesar's achievement.¹¹¹ As multiple literary texts and inscriptions from the Republic and early Empire show, "the Romans thought that conquest was a good and glorious thing." They "had a penchant for collecting and publicizing lists of the names of peoples or places" they had subjected or destroyed. Caesar's long lists of nations arrayed against him and eventually defeated emphasize the same point. His actions and justifications were perfectly attuned to Roman ideology.¹¹²

Moreover, Caesar operated in a country that was mostly unknown and hostile. He was often confronted by superior forces. Under these circumstances, I suspect, generals far beyond antiquity would have considered it vital to include in their arsenal distrust, preventive brutality, and exemplary punishment as a deterrent.¹¹³ Caesar knew how to use both the carrot and the stick.

¹⁰⁵ Section 4 above, episodes 1, 3, 4, 6, 7.

¹⁰⁶ 2.32–33.

¹⁰⁷ See n. 7 and n. 163 below.

¹⁰⁸ See at n. 85 above.

¹⁰⁹ See at n. 60 above for correspondence; on Caesar's readers and audience, see Wiseman 1998.

¹¹⁰ *On the Consular Provinces* 12.31 (my trans.). On Cicero's attitude toward imperialism, see Stevenson 2013: 183–87.

¹¹¹ 4.38.5.

¹¹² E.g., 2.4.4–10; 7.75.2–5. See Mattern 1999: 162–94 (quote: 164).

¹¹³ So too Powell 1998: 136 n.51.

Arthur Eckstein describes the Mediterranean world of the last centuries BCE as an anarchic jungle where might was right and the strongest prevailed. Rome had risen to rule in the Mediterranean through constant warfare. War had molded Roman society, social relations, and values. Uncounted numbers of victims of Roman conquests had been killed (in battles and massacres) or enslaved; in Italy these slaves served as an indispensable motor for the economy from which especially the elite profited enormously. Carthage and Corinth stand as examples of large, thriving cities that the Romans brutally destroyed in war.¹¹⁴

The following example is extreme but not untypical. The Senate had granted the army of Aemilius Paullus, the victor over the Macedonian king Perseus at Pydna in 168 BCE, the booty from the cities of Epirus that had supported the king. In a carefully coordinated surprise action, based on deception, 70 towns were sacked. Out of the enormous booty every soldier and cavalryman received a reward amounting to almost double their annual pay. 150,000 persons were enslaved.¹¹⁵ Against this background, Caesar's actions do not seem so unusual. In fact, without having the space to demonstrate this here, I feel confident in stating that not one of Caesar's war atrocities does not have antecedents in the history of Roman imperialism before his time.¹¹⁶

Moreover, texts and images from the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek world illustrate the same pattern. The biblical "ban law" ordered the Hebrews to destroy completely (persons, animals, and property) some of the enemies they conquered.¹¹⁷ In the *Iliad*, Menelaus is about to take a Trojan captive for ransom, when Agamemnon intervenes:

Not one of them
Escapes sheer death at our hands, not even
The boy who is still in his mother's womb.
Every Trojan dies, unmourned and unmarked.¹¹⁸

Indeed, the complete extermination of Troy by killing the men, enslaving the women and children, and destroying the town is the goal of the Achaean heroes and, conversely, the complete destruction of the Achaean army and fleet that of the Trojans in this seminal work that is widely admired as foundational for European literature, with a cultural impact that reaches into our own time.¹¹⁹ In the unquestioned understanding of Greeks and Romans, the victors had the right to deal with the defeated and their property as they wished.¹²⁰

9. The Other Side of the Coin: Caesar the Clement Victor

There is yet another answer to the question I posed—one I consider particularly important because it sets a positive image against the negative one. This requires us, however, to be able to look, so-to-speak, at two sides of the same coin simultaneously and to acknowledge that history is never entirely one-dimensional: historical personalities no less than modern ones are complex, neither all good nor all bad, even if some verge close to one or the other extreme. Caesar was not only a typical but also a very untypical Roman. What made him exceptional among his fellow Roman conquerors, though, is not so much that he offered an enemy the

¹¹⁴ Eckstein 2008. War and Roman Society; Harris 1979: chs. 1–2; Raaflaub 1996. War captives; Harris 1979: 80–85. Carthage: e.g., Appian, *Roman History* 8 (*Punic Wars*) 74–136; Goldsworthy 2000. Corinth: Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 7.16.7–10; Dio Cassius 21 (Zonaras 9.31).

¹¹⁵ Livy 45.33–34; on Pydna and its aftermath, see Lendon 2005: 193–211.

¹¹⁶ See Westington 1938. No recent study is known to me.

¹¹⁷ As an example from the Ancient Near East, see Ussishkin 1982 (reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh, depicting the siege of Lachish during the king's campaign against Judah in 701 BCE; also accessible at google.com under "Lachish reliefs"). On the ban law in the Hebrew Bible see Niditch 1993: chs. 1–2; Greenberg 2007. Overall, see van Wees 2010, 2011, 2016.

¹¹⁸ *Iliad* 6.57–60; cf. 22.62–68 (trans. S. Lombardo).

¹¹⁹ On the "ideal of annihilation" in the *Iliad*, see van Wees 1992: 183–90; also Gottschall 2008.

¹²⁰ E.g., Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5.73.

opportunity to avoid war and calamity or that he sometimes treated defeated enemies with moderation. Others had done this too. Scipio Africanus the Elder (the victor over Hannibal) and the Younger (the brutal destroyer of Carthage), Pompey, and others were credited with having applied moderation in memorable cases or to memorable effect.¹²¹ Livy (of course writing after Caesar) even lets the Carthaginians enhance their peace appeal to Rome by emphasizing that it had enlarged its empire almost more by sparing the defeated than by the victories themselves.¹²²

The crucial difference is that these earlier generals had used clemency occasionally. Caesar elevated it to a principle or preferred *modus operandi*—although, if informative sources had survived to let us know more about his predecessors, Caesar might appear somewhat less exceptional than he does now. Several extant sources, however, recognize the singular merit of Caesar's focus on clemency. Cicero's use of clemency in connection with Caesar increases in his correspondence after the spring of 49 and in his "Caesarian" speeches of 46–45. Pliny the Elder criticizes Caesar for his bloody victories and for boasting about the numbers of enemies killed, and overall rates Pompey's achievement higher, but he praises Caesar's "peculiar distinction of the clemency in which (even to the point of subsequent regret) he surpassed all men; also he afforded an example of magnanimity that no other can parallel."¹²³

Yes, peace was possible only if Caesar offered it and on Caesar's terms and, yes, his interference in Gaul was, despite all his justifications, motivated by only one cause, and that was Rome's imperialist drive, compounded by Caesar's ambition and need for victories.¹²⁴ But all this corresponded to the harsh reality of war and imperialism throughout the ancient world and far beyond. Roman triumphs were awarded for great victories, based on numbers (enemies killed and towns destroyed). In the dedicatory inscription on the shrine of Minerva that Pompey built with the spoils of his eastern wars, he boasted of having in those wars "routed, scattered, slain, or received the surrender of 12,183,000 people, sunk or taken 846 ships, [and] received the capitulation of 1,538 towns and forts."¹²⁵ The "objective" criterion of 5,000 enemies killed, long considered decisive but now debated, cannot be totally off the mark.¹²⁶ Mary Beard begins her exploration of the Roman triumph with a quote from Seneca that offers an analogy: "Petty sacrilege is punished; sacrilege on a grand scale is the stuff of triumphs."¹²⁷ Caesar's care in informing his readers of the masses of enemies defeated and killed, both throughout his war narrative and in his triumphal display in 46, shows that he was much aware of the significance of statistics of names and numbers.¹²⁸

Hence it is all the more remarkable that in his quest for victory and conquest Caesar sought the destruction of his opponents only in specific and, in his view, clearly justifiable cases, when the nature of the enemy's actions left him no choice. Clemency, one might say, was Caesar's default action. He speaks remarkably often of it, even as his habit and character trait. Already in 57 he lets the Atuatucae appeal to his clemency as a widely known fact: "if Caesar, in his merciful kindness (*clementia et mansuetudo*), about which they had heard from others, decided to spare them." In his response, Caesar describes his decision to do so as

¹²¹ Scipio the Elder: Polybius 15.17.3–7; Livy 33.12.7. Scipio the Younger: Polybius 10.17.6–16; Pompey: Cicero, *Verrine* 2.5.153; Plutarch, *Pompey* 20.8.

¹²² Livy 30.42.17; cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.853 (at n. 97 above). On clemency in Roman foreign policy before Caesar, see Weinstock 1971: 234–37.

¹²³ Pliny, *Natural History* 7.92–93 (trans H. Rackham); cf. Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 75.

¹²⁴ As explained in section 3 above. For Caesar's role in the history of Roman imperialism, see Stevenson 2013: 187–92. For the language of imperialism, Lavan 2013.

¹²⁵ Pliny, *Natural History* 7.97; cf. Plutarch, *Pompey* 45.2–4.

¹²⁶ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 2.8.1; for discussion, Beard 2007: 209–11.

¹²⁷ Seneca, *Letter* 87.23; Beard 2007: 1. See Beard 199–214 on the criteria for a triumph.

¹²⁸ Triumph: Pliny, *Natural History* 7.92 (above at n. 13). Size of enemy armies and numbers of enemies killed: e.g., 1.29.2; 2.4.5–10; 2.28.2; 4.15.3; 7.75; also 8.29.4. See, on this kind of statistics, Wiseman 1985: 1–10; Williams 2001: 38–40; Pelling 2011: 211.

his habit (*consuetudo*).¹²⁹ In 51 at Uxellodunum, Hirtius writes, Caesar “was aware that his merciful disposition (*lenitas*) was known to everyone, and he did not need to be afraid that, if he acted more harshly than usual, it would be ascribed to his cruel character (*crudelitas naturae*).”¹³⁰ The vocabulary Caesar uses for this attitude is varied: *clementia* twice in Book 2, otherwise “mildness” (*lenitas*, *mansuetudo*), “commiseration” (*miser cordia*), even *humanitas*, and several other terms.¹³¹ Whatever the words, this attitude was expressed in deeds. Two examples must suffice here.

After their capitulation in 58, he sent the Helvetii back to their country and ordered them to rebuild their towns. Because they had no supplies left to survive the winter, he instructed the nearest nation in his province to assist them. After the surrender of the Nervii who had suffered horrendous losses in the battle at the Sambre in 57, “Caesar wished to make it known that he was merciful in dealing with miserable people and suppliants. He thus took great care for their safety,” ordering their neighbors to refrain from exploiting their weakness.¹³²

Of course, in all these cases Caesar’s clemency was also driven by ulterior motives. Resettlement of the Helvetii in their own country would prevent German invaders from taking it over.¹³³ To help the Nervii recover from their disastrous defeat might entice others to avoid risking a war and battle, while the punishment of the Atuatucae and the men of Uxellodunum clearly was meant to deter imitation by others. And, of course, clemency, however termed, is to be understood within its Roman parameters. In war, it inevitably implied a massive power difference between giver and recipient. Although the definition Seneca offers in *On Clemency* is far too restrictive to be applied universally in the mid-first century BCE, for the conditions under which Caesar operated the essentials are valid: whenever a person who has power over another person, group, or nation to punish, take vengeance, oppress, or kill does not use this power, he demonstrates clemency.¹³⁴ Hence, in Roman perception, Caesar’s decision to accept the Atuatucae’s first capitulation without doing them any harm—after they had demonstrated their support for the Nervii and actively resisted his siege operations at their town—counted as clemency.¹³⁵ To use modern parallels, the allied victors’ treatment of Germany in the Versailles Treaty of 1919 was the opposite, the American help to rebuild Germany after World War II a shining example of Roman-style clemency—whatever the ulterior motives behind these policies.¹³⁶

Caesar’s principle of applying clemency whenever possible was even more visible during the civil war against Pompey. Many feared that both leaders would imitate the cruelty Sulla had exhibited in the civil war of the 80s. Of Caesar Cicero wrote: “You may well be afraid of a massacre, although nothing would be less in Caesar’s interest if he wants his victory and personal power to last.”¹³⁷ But Caesar surprised everybody and turned public opinion in his favor, when, at the first opportunity he had, he dismissed unharmed all senators and equestrians who had been fighting against him.¹³⁸ Cicero commented: “The truth is that any evil this Pisistratus has not done is earning him as much popularity as if he were to have stopped someone else doing it ... They are delighted with his deceitful clemency (*insidiosa clementia*) and fear the other’s wrath.”¹³⁹ Caesar himself wrote to two of his supporters:

¹²⁹ 2.31.4, 32.1.

¹³⁰ 8.44.1 (see above at n. 79).

¹³¹ *Clementia*: 2.14.5; 2.31.4. Variety of terms typical of this period: Konstan 2005: 341–42.

¹³² Helvetii: 1.28.3; Nervii: 2.28.3.

¹³³ 1.28.4.

¹³⁴ See Seneca, *De clementia* 2.3.1. For discussion, see Konstan 2005.

¹³⁵ On Caesar’s clemency, see, e.g., Dahlmann 1967; Weinstock 1971: 233–43; Alföldi 1985: ch.5; Campi 1997, and especially Konstan 2005.

¹³⁶ See, e.g., Boemeker et al. 1998; Sharp 2011, and Hogan 1987; Schain 2001, respectively.

¹³⁷ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.22.1. Trans. here and below Shackleton Bailey 1978a, modified.

¹³⁸ *BC* 1.22–23; other spectacular acts of clemency: 1.72; 3.98.

¹³⁹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 8.16.2. “This Pisistratus” refers to the famous Athenian tyrant and characterizes Caesar as a tyrant; “the other” is Pompey.

I had already decided on a policy to demonstrate as much leniency as possible ... Let's try whether in this way we can regain the goodwill of all people and achieve lasting victory, because others have not been able by cruelty to escape hatred and to hold on to victory for any length of time—except only for Sulla whom I am not going to imitate. Let this be our new way of conquering: to protect ourselves by mercy and generosity (*misericordia et liberalitate*).¹⁴⁰

To Cicero he wrote: “You rightly surmise of me... that of all things I abhor cruelty... I am not disturbed by the fact that those whom I have released are said to have left the country in order to make war against me once more. Nothing pleases me better than that I should be true to my nature and they to theirs.”¹⁴¹ By 46, Cicero's initial skepticism had subsided: he too now spoke of Caesar's “mild and merciful disposition” (*mitis clemensque natura*).¹⁴²

Caesar was well aware that the civil war, in which he was fighting against Roman citizens, created conditions that differed massively from those of his Gallic campaigns.¹⁴³ Hence his frequent application of clemency in the Gallic wars, as his default action, as a principle, and as his character trait, seem all the more remarkable. His attitude is consistent throughout his wars.

Augustus followed his adoptive father—although only after the brutal phase of his life in the civil wars and proscriptions was over. In his *Res Gestae* (*Record of His Achievements*) he wrote: “As victor I spared the lives of all citizens who asked for mercy.”¹⁴⁴ The Senate honored him for this in 27 by the gift of the *clipeus virtutis*, a golden shield with the inscription “the shield of virtue, clemency, justice, and piety toward the gods and the fatherland”—the first formulation of the four cardinal virtues.¹⁴⁵ Henceforth, *clementia* was firmly established among the canonical virtues of the emperors.¹⁴⁶

Caesar has a good claim to have integrated *clementia* among the cardinal virtues, and probably of having consolidated these virtues in their soon-to-be canonical set.¹⁴⁷ This, then, would be the imaginary coin I mentioned at the beginning of this section. On the obverse it would display the head of *Clementia* or, as on a posthumous issue, the temple of *Clementia Caesaris* (Caesar's Clemency) vowed by the Senate but never built because of the honoree's assassination.¹⁴⁸ The reverse would feature the brutal conqueror, with a captive Gallic warrior and a mourning woman representing Gaul below a trophy (a victory monument).¹⁴⁹ Both images are linked: they represent two aspects of Caesar's complex war record.

10. Conclusion

In ancient Greek sources genocide was regarded as an ultimate punishment that could be legitimately inflicted when a community had committed a serious collective offense that called for such measures. In antiquity, Hans van Wees suggests, this view was most widely accepted during periods when states tried to preserve their long-established hegemony or expanded rapidly. Once they had established their control, very few further acts of genocide are attested. Yet, van Wees continues, genocide was always also, and sometimes mainly, “an act of ‘conspicuous destruction’ that served to display the power of the perpetrators

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 9.7C.1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 9.16.2.

¹⁴² Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 6.6.8. Trans. Shackleton Bailey 1978b.

¹⁴³ See *BC* 1.72; Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 75. For a brief summary of Caesar's political strategy in the civil war (explored fully in Raafaub 1974), see Raafaub 2003: 59–61.

¹⁴⁴ Augustus, *Res gestae* 3.1. For the text with explanations, see Brunt and Moore 1967; Cooley 2009.

¹⁴⁵ Augustus, *Res gestae* 34. On these virtues, see Weinstock 1971: 228–59; Galinsky 1996: 80–90.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g., Fears 1981; Classen 1991.

¹⁴⁷ Weinstock 1971: 228–30, 237–41.

¹⁴⁸ Cassius Dio 44.6.4; Weinstock 1971: 241–43; see, e.g., <https://100falcons.wordpress.com/2009/04/20/caesars-clemency/> (accessed July 12, 2020).

¹⁴⁹ Coin: <https://feminaeromanae.org/caesarcoins.html> (accessed July 14, 2020).

and to restore or enhance their ‘honor’.” Power and prestige were intimately linked. “Those who aimed for the highest possible status in the world order were least able to tolerate any challenge to their honor.”¹⁵⁰ Those who know Thucydides will think of the “Melian Dialogue,” the mega-power Athens’ confrontation with the tiny island of Melos that ended with the Melians’ annihilation.¹⁵¹

All this applies to Caesar too, whose name in the *Gallic War* always stands for the Roman people, the Roman state, and Roman honor. His “genocidal actions” in Gaul are typical of his expanding state and his society to which honor and prestige (*dignitas* that determined status and was primarily acquired in war) were among the highest values.¹⁵² Given this background, Caesar’s ability both to embrace and transcend this generally accepted pattern seems remarkable. He was at the same time a brutal conqueror and a lenient victor. His ability to make clemency one of his guiding principles and propagate it as such, even claim it as his character trait, has few, if any, parallels before his time.

When I talk of Caesar’s clemency I often encounter the objection that all this was nothing but propaganda. Undoubtedly, Caesar’s writings served his positive self-presentation and propaganda, and clemency had high propaganda value. But was what Caesar did *only* propaganda? Effective propaganda builds on a solid foundation of fact. What must be decisive is that Caesar’s words and actions fit together. He propagated his clemency but he also practiced it to an unprecedented extent.¹⁵³

The historian needs to understand and explain history, to judge it without prejudice. Caesar’s clemency offers us, in a brutal world of warfare and abuses, a positive example that we can use to get our students to think about the complexity of history and historical personalities and the difficulty of reconciling contradictory aspects of their lives and actions. We can both be disgusted with Caesar’s brutality and impressed by his clemency. We can acknowledge this tension and use it to convey valuable life lessons.

Appendix: Caesar vs. Migrants

Two of Caesar’s war atrocities concern German invaders (Ariovistus and the Usipetes and Tencteri). His first victory in Gaul decimated another migrating nation (the Helvetii). They all were on the move to find a better place to live. Inevitably, we are reminded of experiences in our own time, in both Europe and the US, with large-scale migrations of refugees and seekers of asylum and a better life. But the analogy is superficial and misleading.

In Caesar’s time the Rhine was not a firm demarcation line between Gauls and Germans. As Maureen Carroll observes, “the idea of a Gallic and a German nation is a Roman political and ideological construct.”¹⁵⁴ The differences were less clear-cut than Caesar makes them to be. While Gaul was predominantly Celtic, a few German nations had settled west of the Rhine.¹⁵⁵ It was natural for others to try to follow them. In much of Gaul the process of stable settlement and urbanization had progressed quite far.¹⁵⁶ This was not the case east of the Rhine. Gaul thus was attractive. West-Rhenanian Germans and their Gallic neighbors maintained close relations across the Rhine. In particular, the Gallic Treveri frequently appealed to Germans for help or hired them as mercenaries in their fight against Caesar.¹⁵⁷ Realizing that he could not possibly control large territories east of the Rhine, Caesar settled on a policy of deterrence and separation of Gauls and Germans along the

¹⁵⁰ Van Wees 2016: 34–35.

¹⁵¹ Thucydides 5.84–116.

¹⁵² Rosenstein 2006.

¹⁵³ See also Weinstock 1971: 239.

¹⁵⁴ Carroll 2017 (quote: 48).

¹⁵⁵ 2.3.4; 6.32.1; 8.7.5; 8.10.4 (although the latter could also refer to transrhenanian Germans). For discussion, see Carroll 2017.

¹⁵⁶ See Büchschütz 2017; Ralston 2017.

¹⁵⁷ 5.27.8; 5.55.1–2; 6.7.1–9.2; 8.45.1.

natural, though very porous, Rhine border.¹⁵⁸ This artificial separation helped support his claim of having pacified “all of Gaul.”¹⁵⁹

Ariovistus was a “condottiere” or warlord. Leader of the Triboci, he attracted followers from various nations, molded them into his own private army, hired out his services to Gallic leaders in their wars for supremacy, and then turned the tables on them, creating his own expanding fiefdom (centered in modern Alsace), where he was planning to settle the rapidly increasing number of his followers with their families. Allied with the Sequani, he gained a victory over their rivals, the Aedui, and exploited his power to appropriate large portions of Sequanian territory, while keeping the Aedui in check.¹⁶⁰ He ended up being as unwelcome in Gaul as Caesar was.

It seems strange that just a year before his confrontation with Caesar, when Ariovistus had long established his oppressive rule in southeastern Gaul, the Senate had recognized him as king and “friend of the Roman people”—upon the recommendation of the consul Caesar himself. Although being unresponsive to an Aeduan request for help in 61, the Senate in 59 may have hoped that this prestigious status would deter Ariovistus from continuing to attack another Roman “friend,” the Aedui.¹⁶¹ Now, in 58, however, Caesar had developed his own Gallic ambitions and saw an advantage in containing and, when negotiations failed, expelling the German rival, thereby fortifying his position of power and patronage in Gaul.¹⁶²

By contrast, according to Caesar, the Usipetes and Tencteri were entire nations that migrated under pressure.¹⁶³ Their intention too was to settle in Gaul, and some Gallic nations welcomed them—presumably hoping not least to use them as a potential reinforcement against Caesar.¹⁶⁴ Cassius Dio claims that an invitation by these Gauls had encouraged the Germans to cross the Rhine in the first place.¹⁶⁵ One would expect Caesar to mention this because it would have strengthened his case. If, as Cassius Dio also says, they had already entered the territory of the unreliable Treveri, Caesar had good reason to consider these Germans a danger to his efforts to consolidate his control over Gaul. At any rate, overall their role was similar to that of Ariovistus in that it was political: two large nations in one case, a coherent entity under a strong leader in the other, sought to settle on land taken in Gaul.

Moreover, the Romans’ traumatic fear of German invaders, rooted in disastrous defeats suffered on the part of migrating Cimbri and Teutoni in 113–105 and invoked by Caesar several times, must have increased the army’s willingness to show no mercy towards Germans and provided Caesar with an additional excuse to do the same.¹⁶⁶ Roman soldiers had also experienced the fierce warrior spirit of German women in two victorious battles against these Germans in 102 and 101.¹⁶⁷ We can thus understand Caesar’s motives and the willingness of his soldiers to engage in wholesale massacre, but understanding does not require us to condone it.

¹⁵⁸ Porous border: see previous note and 6.35–41.

¹⁵⁹ A claim first raised in 57 (2.35.1) and 56 (3.7.1; 3.28.1); also 8.1.1.

¹⁶⁰ 1.31–32. The victory over the Aedui at Magetobriga (1.31.12) dates to 61, at the latest. Ariovistus probably entered Gaul in 72–71.

¹⁶¹ The Aeduan leader Diviciacus had visited Rome in 61: 1.31.9; 6.12.5; Cicero, *On Divination* 1.90. Declaration as “friend”: 1.35.2. The issue came up in a parley between Caesar and Ariovistus: 1.43.4–5, 44.5. On “friendship” in Roman international relations, see Burton 2011.

¹⁶² The complaints of Gallic leaders (1.31–32) and the speeches at the parley between Caesar and Ariovistus (1.43–45) are overdrawn but their essence is probably correct; the latter were heard by several witnesses. *Contra* (though extreme): Walser 1956: 8–20. Containment: 1.35.3–4, 43.9.

¹⁶³ See the beginning of this paper.

¹⁶⁴ 4.6.3–4.

¹⁶⁵ Cassius Dio 39.47.1.

¹⁶⁶ 1.14.1–2; 1.33.4; 1.40.5; 2.4.2; 7.77.12–14.

¹⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Marius* 19.9; 27.2–3.

Both Ariovistus and the Usipetes and Tencteri are best described as harbingers of the much larger German migrations that threatened Roman frontiers from the mid-second century CE onward.¹⁶⁸ Neither episode thus fits the pattern of migrations of large numbers of individuals (persons or families) without central organization or leadership and with entirely personal motives that haunt our own time. But the comparison is useful in making us think and define the underlying problems more sharply.

Brown University
Kurt_Raaflaub@Brown.edu

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¹⁶⁸ See Burns 2003.

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Full Circle: Juvenal's Egyptians and the Return of the "Angry White Man" in *Satire 15*¹

NANCY SHUMATE

Abstract: Some critics have seen a softening of Juvenal's signature anger in the later satires, while others argue, on the contrary, that the *indignatio* animating the earlier poems resurfaces toward the end of the corpus. This paper supports the second position by comparing the characterization of speakers in the first six satires and in the fifteenth. In spite of its different setting and quasi-philosophical trappings, the (virtually) last poem's speaker emerges as a variation of the same reactionary character type so fully drawn in the first two books. The *Satires* are thus framed by prototypes of the grievance-driven "angry white man" of later eras.

Keywords: Juvenal; satire; identity; nationalism; othering; Romanness; persona.

One of the enduring questions of Juvenal criticism has centered on the relationship between the early and later satires, and in particular on whether the two groups of poems show continuity or divergence in terms of tone and voice. Does the signature angry indignation so evident in the first six satires persist to the bitter end of the corpus or, on the contrary, dissolve into resignation, philosophical detachment, or even high-minded altruism?² The Ur-analyst in this debate was Ribbeck, who argued in 1865 that there was such a shift in tone by Books 4 and 5, and especially in *Satires* 10 and 12 through 15, that the later poems must have been written by someone other than Juvenal. Among subsequent earlier scholars, Duff and de Decker followed in this vein, though not to the extent that they posited two separate authors. The latter explained the perceived difference as a sign of Juvenal's movement from the unvarnished expression of his own views in the earlier poems to increasingly elaborate rhetorical *tours de force* later on. Duff concurred that evolving satirical methods played a part in the shift that he too saw, while wondering about the role of "advancing years and failing powers" in softening Juvenal's bite. He was clear, however, in his conviction of a distinct change in tone: "Read the fifteenth satire after the first," he writes, "and the difference will seem astonishing."³

The specter of these earlier impressions of discontinuity hovers over the work of later critics who likewise identified a turn away from anger to its deflation or rejection, but now understood any variation in the satiric speaker's posture in terms of mid-century literary critical developments. Anderson, in two seminal articles from the 1960s, and later Braund are especially connected with the view that beginning with Book 3 (*Satires* 7 through 9), the poems move toward calm detachment, ironic distance, and even human empathy, albeit in fits and starts.⁴ Rather than looking for a change of heart in the author himself, however, Anderson argued that these variations depend on the particular *persona* or mask that the poet assumed in any given poem, as Juvenal experimented with different roles and characters in

¹ Some material in this article has been adapted from chs. 1 and 4 of Shumate (2006). The Latin text is that of Clausen (1959, rev. 1992); translations are mine unless otherwise noted. I am grateful to the anonymous reader for suggestions; any remaining errors and omissions are my own.

² There is general consensus that the *Satires* were composed and published in the second and third decades of the second century CE, in the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, with Book 1 probably appearing around 115 (but see Uden [2015, pp. 219–26], who argues for 100/101), and Book 5, the final book, after 127 (on internal evidence at *Satire* 15.27). There is no reason to believe that the *Satires* did not appear according to the order and book division that we have (Book 1=*Satires* 1–5; Book 2=*Satire* 6; Book 3=*Satires* 7–9; Book 4=*Satires* 10–12; Book 5=*Satires* 13–16).

³ Ribbeck (1865); de Decker (1913); Duff (1970, originally published 1898, pp. xxix–xxx).

⁴ Anderson (1962=1982, pp. 277–92 and 1964=1982, pp. 293–361) and Braund (1988).

the course of the *Satires* — a reading of Roman satire as performance art that has represented a major strain in modern scholarship. To many who subscribe to *persona* theory as well as “sincerity” holdouts, *Satires* 10 and 13 (from Books 4 and 5) have been seen as especially emblematic of the shift in tone: the former with its closing counsel to prefer “temperance, restraint, and equanimity” to destructive over-reaching, the latter with its speaker’s advice to Calvinus, who has been cheated out of a sum of money, to keep his angry response within bounds, replete with a dismissive swipe at the sort of *simplicitas* (13.35, in the sense of a naïve expectation of honesty) that had been affected as a virtue by the main character Umbricius in *Satire* 3. Though he cautioned the reader against being “taken in by [the] commonplace moralizing” in the ostensible appeal to equanimity in *Satire* 13, Morford still saw trenchant irony rather than *indignatio* as its operative mode, while Anderson glimpsed an almost Senecan *tranquillitas* in Book 5 as a whole.⁵

To these and like-minded critics, the culmination of this turn away from anger is often located in *Satire* 15, the last complete poem in the corpus — a disapproving tale of inter-village religious conflict in Egypt whose outcome is a sudden paroxysm of cannibalism. With its shocked condemnation of the destructive *ira* of the Egyptians and lengthy coda on the power of human compassion, *Satire* 15 seems to represent a final critique and rejection of the emotions that had animated the speakers in and of the poems of the first two books. Looking beyond the vehemence of the poem’s excoriation of the Egyptians, critics have focused on the emotional appeal to human ties that occupies its second half, suggesting that the elaboration of a positive vision to balance the initial hostility unleashed against the miscreants gives it a very different orientation from that of the entirely negative screeds of *Satires* 1 through 6. In this view, as Keane puts it, “*humanitas*, rather than misanthropy, is Juvenal’s new guiding principle” in the end.⁶

Considering the same texts, others have seen a very different trajectory; in their view, rather than dissipating, the speaker’s *ira* and *indignatio* go underground and regroup for a second appearance as the collection draws to a close. In this reading, even in *Satire* 13 with its apparent critique of anger, the address to Calvinus has a harsh and unforgiving edge, making it consistent with the note of bitterness and disillusionment that runs through many of the later poems, even if the outright rage of Books 1 and 2 has been muted.⁷ Here too, *Satire* 15 has become an important test case. Keane has argued that the focus of this poem is indeed *ira*, but that the rabid fury of the Egyptians rather than the anger of the speaker is the satire’s main critical target. To the extent that the speaker himself evinces angry indignation, it is the righteous philosophical kind — “good,” moral outrage condemning “bad,” destructive anger — which would seem to elevate his broadside above the straight venom of the earlier books’ monomaniacal ranter.⁸ But others have seen here a return of exactly that figure; any rejection of *ira* as counterproductive seemingly floated in *Satire* 13 has been forgotten. Godwin, for example, sees the *Satire* 15 speaker as “suddenly flip[ping] back into angry mode with his snarling and violent attack on Egypt,” and Coffey notes the “explosive violence” of the speaker’s treatment of the Egyptians in the exordium and narrative, even as he reads a “restrained irony” in the rest of the poem and indeed in Juvenal’s later books as a whole.⁹

Some critics in this camp have suggested that the continuity involves more than anger; it is a matter of theme and characterization as well as emotional tone. For them,

⁵ Quote on *Satire* 10 from Hooley (2007, p. 124); Morford (1973, p. 36); Anderson (1964, p. 190=1982, p. 356). See Keane (2015, p. 170 and nn. 8 and 9) for references to other discussions of *Satire* 13 as a pivot-point away from *ira*.

⁶ Keane (2015, p. 169 n. 4). *Satire* 15 articulates a positive vision: e.g., Fredericks (1976), Singleton (1983).

⁷ See Keane (2015, p. 169 n. 6) for citations; also Godwin (2020, pp. 115-16): the speaker of *Satire* 13 “ends up as vindictive as Calvinus himself...no healer of minds, but rather a cruel teacher leading a foolish man by the nose...”

⁸ Keane (2015, pp. 192-202). In an earlier discussion (2010, pp. 116-17), she seems to locate more irrational anger in the speaker himself: “As anger becomes [the speaker’s] theme...it...gradually erodes his air of detachment and permeates his rhetoric...[he] seems to have swallowed his angry subjects and thereby stirred up his own capacity for savagery.”

⁹ Godwin (2020, p. 6); Coffey (1989, p. 135).

what ties the first two books to the later poems, including *Satire 15*, is the articulation of a consistent “worldview and value system,” as Nappa observes without elaborating any point-by-point correspondence. Like Coffey, Hooley hears in the opening salvo of *Satire 15* the “familiar, high-volume Juvenalian voice of incredulous outrage,” but in addition to noting that raw emotion he begins to fill in the content of the “value system” on display in *Satire 15* when he observes that the speaker’s outrage is driven by the same xenophobia that had featured so prominently in *Satires 1* through *6*. There, hatred of foreigners was an important driver of the kind of vicious invective against “offending race[s]” (Hooley) that erupts again in the penultimate poem. In suggesting that the satire’s ultimate target is not so much the Egyptians as the cultural and political depredations of Rome itself, Hooley follows McKim, who had argued that the pompous and deluded speaker of *Satire 15* is the vehicle for a critique of *Roman*, not Egyptian culture. In other words, as is often the case in readings informed by *persona* theory, what is being satirized is mainly the speaker’s own discourse, which McKim calls a “tissue of hysterical racism... and smug self-congratulation.”¹⁰ Here as elsewhere, however, general characterizations of the speaker’s disposition and prejudices, while spot-on, only hint at the complex workings of the “worldview and value system” that structures *Satire 15* and, I would argue, links it systematically to Books 1 and 2.

As my title indicates, I count myself among those who read *Satire 15* as circling back to the angry *indignatio* of the earlier books. Here I want to approach the question of continuity from a new angle, by fleshing out just how carefully constructed a reprise of one particular incarnation of the first two books’ famous angry satirist the speaker of the penultimate poem is, still clearly discernible behind his pose as the voice of reason and human empathy. For it is not just the generally intemperate malcontent or resentful marginalized citizen that returns, or even a particular antipathy such as xenophobia alone. What resurfaces as the corpus concludes is more precisely the wholesale “world view and value system” of a very specific and fully developed reactionary character type, consumed by all the interrelated hatreds — of women, foreigners, sex and gender deviants — that so clearly animate the earlier satires, in spite of the speakers’ tendency to cast their own animosities and grievances in high moral terms. In the earlier poems this character type finds its most completely realized expression in Umbricius, the querulous and resentful native left behind by social change in *Satire 3*, but it asserts itself whenever a speaker’s free-floating anxieties about his own status are channeled into virulent attacks on social “out-groups,” a signature dynamic especially evident in *Satires 1, 2, and 6* in addition to *3*.¹¹

In *Satire 15* we find the same bundle of prejudices propped up by the same rationalizing impulses, now transposed from Rome to the provinces with appropriate rhetorical adjustments on the part of the speaker. This situation requires that his visceral hostilities be modulated as he takes on a new, self-assigned role as the rational standard-bearer of Greco-Roman civilization, yet the old irascibility keeps coming to the surface, triggered by the same issues. It is as if a reconstituted Umbricius is doing his best to affect a cosmopolitan air because he senses its utility against the “out-group” that has now stirred his ire, but keeps losing control of the performance as his actual feelings break through. Thus, toward the end of his work, Juvenal reorients the brilliant portrait of a particular social type that he had introduced in Book 1 to explore how the same character might fare in a more global setting; this foray into the provinces together with the collection’s coda, the apparently unfinished sixteenth satire, combine to “enact a form of ring-composition...showing that little has changed either in society or...in this personal response to it,” as Godwin puts it recently in

10 Nappa (2017, p. 4); Hooley (2007, pp. 128-9); McKim (1986, p. 58). Gold (2012) argues for tonal and thematic unity — the latter under the umbrella of “what it means to identify as Roman” (p. 100), a question clearly at the core of the *Satires* — but leaves *Satire 15* entirely out of her discussion.

11 “Out-groups” is a term brought into wide use by Amy Richlin in connection with the social dynamics represented in Latin literature. *Satires 4* and *5* will be left aside in this discussion; while in a general sense they show all the crankiness of Books 1 and 2, their circumscribed thematic focus (imperial megalomania, corrupted patron-client relations) gives them speakers who do not clearly exemplify the specific character type under study here.

comments on the very last poem.¹² In what follows, I will trace the parallels that tie speakers of the early books and of *Satire 15* together as “rednecks” in togas,¹³ focusing on two aspects of characterization that especially define this type: their rhetoric of enemy construction, and the related package of personality traits that round out the picture of this ancient Roman “angry white man.”

A premise of Larmour’s *The Arena of Satire* is that in the end Juvenal’s poems are about the search for Rome and Romanness in a rapidly changing and de-centered world. In modern terms, in other words, they are about the construction of national identity, but in Juvenal as in more recent times this is a defensive project rather than any positive celebration of shared values. In *Satires 1* and *3* in particular this reactive posture is on full display. These poems revolve around native male speakers trying frantically to shore up their precarious sense of self by conjuring up a phantasm of the un-Roman, a composite Other fabricated out of disparate but overlapping anxieties, to serve as the opposite term against which their own identity can be fixed and validated. In this universe, true Romanness is defined not so much by what the “authentically” Roman speaker is, as by what he (thankfully) is not.¹⁴ Misogyny is the bedrock upon which his nemesis, this Frankenstein monster of un-Romanness, is built. In a process replayed in later eras, the speaker’s deep-seated hatred of the female and of the values that women are imagined to embody is projected onto another internal “out-group,” male sex and gender deviants, and ultimately onto foreigners, in these poems mostly those who have made their way to Rome as immigrants, turning the city into a catch-basin of the “Syrian Orontes” (*Sat.* 3.62).¹⁵ In the speaker’s mind, these misfits bleed together to present a monolithic and existential threat to his own status as they destabilize the social and economic hierarchies upon which his own sense of identity and self-worth have depended. Tenuous as his place in those hierarchies may be, he clings to it as his birthright.¹⁶

In *Satire 6* the speaker inadvertently offers a useful catalog of the negative attributes of women that also shape the disparaging portraits of male gender outlaws and newcomers from the East that are especially prominent in Books 1 and 2; the pervasive elision of these three groups had been adumbrated in the first salvos of *Satire 1*, where the speaker intuitively lumps together a “soft eunuch” (*tener spado*, taking a wife, no less), a female arena-fighter, and various effeminate, newly rich immigrants as transgressive objects of derision (22-30). Of course, Juvenal did not invent the stereotypes of the female that he deploys; in their essentials they go back in Greek and Roman literary culture to Hesiod’s scathing picture of the first woman in *Works and Days* (60-105) and *Theogony* (570-612). In the *Satires*, however, they are embedded in a larger nativist rhetoric of Roman vs. non-Roman, in a Juvenalian version

¹² Godwin (2020, p. 6). *Satire 16*’s sixty transmitted lines begin to sketch out a complaint about the privileges enjoyed by soldiers at the expense of ordinary citizens. Ferguson (1979, p. 323) notes that “a return to an attack on the power structure of Rome is a return to [Juvenal’s] old self,” but it is more the “old self” of *Satires 4* and *5* (see previous note), whose situations do not provoke the combined race, class, and gender anxieties that link the speaker of *Satire 15* with those of the earlier books.

¹³ Winkler (1983, p. 223) applies this anachronism to Umbricius; I adopt it purposefully.

¹⁴ The shrillness of the speakers in the poems where Romanness is staked out — in Geue’s (2017, p. 190 n. 5) words, the “intensification of separation discourse” — ratchets up as the changes that trigger it become settled; the speaker’s very sureness of himself tells us that his cause is lost. Geue’s focus is on the tension between Roman satire’s, and especially Juvenal’s, impulse “to police an obsolescent, ‘pure’ space for the Roman self” (2017, p. 189) and the dynamic forces of empire that render this idea increasingly untenable until, he argues, they triumph by the end of the collection.

¹⁵ Hooley’s (2007, p. 119) otherwise perceptive formulation, that “targeting women is a perennial reflex for expressing” more generalized male angst about status loss, treats misogyny more as an effect than the wellspring of that angst — the glue that holds all the speaker’s psychosocial pathologies together.

¹⁶ In Hooley’s (2007, p. 116-17) evocative framing of the speaker’s anxieties (“Upstarts, newly-moneyed outsiders, women, foreigners, Greeks and Jews — these are the bogeys of the reactionary mind, complacent in its traditional privilege, jealous of position, resentful of change and displacement”), the catalog of discrete offenders fails to capture the extent to which they are all in effect the same person. Similarly Gold (2012), while discussing the ubiquity of such antipathies to demonstrate “consistencies in theme and tone” (p.98) in Juvenal, treats women and deviant men as largely distinct groups.

of a durable reactionary strategy, the feminization of enemies both foreign and domestic. The rhetorical building blocks of this discourse, neatly discernible in *Satire 6*, all fall under the general rubric of lack of self-control, woman's original sin, which can manifest itself in sexual voraciousness, dipsomania, materialism, and any number of other failings that signify slavery to animal and emotional impulses rather than obedience to the intellect.

This satire begins with one of several Juvenalian visions of the pristine past, centered here on the uncouth but virtuous "mountain wife" (*montana uxor*) huddled in a cold cave with her giant prelapsarian babies and acorn-belching husband, so different from the elegiac temptresses of the decadent present (1-10). The clearly parodic tone tells us a great deal about the poet's attitude to moralistic commonplaces, and about his characterization of the speaker, who is made to utter them seriously.¹⁷ After more riffing on Golden Age tropes ends with Justice and Chastity fleeing from the earth (11-20), the poem showcases several memorable vignettes of contemporary female sexual excess, often involving liaisons with lower-class, effeminate, and/or foreign men: there are the fan-girls who frequent the theater to drink in the performances of their favorite foreign-born actors and dancers, whose moves arouse the women sexually (6.60-81); the aristocratic *matrona* Eppia, who abandons her husband and children to follow a gladiator lover (6.82-113); and the "royal whore" (*meretrix Augusta*) Messalina, consort of a cuckolded emperor, driven by her insatiable sexual appetites to offer herself to all comers in the brothels of Rome (6.114-32). The figures and behaviors that the speaker condemns at the outset of the poem present a multi-faceted assault on his sense of right order. By associating transgressive Roman women with the effeminate, the foreign, and the déclassé in an atmosphere of urban decadence, he seamlessly elides all the forces he imagines as posing a threat to normative male Romanness. As the poem continues, the speaker additionally faults women as a group for their greed and material extravagance (spending beyond their means to indulge in *luxuria*, 6.149-57; 352-65); superstition (their passion for astrology and orgiastic foreign cults, 6.511-91); gratuitous cruelty, especially toward powerless inferiors such as slaves (6.219-23; 475-95); and even murderousness, if someone or something stands in the way of their lust or greed (6.133-5; 610-61). Juvenalian women are a paradoxical amalgam of the irrational and the calculating: duplicity and manipulation, exercised for nefarious ends, come to them naturally (e.g., 6.268-78).

Working from this guiding paradigm of primal alterity, the Juvenalian speaker easily projects its features onto the other living affronts to his sense of Roman maleness: deviant men and foreigners, two categories that are themselves often elided. In *Satire 2* his wrath is provoked by *cinaedi* — socially non-conforming and sexually passive men — who present themselves in the public sphere as paragons of manly virtue, all the while carrying on in private like the degenerate pathics that they really are. Thus this out-group too is imagined as honing duplicity into an art form; the speaker tags them with the oxymoron "solemn débauchés" (*tristes obsceni*), lamenting in line 8 that "there's no trusting appearance" (*frontis nulla fides*) — a suspicion that he applies to women in *Satire 6*. The imputed sexual activities of the target group in *Satire 2* in themselves represent a failure to exercise the quintessentially male prerogative of control (of others and of self, especially of one's bodily integrity), and thus in the speaker's mind implicate the entire group in "female" sexual excess. Strengthening the link, he imagines them involved in an orgiastic party scene (2.83-116) where, like the women in the bacchanal of *Satire 6* (314-51), they use religion as a cover for depravity. Here, mincing drag queens fuss over elaborate hair-dos, costumes, and make-up while enjoying free-flowing wine and engaging in ribald play — all stereotypically "female" behaviors. The

¹⁷ As Watson and Watson (2014, pp. 77-80) note, the poem of *Satire 6* is a "playful, characteristically Juvenalian take on the Myth of the Ages," first appearing in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 106-201) and refracted in earlier Latin literature by Horace (*Epode* 2), Virgil (*Georg.* 2.523-35), and Tibullus 1.5.21-34 (Watsons' examples). By the early empire the myth had devolved into a *topos* of declamatory rhetoric, the *locus communis de saeculo*, with its stock contrast between the virtues of poverty, simplicity, and hard work (usually identified with the past) and the dangers of contemporary wealth and luxury; see Bonner (1949, p. 61), with examples from the Elder Seneca. The second model is as important to Juvenal as the first.

poem abounds in exaggerated vignettes of effeminate men offending the traditional sex and gender order, such as the advocate Creticus, practicing law with his stylized “gay” gestures and risqué feminine dress (2.65-78).

While these figures appear to be Roman — a main point being the degeneration of the native male and of high-born men in particular — their emasculation makes them templates for the Juvenalian speaker’s ultimate symbol of the un-Roman, foreigners from the East, as the feminizing rhetorical net expands to ensnare that despised out-group as well. Thus in Juvenal as elsewhere, the conventional gendered opposition between rational male subject and unruly female Other is mapped onto cultural encounters, especially in *Satires* 1 and 3, in a preview of the full development of this trope in *Satire* 15. The idea of the decadent, effeminate Oriental, from the Juvenalian perspective ironically Greek in origin, again significantly pre-dates the *Satires*, going back in literary culture at least to Aeschylus’ *Persians* from 472 BC, but again, like misogyny itself, it becomes here an ingredient in an uncannily modern, and extremely toxic, nativist brew. Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks — they are all the same to the aggrieved Roman male speaker, crass upstarts encroaching on territory that is rightfully his. In *Satire* 1, the collection’s programmatic poem, he encounters *nouveau riche* freedmen like the Egyptian Crispinus (1.26-30), ostentatiously hitching up his purple mantle and swishing (*ventilet*) his bejeweled fingers on a hot summer day while pointedly noting that such weather makes it impossible for him to wear his larger jewels. This sight, amidst an accumulation of other outrages, provokes the speaker’s famous exclamation that “it is difficult not to write satire” (*difficile est saturam non scribere*, 1.30). In the same poem we meet another parvenu, this time from the banks of the Euphrates, marked out as non-Roman by his unmanly earrings yet invoking his success in business to justify pushing ahead of poor, deserving natives in the dole line of a rich patron (1.102-9). As the “East” often included Greece in the Roman cultural imagination, *Satire* 3 continues the Orient-bashing with the sustained portrait of the “hungry little Greek” (*Graeculus esuriens*) as an over-sexed, scheming flatterer from a nation of natural actors (3.69-125). While the feminization of the first two figures is signaled by their girly gestures and crass materialism, the red flags in the case of the *Graeculus* are his lechery and easy duplicity.¹⁸

What is especially significant for our purposes is how the disparate groups against which the speaker positions himself fuse into one another in a way that makes them essentially interchangeable and functionally identical, their members mix-and-match exemplars of the same basic complex of threats to Roman maleness. Thus, in the speaker’s calculus, women are, on several levels — as Aristotelian deficient males, as sexual profligates, as unnatural intruders into the male sphere — sex and gender deviants as well as xenophiles; male sex and gender deviants are “female” as well as xenophiles; and foreigners are “female” as well as sex and gender deviants. The categories do not just overlap; they are virtually synonymous. This “homogenizing” tendency is a key feature of the speaker’s rhetoric of othering in the earlier poems, as it will be in *Satire* 15.¹⁹ Rounding out the picture is the attribution to all these groups alike of a laundry list of unsavory tendencies that supposedly come to them “naturally,” including innate viciousness (in Greeks due to a “defect in the race,” *gentis vitium*, 3.121) and criminality (women’s murderousness, mentioned above; the schemes of the immigrant hustlers depicted in *Satire* 3).

Another basic feature of the rhetoric’s structure is binarism: the habit of constructing reality in terms of stark antitheses that close off any possibility of complexity or nuance. The speakers’ thinking is structured through and through by a system of corresponding oppositions — male *versus* female, nature *versus* artifice, past *versus* present, native *versus*

¹⁸ On Greek and Roman views of people from the “Middle East,” and Roman views of Greeks, start with Isaac (2004, pp. 324-51 and pp. 381-405 respectively, with bibliography).

¹⁹ I borrow this use of the term “homogenization” from Mosse (1985, *passim*), who applied it to the same phenomenon in nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist discourses of enemy construction. McClintock (1995, p. 56), analyzing colonialist othering that operated on a similar principle of substitution, calls it a “triangulated switchboard analogy.”

foreign, country *versus* city — in which all the first terms line up in one (the “good”) column while the second terms fall on the other (“bad”) side of the register, creating an airtight and rigidly valorized dualistic scheme. The country-city opposition in particular, in Juvenal as in conservative Roman thought as a whole, holds a certain pride of place in this system in that it contains within itself all the other contrasts.²⁰ For the speakers in the earlier poems, especially *Satires* 1 and 3, the city has come to represent everything false, corrupt, and wrong; it is the home not only of shape-shifting foreigners with their alien values but also of internal enemies, foremost among them womanish men and mannish women, all identified with a feminized and degenerate present. The countryside of the speaker’s imagination, on the other hand, embodies the clarity, stability, gendered virtues, and “authentic” Romanness of an increasingly distant national past. This enduring opposition, with all its ideological associations, implicitly undergirds the opening poem, where it is no accident that the city is the teeming backdrop of the social and moral collapse that provokes the speaker’s indignation.

It is in *Satire* 3, however, that this opposition is most fully articulated, not surprisingly given the poem’s explicit theme of the (perceived) injustices of city life. The poet pointedly frames the view of country life expressed by both the prologue speaker, Umbricius’ acquaintance who accompanies him to the city limits, and more centrally by Umbricius himself, as a deluded fantasy naively drawn from literature. Umbricius has resolved to seek a “pleasant retirement” (*amoenus secessus*) away from the *saeva urbs*, says his friend (3.4–5, 8–9), recalling the *locus amoenus* of pastoral poetry, while Umbricius, at the end of his tirade against city life, likewise signals his departure with a jarring, pastorally-flavored coda: “the cattle are lowing and the sun is setting: it’s time to go” (*iumenta vocant et sol inclinatum cundum est*, 3.316). In between these bookends, the (pure) country/(corrupt) city binary is fleshed out with the loaded ancillary oppositions that it always implies, especially between past and present, authentic and artificial, native and foreign, and masculine and feminine, often activated simultaneously. In a sense the entire scheme is an elaboration of the *locus communis de saeculo* trivialized elsewhere in the *Satires*,²¹ but this is no mere mockery of hackneyed rhetoric: Juvenal puts real ideological flesh on the declamatory bones.

Thus, for example, the prologue speaker laments that the location of the pre-metropolitan grove where Numa met his *amica*, the nymph Egeria, is now infested with mendicant Jews (3.12–16), and further disapproves of the phony grottos (*speluncae/dissimiles veris*) and marble that have replaced the grass and “native limestone” (*ingenuus tofus*) of old (3.17–20). Umbricius moves the artifice theme into the human realm with his complaints about the duplicity of foreigners, especially Greeks. “He can take his own expression from another’s face” (*potest aliena sumere vultum/a facie*) he says of the *Graeculus* with contempt/envy at 3.105–6, indignantly implying a contrast with his own congenital honesty, which makes it impossible for him to compete in a city of calculating immigrants: “What should I do in Rome? I don’t know how to lie,” he had exclaimed at 3.41 (*quid Romae faciam? mentiri nescio*).²² When he comes to spinning one of his reveries about rural life at 3.168–79, his loving invocation of a humble country festival has it all: stock figures of rustic Italian virtue (3.169, he imagines himself “transported to the Marsi and a Sabine table,”

²⁰ Vasaly (1993, p. 156) observes that “[t]here is hardly a topic in Latin literatures that appears more frequently and in a greater variety of guises than that of the contrast between the mores of the country and those of the city.” One guise was Roman satire, where the contrast, with all its points of contact with the equally conventional *laudes temporis acti*, had been a standard topic from the genre’s beginnings; see Braund (1989). In Juvenal it begins to take on the nativist cast that has characterized modern versions of the trope.

²¹ See note 17 above.

²² Here Juvenal has Umbricius employ a version of the established rhetorical *captatio benevolentiae* of protesting, in a bid for sympathy, that he is just a simple and artless man — an ethical appeal, in Aristotelian terms (*Rhet.* 1.2.4; also, e.g., Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.1.8–9, and see Andersen [2001] on the topos of modesty). This bit of characterization may well have caused Juvenal’s rhetorically literate audience to view the speaker as less rather than more sincere. Claims of guilelessness were especially attached to rustic speakers and characters, so Umbricius assumes the moral valence of the country before ever leaving the city; see Vasaly (1993, pp. 156–72) on Cicero’s spin on the defendant in the *Pro Roscio Amerino*.

translatus...ad Marsos mensamque Sabellam, echoing earlier poetic appearances of these types with the same ideological coding²³; a marked absence of *luxuria* in any form; proper gender order (3.176, devoted mothers holding *rustici infantes*); nature, not artifice (3.173, the theater is edged with grass, not marble, in keeping with the ingenuousness of the whole population, wide-eyed at the performance of a familiar indigenous skit).²⁴ All this is cast as an antidote to the opposing values ascendant in the city.

This multi-layered coding of the cosmopolis as irredeemably bad is ostensibly reversed in *Satire 15*, where the reconstituted speaker's newfound (and situational) universalism at least implicitly positions the city as a prime symbol and beacon of enlightened Greco-Roman culture: at 15.110 the speaker marvels at the salutary effects of "Athens, both Roman and Greek" on less advanced peoples throughout the world (*nunc totus Graias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas*). Urbanity, now elevated and idealized, is here set in opposition to the country districts of Egypt and the savagery that allegedly arose there. Nevertheless, the fundamentally binary structure of the discourse remains in place, even if rhetorical opportunism has scrambled the plug-ins and the speaker's self-positioning has shifted from parochial Roman to global citizen of the civilized (i.e., Hellenized/Romanized) world. This recasting is possible because in this speaker's mind provincial Egyptians occupy the place held by Greek and other Eastern immigrants to the imperial metropolis in the earlier poems as objects of irrational fear and hatred, but it is still a stark matter of "us versus them."²⁵

On the whole, in fact, the rhetoric of what we now might call reactionary nationalism permeating *Satires 1* and *3* and that of colonizing imperialism in *Satire 15* are two sides of the same coin.²⁶ The former lashes out defensively once the colonial Other (or his doubles) has infiltrated the speaker's "homeland," the imperial center, while the latter starts from an offensive position, marshalling ideas of civilizing mission to justify rule over the same figure in his own land. Structurally, however, they operate on many of the same principles. In the later poem too, as we have seen, the speaker's thinking and the assertions that grow out of it are as binary as the simplistic zero-sum calculus of Umbricius; his deployment of the country/city topos illustrates this, even if its terms are inverted. Likewise he conceives of Egyptian culture and religion as diametrically opposed to his own, which represent the gold standard against which the imperfectly understood beliefs and practices of targeted Others are measured and found wanting. The conceptualization of difference as unambiguously valorized opposition is demonstrated from the outset in the first lines of the poem. There (15.2-13) a familiar anthropomorphic Roman goddess and "normal" culinary habits are

²³ Cf. Virgil, *Georg.* 2.167, *Marsos pubemque Sabellam*; Horace, *Odes* 3.5.9, *Marsus et Apulus*.

²⁴ Probably an Atellan farce, as opposed to the exotic novelties required to hold the attention of jaded city audiences (see Braund 1996, p. 204).

²⁵ One of the most rhetorically exemplary poems in Latin literature, *Satire 15* consists of *exordium* (1-32, everyone knows that Egyptian culture is crazy, but a recent incident there, incredible as it is, illustrates this in spades); *narratio* (33-92, a conflict between two towns over religious practices degenerates into a brawl culminating in a spontaneous act of cannibalism); *argumentatio* (93-131, instances of cannibalism from the past can be explained by extenuating circumstances — siege warfare, for example —, and the diffusion of Greco-Roman culture has eliminated even those; incorrigible Egyptian savagery falls outside this pale); and *peroratio* (131-75, human compassion is the basis of social order and progress; again, the Egyptians have failed to evolve — at which point the satire becomes a rhetorical train wreck, as we will see). The description of human flesh-eating has been taken at face value, as a misreading of Egyptian cult ritual, and as a declamatory or satiric topos; see Shumate (2006, p. 132 and n.4) for references. Juvenalian hyperbole and tendentiousness, along with the durability of cannibalism as a go-to charge for vilifying the not-self (see n. 27 below), tip the balance against strict factuality. Vincent (2011) has read the poem as paradoxography (p. 241, "a tale which is clearly fictional from the start").

²⁶ The bibliography on these two ideologies in the modern era is vast and growing, as additional articulations come under study; a journalistic illustration is Filipovic's (2021) retrospective following the recent death of right-wing radio shock jock Rush Limbaugh, which teases out the connection between misogyny and white supremacism "Christian" nationalism in the U.S. For a sense of the generic shape of these discourses, the seminal work of Mosse (1986) on sexuality and nationalism (shading into fascism) still repays study; for colonialism, Spurr (1993) and Boehmer (1995) similarly identify transferable sets of features.

sharply contrasted with a cartoon version of Egyptian animal worship and the claim that among them human flesh-eating is routine: "Some of them worship the crocodile, others quake at the ibis with snakes stuffed in its mouth, and they have golden statues of a sacred long-tailed ape.... Here whole towns venerate cats, there fish, here dogs, but no one Diana.... It's considered a sacrilege to eat leeks, onions, or mutton, or to sacrifice a kid, but perfectly fine to feed on human flesh."²⁷ The rigid binarism introduced here undergirds the entire poem.

In addition to this principle, the speaker's appeals in *Satire 15* rely on the same sort of blurring and eliding strategies that were ubiquitous in Books 1 and 2. Thus, Egyptians somehow manage to be both primitive, a sign of civilization's absence (they are capable of spontaneously ripping a person limb from limb and devouring him), and decadent, a symptom of civilizational excess, which can circle back to barbarism in Greco-Roman thought (there's no winning for Egyptians). This paradox is what the speaker sees in the Ombites' pre-riot religious celebration: "Egypt is surely a rough place, but in *luxuria* the barbarous mob does not yield to [the] famous[ly dissolute city of] Canopus."²⁸ In a related bit of rhetorical sleight of hand, Egypt's ancient civilization and its complex multicultural history are airbrushed entirely out of the account, as the current inhabitants of a couple of backwater towns are made to stand for the country as a whole. The grand succession of high cultures in Egypt—Pharaonic, Hellenistic, even Roman—is erased, to be dismissively replaced by a monolithic "crazy Egypt" (*Aegyptos demens*, 1-2). Finally, the operation of reductive or homogenizing moves is consistently evident here too in the conflation of disparate groups marginal to the dominant discourse, which nevertheless present a mortal threat to the speaker's mental equilibrium. Like the Eastern immigrants in the streets of Rome, the Egyptians of *Satire 15* are demonized in large part through their symbolic association with women and deviant males. "Race" is gendered and gender is racialized, as they had been in the earlier books.

Throughout the poem, the speaker builds his picture of Egyptian depravity around what he posits as their fundamental defects: irrationality and lack of self-restraint. This idea is introduced in the very first line with the epithet *demens* applied to all of Egypt, and reinforced at the end of the exordium (15.32) with the pointed choice of the word *feritas* — animal wildness — to suggest a complete absence of self-regulating superego. This is what drives the Egyptians to superstition and intolerance, this is what causes them to nurse a primal hatred of their neighbors until it erupts into an orgy of violence; their destructive passion is also flagged with the rage words *odium*, *furor*, and *ira*, at 34, 36, and 131 respectively. Lack of self-control, a deficit of reason, superstition, grudges, vendetta justice: these are cornerstones of female stereotyping, as we have seen, and thus form a recognizable basis for the feminization of the Egyptians.²⁹ This characterization is evident from another angle in the festival scene that precedes the outbreak of hostilities, which the speaker frames in terms of "Oriental"

²⁷ *crocodilon adorat/pars haec, illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibin./effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopithecii/... illic aeluros, hic piscem fluminis, illic/oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam./porrum et caepe nefas violare...lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis/mensa, nefas illic fetum iugulare capellae:/carnibus humanis vesci licet.* Contemptuous views of Egyptian religion and culture are not uncommon in Latin literature: cf., e.g., Virgil, *Aen.* 8.698-700; Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.11; and Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.78, which the satire's opening lines echo and critically engage. For an overview of Greek and Roman attitudes towards Egyptians, which could be positive in different rhetorical environments, see Isaac (2004, pp. 352-70, with bibliography). For cannibalism as a marker of alterity in antiquity, see Alston (1996, p.101 and references); Isaac (2004, pp. 207-11).

²⁸ 15.44-6, *horrida sane/Aegyptos, sed luxuria.../barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo*. Lucan also attributes both *luxuria* and *saevitia* to Egyptians, though not always to the same ones: at *BC* 8.542-3 Hellenized Canopus is *mollis*, Egyptian Memphis is *barbara*. Likewise he denounces Egyptian treachery, indifference to law, and murderousness (*BC* 10.60-81, 104-71, 332-98, 467-85), but there is little space for irony in his poem.

²⁹ The overarching rubric of deficient self-restraint allows lawless violence to be construed as female in Juvenal; the frequent characterization of male promiscuity and womanizing as effeminate in Latin literature (e.g. Antony in Cic. *Phil.* 2) works the same way. Both ideas may strike modern readers as counter-intuitive. Of course, Roman culture readily sanctioned many forms of *male* violence.

decadence. Like uncouth savagery, this is also a form of barbarism, as we have seen, and is conventionally mapped onto the feminine as well (as, again, in Aeschylus, *Persians*). The inhabitants of one town, the Ombites, are described as staggering about drunk on their holiday, dancing and indulging themselves with perfumes and floral crowns, while their enemies the Tentyrites, taking advantage of this diversion, plot a cowardly ambush (44-51). The reckless abandon of the party resonates with stereotypical “female” excess, while the reliance on treachery in “warfare” is likewise a variant of the duplicity long associated with women.³⁰

With the dread charge of being like women in a broad range of attributes clearly implied, it is an easy step to other tried-and-true forms of feminization, especially the insinuation of deviant masculinity; as in Books 1 and 2, women and deviant men slide around with foreigners on a seamless continuum of alterity in the mind of a native male anxious to bolster his own identity. In this vein, the speaker seems especially incensed that the dancing is being done by men, with other men — to the music of a “black” flute-player, thrown in for good measure (*inde virorum/saltatus nigro tibicine*, 48-49).³¹ This suggestion of transgressive maleness culminates at 15.124-8 in the unfavorable comparison of the puny and feckless Egyptians with the virile barbarians of the north and west, replete with mockery of their customary means of navigating the Nile: “A madness that has never seized the scary Germans or the Britons or the fierce Slavic tribes or the hulking Rumanians rages in that unwarlike and useless rabble who unfurl the pint-sized sails of their clay-pot rafts and lean on the short little oars of their brightly painted pieces of tile.”³² There are barbarians and there are barbarians, apparently, just as there are good and bad forms of menacing violence or of “natural” behavior. Thus emasculated and trivialized, the Egyptians are cast as classic feminized colonial Others, a provincial variation on the composite *bête noire* that the speaker fabricates and then vilifies in the Rome-centered satires. They are well on their way to being othered out of the human race altogether, a move that the speaker saves for his peroration, as we will see.

Juvenal’s characterization of the angry speaker involves more than the reproduction of that figure’s often internally inconsistent rhetorical strategies of self-definition through opposition. In a sense these strategies are an effect of the core personality traits of the social and psychological type so vividly brought to life in these satires.³³ These include his self-righteous indignation, which masks a profound lack of self-knowledge, and his unwillingness or inability to understand and adapt to the newly dynamic socio-economic world around him. This description applies to all the main speakers of the first six satires in some degree, but Umbricius again is the epitome of this type. He presents himself as a model of reason, moderation, and good sense in a city that seems to have lost its moral bearings, but the defects in his understanding of himself and his place in the new Rome are revealed by his misplaced lashing out at those he casts as somehow responsible for his own failings. Driven as he is by a deep sense of being wronged by others but lacking any capacity for critical analysis, self-

³⁰ It is worth noting that except at the end when the speaker becomes confused on this issue, *Satire 15* follows the standard nature=female/culture=male formula, whereas *Satires 1* and *3* reverse it by identifying country life (nature) with rustic masculine virtue and city life (culture) with feminine decadence. Nature is feminine and culture is masculine, except when they aren’t.

³¹ Godwin (2020, p. 324) notes that “dancing of this effeminate kind was not something which decent Roman men went in for,” citing the use of *saltator* as a term of abuse in Cic. *Pro Murena* 13. He also reminds us that from Herodotus on the Greeks and Romans referred to *all* Egyptians as black; here the adjective must either suggest a valorized gradation or further exoticize all the participants with a sweeping, and clearly pejorative, epithet. In either case its use here unsettles the conventional wisdom that color prejudice was virtually unknown in antiquity; see, e.g., Snowden (1996).

³² *qua nec terribiles Cimbrī nec Brittones umquam/Sauromataeque truces aut inmanes Agathyrsi,/hac saevit rabie inbelle et inutile volgus/parvula fitilibus solitum dare vela phaselis/et brevibus pictae remis incumbere testae.* *Inbellis* is often used disparagingly of men who are failures *qua* men, e.g. *Sat.* 6.366 (of eunuchs); 8.113 (of effeminate Greeks); Horace, *Odes* 3.2.14-15 (of shirkers in war).

³³ Hooley (2007, p. 117) on *Satire 2*, but generally applicable: “...the narrative serves to sketch out a portrait of the observing consciousness as much as the things observed.”

examination, or mature course-correction, he often slips into logical incoherence, transparent rationalization, and rhetorical opportunism. Thus, to take a few examples, Umbricius is oblivious to the irony that he seeks refuge from a decadent Rome overrun by Greeks in Cumae, a Greek city famous for its “immoral” *luxuria*; his jealousy of the Greek’s superior adaptive skills is barely disguised even as he resents and condemns it (3.105-6); his self-pitying claim that he is unable to compete with the newcomers because of his natural honesty (3.41) seems smug and petulant; and his expectation of an easy life once he gets to the country borders on the delusional.³⁴ Like kindred Juvenalian speakers, Umbricius seeks scapegoats, not a better understanding of his situation. He frames what is from a larger perspective simply inevitable social and economic change as complete cultural and moral collapse; this allows him to seize the high ground while avoiding the need to reassess his own views.

The encore appearance of this particular type of angry character in *Satire 15* is signaled at the beginning and further developed as the poem unfolds. The reader is alerted to the speaker’s barely sublimated fury in the first two lines, an indignant rhetorical question that echoes the ones that launched the first satire: “Who doesn’t know what sort of monsters crazy Egypt worships? (15.1-2, *quis nescit...qualia demens / Aegyptos portenta colat?* cf. 1.1, “Will I always just have to listen? Will I never respond ... [to the third-rate poetry being recited by aspiring bards everywhere I turn in Rome]?”—*semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam...?*). This opening offensive leads into a scathing broadside against what the speaker presents as the absurdities of Egyptian religion (15.2-13, its motley array of animal gods, its misguided dietary restrictions), propelled by the sarcasm and hyperbole that are hallmarks of the earlier speakers’ wide-ranging tirades. As in the earlier satires the speaker’s anger, in the exordium and throughout the poem, blinds him to logic and generates rhetorical gaps that widen as his argument advances, undermining his self-positioning as the voice of reason in the clash of civilizations that he sets up. He is not troubled, for example, by the slippage in his picture of the Egyptians as both decadent and barbaric, or by his inconsistent treatment of the Egyptians’ religious intolerance and his own: he mocks the catalyst that drove them to violence — conflict over whose gods were more legitimate³⁵ — while taking up the same sort of cudgel to attack the legitimacy of Egyptian deities as a whole, in spite of living in an increasingly syncretistic imperial world. Likewise, he exculpates Spaniards who were allegedly guilty of cannibalism on the grounds that they were *in extremis*, but also because they had not yet been enlightened by Greco-Roman culture and so could not have known any better (15.106-12, where he cites the spread of Greek philosophical teaching and Roman rhetorical training as salutary), yet does not extend the same pardon to the Egyptians, even though in his telling they too are still untouched by civilization.³⁶

But it is in the poem’s peroration (131-75) — precisely the section where others have found a rehabilitated and more humane Juvenalian speaker — that the coherence of his discourse really breaks down, as his true views and incorrigibly crabbed disposition sabotage an already wobbly attempt at philosophical commentary. Having based his declamation up to this point on the premise that superior *culture* tames beastly human impulses, he shifts abruptly to the claim that *nature* is the author of good behavior, because it gives compassion

³⁴ This outline of the psycho-social profile of the speakers in the earlier satires, particularly *Satires 1* and *3*, closely follows the reading of Braund (esp. 1996, pp. 110-21 and 230-6). More recently Gallia (2016, pp. 337-9 and *passim*), discussing *Satire 3* alone, adds as markers of Umbricius’ muddle-headedness his unwitting philhellenism (in his participation in the Greek literary and material culture all around him in Rome); his understanding of national identity in terms of “blood and soil” when in fact Roman citizenship was not ethnically based; and his failure to realize that as a poor(ish) Roman he could make common cause with marginalized outsiders.

³⁵ 15.37-8, *utrumque locus cum solos credat habendos/esse deos quos ipse colit*.

³⁶ The two exonerated Spanish peoples are the Vascones, whose main town Calagurris was pressed by Roman forces loyal to Sulla during the Sertorian war in 72 BCE, and the Saguntines, besieged by Hannibal in 218 BCE. Even if one accepts that exposure to Greco-Roman culture is the only hedge against cannibalism, it is unlikely that the Vascones, remote as they were, would have been completely untouched by it, as there had been a Roman presence in Spain since the second Punic war that encompassed almost the entire peninsula by 72.

to the “human race” and separates “us” from the mute beasts on their lower plane: “Nature, which has taught us how to cry, proclaims that she gives very pliant hearts to the human race. This is the best part of our sensibility...it separates us from the herd of beasts.”³⁷ Just who is granted admission to the *humanum genus* in Roman thought can vary with genre, philosophical orientation, and rhetorical purpose, but it is clear that this speaker has mainly people like himself in mind while going out of his way to exclude the Egyptians, who fail all the membership tests — the capacity for pity, the drive toward orderly community building — that he sets in this passage. By invoking the double-edged sword of *humanitas* as, ultimately, a screen for exclusion — as code for “us,” not “them” — the speaker draws on ample precedent, but as often he tries to have it both ways — or simply fails to notice the tension — when he overlays his implied interdiction of the Egyptians with a patina of the universalism (innate, “natural human” compassion *precedes* civilization here) that could also attach to this and related terms.³⁸ His remarks about nature’s gift of compassion segue into a miniature Lucretian narrative of progress (15.149-58) whose incremental steps toward stable and secure communities are driven by uniquely human intellect (*animus*), now bestowed by a “common founder” (*communis conditor*).³⁹ The relationship between *natura*, the initial benefactress, and this suddenly appearing masculine *conditor* is unclear, but there can be no doubt that this is another “human” process in which the Egyptians can play no part.

Virtually mid-thought in his account of social progress, however, the speaker abruptly changes course when he blurts out, “But now there’s more harmony among snakes!” (*iam serpentum maior concordia*, 15.159).⁴⁰ Unable to sustain the idea of progress any more than he could hold onto his faith in culture, he slips back into the narrative that far better suits his temperament: a picture of cultural and moral decline, replete with benign animal species putting degenerate man to shame and once constructive technology turned to nefarious ends; the nadir of this trajectory is the Egyptians’ heinous act (15.159-71). At this point the questions are piling up: wait, is it culture or nature that determines who people are and how they behave? Is the human race (whoever that is) on a path of progress or decline? Are the mute beasts bad and technology good, or is it the other way around? And what about the Egyptians? Are they outliers in an otherwise widely shared process of advancement, or the end-point of a universal downward spiral?⁴¹ Readers will look in vain for cogent answers from this speaker, whose cosmopolitan pose and strategic virtue signaling have unraveled to expose a kindred spirit to the irascible, dishonest, and pessimistic reactionary of the earlier poems. There, less stressfully for him, the situation did not require a tenuous and opportunistic embrace of Greek culture.

With its stress on the characterization of the speaker and on the implied gap between that figure and the poet himself, this reading of *Satire 15* (and of the earlier poems as well) follows in the tradition of *persona*-centered criticism of Roman satire. Reacting

³⁷ 15.131-3 and 142-3, *mollissima corda/humano generi dare se natura fatetur/quae lacrimas dedit. haec nostri pars optima sensus...separat hoc nos/a grege mutorum*. The distinction between rational humans and mute beasts is conventional; see, e.g., Sallust, *Cat.* 1.1-2.

³⁸ See Braund (1997) on the narrow identification of *humanitas* with Greco-Roman culture rather than “humanity”/the human race as a whole. This meaning was common, as she explains, but existed alongside a more universalizing use of the term as shared human experience across cultures, including even “barbarian” ones.

³⁹ 15.148-9. To the Juvenalian narrative of progress, cf. Lucretius, *DNR* 5.925-1457. Uden (2015, p. 213) argues that *conditor* (an epithet of the emperor) flags the Hadrianic universalism that he thinks the satire problematizes. If this identification is correct, *conditor* becomes in my reading a kind of shadow foil to the speaker’s provincialism, which his pretenses cannot obscure.

⁴⁰ Godwin (2020, p. 22) describes the claim at 15.159-64 that animals never attack their own as a “ludicrous argument” — one of many in this monologue — though elsewhere (e.g., p. 306, p. 344) he seems to fall for the speaker’s humanitarian posturing.

⁴¹ Geue (2017, pp. 207-10) reads the sudden shift from targeting the Egyptians as uniquely depraved to blaming the whole human race as a marker of the incremental collapse of self into Other and *vice versa* that is inevitable under empire — a background dynamic not inconsistent with a speaker characterized as both confused and defiant.

to earlier approaches that took the sentiments expressed in the poems at face value as the honest beliefs of the poet, who was not distinguished from the speaker — in other words, biographical and moralistic approaches — *persona* criticism posited that the speaker is a dramatic construct fashioned by the author, who takes up the mask and plays that role much as an actor or declaimer would. A consequence is that the satiric target can shift, from the poem's ostensible objects of invective to the speaker who does the inveighing — his attitudes, values, temperament, and failings.⁴² In recent years there has been a movement away from *persona*-based readings toward a corrective focus on “satire as literary, political, and cultural discourse,” motivated in part by a sense that the centrality of irony in, for example, a performance of anger empties satire of substance and renders it a self-contained literary exercise, a “medium of humor rather than authentic social criticism.”⁴³ While this could suggest a welcome antidote to the strain of criticism that reads much of Latin poetry as solipsistic literary navel-gazing, there is no reason why *persona* readings and serious social criticism have to be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, criticism is at its most biting when parody highlights the absurdities of its object — here, to a great extent, the speaker himself — through comic exaggeration, while preserving the recognizable contours of that object as it exists in real life. Even then it can sometimes be difficult to tell where “real world” speech ends and parodic distortion begins — to such an extent do some extremisms manage, in effect, to satirize themselves.

Another objection to *persona* readings points to the improbability that any Roman author could be as “woke” as a strict distinction between elite poet and benighted, satirized speaker implies — could be, as Nappa puts it, an early version of the “liberal modern Western man who opposes sexism, racism, and imperialism.”⁴⁴ Surely this formulation screams anachronism, but character-mediated, parodic critiques of conservative discourse do exist in Latin literature — witness Enclolpus' monologue on the decline of education at the beginning of what remains of Petronius' *Satyricon*, and almost anything the hypocritical grifter Eumolpus says in the same work. In any case, this objection posits a polar opposition between the poet and the speaker he creates, whereas in reality the distinction is usually less clear-cut. After all, if its appearance in Cicero and Tacitus is any indication, vilification of Egyptians on cultural and religious grounds may have been as acceptable in elite literary circles as it was (if it was) among the lower classes that Umbricius represents, and most Romans (if they thought about it) may well have restricted *humanitas* to people like themselves, even in the era of Hadrianic universalism.⁴⁵ Yet attachment to arguable assumptions and to unexamined prejudices, chauvinisms and other dominant discourses can co-exist with self-awareness, self-interrogation, and self-parody: we only need think of Horace's continuously self-deconstructing *personae* in his satires, the internalized acceptance, even endorsement, of British colonialism alongside barbed satirical critiques of it in novelists such as Conrad

⁴² Cf., e.g., Jonathan Swift as distinguished from the mouthpiece of his “modest proposal,” the liberal actor Carroll O'Connor playing the bigot Archie Bunker in the 1970s sitcom “All in the Family,” or Stephen Colbert's performance as a right-wing pundit on “The Colbert Report.” See Keane (2010, pp. 109-111; 2015, pp. 16-20) and the Watsons (2014, pp. 36-40) for overviews of the development of *persona* theory as it has been applied to Roman satire, including arguments for and against this approach.

⁴³ Quotes from Keane (2015, p. 20) and the Watsons (2014, p. 37), respectively. Another reason for the shift is probably *persona* fatigue: the question of whether this model is applicable to ancient texts is ultimately intractable, a situation exacerbated in the case of Juvenal by the virtual impossibility of reconstructing his life, which might tell us something about what views he was likely to hold or, on the other hand, critique. For surveys of evidence for the *vita*, see Armstrong (2012, pp. 59-62) and Courtney (1980, 1-10), with the caveat that both lean toward the biographical fallacy.

⁴⁴ Nappa (2017, p. 4).

⁴⁵ Cicero and Tacitus, see above, n. 27. Gallia (2016, p. 341) suggests that Umbricius' apologetic introduction to his denunciation of the “Greek city” in *Satire* 3 (58-60: *quae nunc divitibus gens acceptissima nostris/et quos praecipue fugiam, properabo fateri/nec pudor obstabit*) indicates that the xenophobic views he expresses were not widely shared in this period, or at least not publicly acknowledged. If true, this could support reading the views and the speaker who holds them as the (clearly distinct) poet's satiric target.

and Waugh, and the retrograde Mr. Chips routines enacted by countless self-satirizing Latin teachers every day. Author and speaker are always co-mingled; as Geue observes, “the self will come through.”⁴⁶

These and other questions remain central to any comprehensive account of Juvenalian satire, but answers are elusive, and the more limited task at hand, that of weighing claims for the unity of the corpus, does not depend on their being definitive. Whether the speaker’s discourse is taken at face value or is itself the target of critique, as I believe, it is clear that in *Satire 15* we have come full circle, back to the enraged, resentful, grievance-driven, and self-righteous mode of the first two books, and not only in general terms but in the very structures of the intertwined cultural discourses reproduced in these satires. Contrary to widespread views of a movement toward equanimity, the *Satires* are bookended by Roman prototypes of the “angry white man,” whose descendants have haunted history up to the present day.

Smith College
nshumate@smith.edu

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⁴⁶ Geue (2016, no pagination). His leftist critique of *persona* readings is appealing, especially in the way it connects them to the pernicious underbelly of postmodernism through the exaltation of a politically crippling irony in both. Still, he understates irony’s potential for political and social engagement, even if reading Juvenal more as an ironic critic of (e.g.) misogyny than as an actual misogynist does have the perhaps suspicious effect of yielding a poet more palatable to modern sensibilities. See Roche (2012, p. 202) for a brief overview of Horatian play with *personae* and how it helps the poet interrogate his own assumptions.

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Katz Contest Winner

“Women Must Weep—Or Unite Against War”: Virginia Woolf’s Feminist Critique of Classical Epic in *To the Lighthouse*

KIT PYNE-JAEGER

Abstract: Previous scholarship on Virginia Woolf’s classicism has acknowledged her debt to Vergil primarily in the context of the *Eclogues* or *Georgics*, and her debt to classical epic as a genre rarely and sparsely. Tremper (1992) and Tudeau-Clayton (2006) have both suggested a reading of “The Lighthouse,” the third part of *To the Lighthouse*, as an example of modernist epic. This paper, conversely, proposes that the novel in its entirety functions as a satirical critique of epic, specifically of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, with the goal of demonstrating the pitfalls of epic ideology as it impacted English society during the First World War.

Keywords: Virginia Woolf, Vergil, epic, satire, pacifism, reception, feminism, *Aeneid*, underworld

In a journal entry for 16 February 1905, Virginia Woolf, then Virginia Stephen, wrote: “I read a bit of Latin the *Georgics* [sic], instead—stately & melodious; but without the vitality of my dear old Greeks. However, there is a charm in Latin, which haunts one. Even that little bit of Virgil with T. in the summer [...] brought a sense of harmony into them, such as for many months they had not known; & therefore I don’t forget it” (*The Early Journals*). Woolf continued to be “haunted” by Vergil throughout her literary career, from her treatment of elegy in the pastoral tradition of the *Eclogues* to her critique of the English public-school fetishization of Roman imperial militarism in *Jacob’s Room*. Woolf’s affection for the *Georgics* as well as the elegiac likeness between *To the Lighthouse* and the *Eclogues* have led previous scholars of Woolf’s classical reception to interpret the novel’s references to “Virgil,” which leave the text unspecified, as referring to either group of shorter poems. Conversely, this paper will argue that *To the Lighthouse*’s receptive relationship with Vergil operates primarily through its ability to function as a subtle feminist critique of the conventions of classical epic, which Woolf understood to be foundational to the patriarchal ideology of heroism that led to England’s self-destruction during the First World War. In *To the Lighthouse*, she satirizes those conventions by invoking, then subverting, the narrative conditions of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, in order to demonstrate the failure of such a self-perpetuating patriarchal ideology in the face of global catastrophe and the failure of male writers as producers of the national mythology that bolsters it.

From the second paragraph of “The Window,” the first third of Woolf’s tripartite novel, the critical subtext of *To the Lighthouse* is clear: this is a biting play on classical epic, intended to evidence the absurdity of its narratological and psychological conventions when applied to 20th-century culture. When Mrs. Ramsay tells her son James that he can visit the titular Lighthouse “if it’s fine tomorrow,” Woolf renders six-year-old James’s response in language that is Odyssean, Aenean, classically and heroically masculine:

To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled, the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night’s darkness and a day’s sail, within touch. [...] he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably candid and pure, frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty [...] (Woolf 1)

Woolf begins her novel *in medias res*, a trope drawn directly from classical epic and characteristic of both Vergil and Homer, by having Mrs. Ramsay answer an unheard question whose specifics must be inferred by the reader. Where the *Aeneid* begins with Aeneas' Trojan fleet caught in a deadly storm during a sailing expedition (*Aeneid* 1.82-123), however, the epic naval journey of *To the Lighthouse* is a little boy's fantasy, a six-year-old's romanticizing of a brief day trip and an excursion by boat to perhaps a thousand feet offshore. As hero of his imaginary "expedition," he has an aspect like the fin de siècle's epic protagonists, polar explorers or military officers lionized to the point of surrealism—one of "stark and uncompromising severity, "impeccably candid and pure," "frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty." Like the application of *in medias res* to a wholly ordinary conversation between a woman and her son, the six-year-old as epic hero has a comic effect that sets the tone for Woolf's slyly effective satire of classical epic elsewhere. Her wry view of the English fetishization of epic narrative is even more apparent in her description of Mr. Ramsay's bleak internal reasoning:

What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure. (Woolf 2)

Mr. Ramsay engages in fantasies of epic heroism no different from his son's; he perceives himself as an Aenean voyager, making a "passage" in "frail barks" to "a fabled land" over the horizon like Latium, the country where Aeneas is destined to found Rome at the conclusion of the *Aeneid* and for which he forsakes other responsibilities, relationships, and ethics. Typical of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century translation of classical epic are phrases like "any mortal being" and "strung from his loins," which further emphasize his self-conception as epic protagonist: a mythic, masculine figure able to transform the course of national history. What renders this self-conception savagely satirical is the fact that Mr. Ramsay's supposed adherence to the principles of classical masculinity—"courage, truth, and the power to endure," suggestive of Aeneas' "*forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*" (*Aen.* 1.204-205)—takes the form of petty cruelty to a child, as irrelevant to the course of history as his son's fantasy of voyage into the unknown and even less heroic. Transplanted into the 20th century, the neo-Romanitas of the epic protagonist falls short of accomplishments that will immortalize him; instead, his Iliadic ideology of heroic bravery, truth and endurance is reified in all-too-human acts of narcissism and brutality. He is Woolf's parody of an epic protagonist, a person attempting to fictionalize himself with recourse to a classically heroic ideology, to immortalize himself as the object of epic poetry by composing an imaginative form of that poetry about himself as ideal Aenean hero.

In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, the midpoint of a twelve-book epic, Aeneas enters the underworld in order to speak with his dead father and see a vision of Rome's imperial future after its founding, still to come, in Latium. "Time Passes," the midpoint of Woolf's tripartite novel, sees the Ramsay family and their boarders enact a similar katabasis as the focus of the narrative moves from the complexity of family life and marriage to loss, death, and the passage of time. Parallels to the *Aeneid* are clear from the first paragraph of "Time Passes," when Mr. Banks concludes, "Well, we must wait for the future to show" (Woolf 88) in parallel to the vision of his future that leads Aeneas to enter the underworld, to the last, when Lily Briscoe sits "bolt upright in bed" (Woolf 101) perhaps in reference to Aeneas leaving the underworld through the Gate of Ivory, one of the "two gates of sleep," which "[sends] false dreams up towards the heavens" (*Aen.* 6.893-896). Yet here too Woolf

maintains her wry, almost parodic attitude towards the Vergilian epic narrative that gripped the men of her social circle so completely. Like the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, the midpoint of *To the Lighthouse* is concerned with an underworld in which takes place a rapid procession of events—birth, fame, death—all subordinate to a grander purpose. However, in Woolf's novel, that grand purpose is the infinitely small changes in and around a house as time passes, rendering its description in epic language comically grandiose and its precedence above human experiences of death and loss, to such a degree as to confine them to parentheticals, disturbing. The house becomes not merely an underworld, not even merely a setting for Woolf's satire of the sacrifice of life to narrative, but in itself a landscape of the wartime mythology she critiques:

Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all) crept round corners and ventured indoors. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing room questioning and wondering, [...] asking, Were they allies? Were they enemies? How long would they endure? (Woolf 89)

When Aeneas must cross the river Acheron to enter the underworld (*Aen.* 6.300ff.) he encounters “the whole throng of the dead [...] rushing to this part of the bank [...] as many as are the leaves that fall in the forest at the first chill of autumn, as many as the birds that flock to land from deep ocean when the cold season of the year drives them over the sea to lands bathed in sun” (*Aen.* 6.307-314), who “wander for a hundred years, fluttering round these shores” (*Aen.* 6.329-330). Here, and elsewhere in Roman literature describing the shades that inhabit the underworld, they appear as airy, fluttering, disembodied yet identifiable images of human beings, strikingly like the personified “airs” capable of asking questions couched in epic language (“Were they allies? Were they enemies?”). The house and its surroundings become the epic underworld, populated by spirits, into which Aeneas descends, an intertextuality that becomes still more explicit with the first parenthetical reference to a death: “[Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty]” (Woolf 90). Also in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas encounters his lover, Dido, queen of Carthage, in the underworld, he begs, “Do not move away. Do not leave my sight. Who are you running from? Fate has decreed that I shall not speak to you again” (*Aen.* 6.466-468); however, Dido “kept her eyes upon the ground and did not look at him” and “rushed away, hating him, into the shadows of the wood” (*Aen.* 6.470-474). Both scenarios depict the “epic protagonist” denied physical contact with the woman he loves due to her untimely death, but Mr. Ramsay is not offered even Aeneas’ closure—he can know neither that his wife will continue to exist in some form nor that any kind of logic, like Dido’s resentment at her abandonment, governs her absence from him. The “underworld” of Woolf’s novel rejects any possibility of death as less than a total loss, a horrific disruption in the progress of daily life.

Within the underworld of the Ramsays’ house, the passage of time and its tangible effects become Woolf’s ironic parallel to the narrative causation, marked by duty, self-sacrifice, and heroism, that drives Aeneas and that drove, too, the deaths of hundreds of young men in the First World War. In autumn, the trees near the house, “ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands” (Woolf 90), a metaphor that evokes, in prose so elaborate it seems overtly satirical, the beauty of war in classical epic. It is, in part, epic glorification of brutal violence, selfless death, and doomed youth in wartime—which characterizes the second half of the *Aeneid* following Book 6, as with Euryalus and Nisus (*Aen.* 9.431-448), Pallas (*Aen.* 10.486-490), and Camilla (*Aen.* 11.816-832)—that resulted in the willingness of young

educated Englishmen, steeped in classical culture and thought, to sacrifice themselves for an abstract ideal of England and the perpetuation of English national mythology.¹ The larger “narrative,” the passage of time, takes on language characteristic of epic, and suggestive of the predictable and predetermined progress of myth, throughout: the sea airs become “advance guards of great armies” (Woolf 91); the stillness of an empty room is “the swaying mantle of silence which [...] wove into itself the falling cries of birds,” recalling the famous proem of the *Iliad*—“many a hero did it yield, a prey to dogs and birds” (*Il.* 1.4-5)—as well as the moment in Book 3 where Helen is seen “weaving a great purple web of double fold [...] broidering many battles of the horse-taming Trojans and the brazen-coated Achaeans” (*Il.* 3.125-129); the First World War appears as “the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance, come, gone; [...] a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath” (Woolf 94), the “purplish stain” of blood invoking one of the epithets most common in Homeric epic, the “wine-dark sea,” and thus conflating the grisliness of the First World War with the world of epic narrative. The wine-dark sea boils up, atemporally, on the surface of the grey English ocean, just as the glorified, self-destructive violence of classical epic has suddenly broken through into the England of the early twentieth century in the form of rabid enthusiasm for the Great War.

The moment in the *Aeneid* when the subordination of individual experience to an epic ideology that values glory, immortality, and the development of a national mythology becomes clearest, however, is when Aeneas witnesses a procession of his descendants, the most important of Rome’s rulers and heroes, in the underworld. Introducing the spirit of Augustus, under whose patronage Vergil composed the *Aeneid*, Aeneas’ father Anchises declares:

Here is the man whose coming you so often hear prophesied, here he is, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, the man who will bring back the golden years to the fields of Latium once ruled over by Saturn, and extend Rome’s empire beyond the Indians and the Garamantes to a land beyond the stars, beyond the yearly path of the sun, where Atlas holds on his shoulder the sky all studded with burning stars and turns it on its axis. (*Aen.* 6.791-798)

Like the other spirits in the procession, from Roman king Silvius Aeneas to doomed youth Marcellus, Augustus is significant not as an individual human being, but as a component of the cycle of Rome’s national myth: as the “son of a god,” it is not humanity but myth that has produced him, and, in “extending Rome’s empire” and bringing back the “golden years” of Saturn, it is that myth to which he contributes and that he perpetuates. In the parenthetical “procession” of “Time Passes,” Woolf, once again, drastically deemphasizes the importance of an individual’s life in order to demonstrate the callousness of epic ideology:

The Spring without a leaf to toss, bare and bright like a virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity, was laid out on fields [...] [Prue Ramsay, leaning on her father’s arm, was given in marriage. What, people said, could have been more fitting? And, they added, how beautiful she looked!] [...] The spring [...] threw her cloak about her, veiled her eyes, averted her head, and among passing shadows and flights of small rain seemed to have taken upon her a knowledge of the sorrows of mankind. [Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said, everything, they said, had promised so well.] (Woolf 93)

¹ E.g. Patrick Shaw-Stewart’s “I saw a man this morning”: “Was it so hard, Achilles, / So very hard to die? / Thou knewest and I know not— / So much the happier I. / I will go back this morning / From Imbros over the sea; / Stand in the trench, Achilles, / Flame-capped, and shout for me.” Heroes of classical epic like Achilles in Homer’s *Iliad* were invariably the examples to whom the war poets turned when seeking bywords for self-sacrifice. See also Vandiver, *Stand in the Trench, Achilles: Classical Receptions in British Poetry of the Great War* (2010).

The personification of the spring as a virgin goddess mirrors the significance of Roman mythological figures like Saturn and Atlas in Vergil's representation of the evolution of the Roman founding myth. Just as Augustus' life is reduced to a cipher for that myth, a signifier of its highest ideal, Prue Ramsay's life and death are reduced to parenthetical asides within an epic narrative of greater importance. Even within the parentheses, the Greek chorus-like commentary allows her no respite from the power of the myth: it is "fitting" for her to be married, because national ideology requires women to be "Angels in the House," propagating the myth as well as the sons who will die for it; women's beauty is one of their few meaningful qualities in epic, hence "how beautiful she looked"; "indeed a tragedy" narrativizes her death, enclosing it neatly in the context of literary genre; "everything, they said, had promised so well" suggests less about Prue's happiness or the success of her adult life than her ability to fulfill an ideal for the "people's" consumption. The complete absence of Prue's inner life in the text, the subsuming of her existence beneath epic narrative, demonstrates the deadly fault of epic ideology—when national myth is at stake, people as people, rather than symbols, become unimportant. Prue's brother Andrew's death in the First World War occurs in the same offhand fashion: "[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous]" (Woolf 94). The absolute unconcern of Woolf's phrasing—"twenty or thirty young men," failing even to specify a particular number—is difficult to read as anything other than an intentional satire of epic perspective, a caricature of the almost cartoonishly brutal catalogues of deaths in battle that make up the majority of the *Iliad* as well as the latter half of the *Aeneid*.

Other scholars, like Margaret Tudeau-Clayton and Ellen Tremper, have discussed previously the significance of reading "The Lighthouse," the third part of the tripartite *To the Lighthouse*, as an example of modernist epic. With respect to Woolf's reception of Vergilian genre convention, Tudeau-Clayton (2006) argues that "'The Window' [corresponds] to pastoral and comedy [...]; 'Time Passes' to georgic and history; and 'The Lighthouse' to epic and tragedy. This last correspondence is suggested [...] through the epic motif of the symbolic journey and the figure of Mr Ramsay as a self-cast epic hero" (Tudeau-Clayton 306). Likewise, reflecting on Woolf's reference to her work as "what? Elegy?" Tremper (1992) comments that "I [...] prefer to emphasize the tentativeness of Woolf's choice, since, in the particular case of *To the Lighthouse*, 'epic' would have done better. It suggests both the past, in which a foundation for the present is celebrated (as in the *Aeneid*), and the heroic proportions of the spiritual adventure of Lily Briscoe" (Tremper 33). Though this paper has made an effort, first and foremost, to illustrate the extent to which classical epic and its wartime reception in early-twentieth-century British culture were decisive in shaping *To the Lighthouse*, it lacks the space to interrogate here previous scholars' conclusions that Woolf's engagement with classical epic was straightforward—namely that she was writing into a tradition rather than deconstructing it—which future scholarship might look to when addressing the influence of epic narrative and formal structure in "The Lighthouse," the section of the novel this paper has excluded. From the evolution of the *Aeneid*'s warrior princess Camilla into a teenage girl with a psychologically complex inner life to the treatment of what would logically be the narrative's ultimate achievement, the success of the "epic journey" to the Lighthouse, "The Lighthouse" is no less cleverly critical of classical epic and its conventions than "Time Passes" or "The Window," and owes the genre, and Woolf's classicism, no less profound a debt.

Cornell University
mp667@cornell.edu

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CANE Student Writing Contest Winner

2020 Topic

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.

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.

Sanguis Sanguinem Habebit.

AIDAN SCULLY

They overtook the open square,
A new dominion to declare,
With panic piercing through the air,
The fear could not be missed.
But hope was fear's eternal foe,
And hope could not be let to grow,
They sought their mighty strength to show,
And so they made the list.

They bared the blade they bore in hand,
The untriumphant traitors' brand,
And claimed to cleanse their cloven land,
Or so they would insist.
The listed names were left for dead,
And sanguine streets were run with red,
For people's sake were people bled,
Or so proclaimed the list.

"The war is over," soldiers say,
"We get to live another day,
But evil must be kept at bay,
And so we must resist.
With weapons we will purge the field,
Ensure our nation's surest shield,
To evil we will never yield,
And so we write the list."

And so from Rome they worked to rid
All those who from the Sullans hid,
And thousands thanked them as they did,
Their wrongs they soon dismissed.
But when that evil came to die,
And blood upon the ground was dry,
They bled the same as you or I,
The same to serve the list.

But list nor soldier would abate,
And servants more of stake than state,
Would count the names of cleanly rate,
Among the evil's midst.
They robbed them of their legal right,
Turned friends to foes in fatal night,
And Romans read at rising light,
The names upon the list.

But what these people did so wrong,
What led their lives to list belong,
Was be the rivals of the strong,

And strength does not desist.
These noble men's ignoble kin,
Who'd break their bond their wealth to win,
Impugned their innocence in sin,
And put them on the list.

And patriots of peace came out,
And shed their sheltered shreds of doubt,
To not the wrong but righteous rout,
Their leaders to assist.
And Roman turned on Roman soon,
All opposition opportune,
And bodies would in streets be strewn
Before they'd doubt the list.

The leader claimed for honest cause,
The senate by their lofty laws,
The people never giving pause,
The names it ought consist.
But once the rule of law had gone,
And from the blade had blood been drawn,
A reign of ruin lingered on,
The ruin of the list.

So Romans, heed me as I warn
So that you may not have to mourn
The loss of those who draw the scorn
Of leaders you enlist.
Challenge those who have in store,
To wage in peace a civil war,
Or find, as silent men before,
Your name upon the list.

Taunton High School
Teacher: Jessica Ouellette

Message from the President

TERESA RAMSBY

Despite the global pandemic, and the nature of this year's challenges for all educators and students at every level, CANE has carried on. As president in the 2020-2021 academic year, I have seen first-hand evidence of the leadership and proactive engagement of our organization's members and committees. It has been enlightening and encouraging to see the dedication and innovative efforts of the members of this organization. CANE has indeed done a lot this year, which I am happy to report in what follows.

Our Education Programs Committee, chaired by Dr. Lindsay Sears, organized pedagogical gatherings on Zoom in the fall, and provided much needed funds for educators. The CANE Membership Committee, under the new leadership of Dr. Meredith Safran, has increased communication with our membership with a quarterly newsletter and through a survey provided at the annual meeting, and is undertaking many steps to attract more people to CANE and increase involvement among members. In July, I commissioned an *ad hoc* committee, chaired by Dr. Peter Barrios Lech, to oversee development of a scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students who are historically under-represented in our discipline. The results of that six-month discussion is the new Helen Maria Chesnutt Scholarship for Equity in Classical Study, funded in part by the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund for Classical Studies. The scholarship will be granted annually to one or more students engaged in projects, professional development, or coursework relevant to our discipline. Please keep an eye on the website for updated information about the application, due in January of 2022, and inform any students who might be interested.

The Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, created in September as an *ad hoc* committee, co-chaired by Dr. Jason Moralee and Dr. Lindsay Sears, and slated to become a standing committee, undertook to plan three events for our 2021 annual meeting, including the plenary panel that featured Dr. Shelley Haley, Dr. Dominic Machado, and John Bracey, who together discussed the ways our field can become more accessible and more inclusive; it was a riveting conversation. Gregory Stringer and the newly formulated Classics in Curricula committee are working with renewed vigor to become a greater force in our region for promoting and defending Latin and Ancient Greek programs, and for providing more opportunities for teachers to share ideas about making courses about the ancient Mediterranean more accessible and relevant.

Amanda Loud, our CANE Summer Institute Director, is hard at work to make the 2021 CSI the best one possible, considering it will take place on Zoom in July. Please check our website to read more about the opportunities it offers for courses and evening lectures. Our Curator of Funds, Roger Stone, and the members of our finance committee, as well as our highly dedicated Treasurer, Ruth Breindel, and our Auditors, Shirley Lowe and Paula Chabot, have all made sure the fiscal state of CANE remains strong. Our Media Coordinator, Ben Revkin, our Past President, Dr. John Higgins, and our Executive Secretary, Kevin Ballestrini, continued to work to make the events and decisions of CANE as transparent and accessible as possible.

The State Representatives for CANE consistently do the important work of coordinating the efforts of CANE with the state organizations for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Last, but not least, Dr. Aaron Seider, Editor of the *New England Classical Journal*, has worked tirelessly to make this journal, our organization's flagship publication, available to all, and has attracted high quality content, which is only right for an academic publication placed in New England!

The 2021 CANE Annual Meeting occurred successfully on Zoom on March 13 and 20. The meeting featured six paper sessions, eight workshops, three events, including the plenary panel, on social justice in classics, one special presentation by Phuc Tran (the nationally renowned speaker, memoirist, and former Latin teacher), and a keynote presentation by Michele Valerie Ronnick on Helen Maria Chesnutt. The meeting also hosted a Business meeting where voting occurred, obituaries were read, reports were submitted, and the annual Writing Contest winner read his winning entry. The meeting also offered affinity groups, and a closing, award-ceremony where Matthew Katsenes of Moultonborough Academy received the Matthew I. Wiencke Teaching Excellence Award, and Dr. Mark Pearsall of Glastonbury High School was presented the Barlow-Beach Award for Distinguished Service. Emma Vanderpool (CANE's MA state rep.) and a team of technology experts made sure the meeting ran smoothly. The 2022 Annual Meeting, under the supervision of incoming president, Dr. Lindsay Sears, will take place at UMass Amherst, most likely in-person, on April 8-9, 2022. Mark your calendars!

It has been a great honor to serve as president of CANE, and I thank all the officers and members of the CANE Executive Committee for their aid in making what could have been a difficult year, from my perspective, one of the best!

Curate ut valeatis,
Teresa Ramsby
President of CANE, 2020-2021
Professor of Classics
Director of UMass MAT Program
UMass Amherst

Announcements

The Helen Maria Chesnutt Scholarships for Equity in Classical Study

The Classical Association of New England (CANE) wants to do its part in expanding the focus, both geographically and temporally, of the field of Classics; in remedying the lack of diversity in Classics teaching staff and student body; and in promoting the health and growth of CANE itself, by establishing the **Helen Maria Chesnutt Scholarships for Equity in Classical Study**, funded in part by the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund for Classical Studies.

Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880-1969), born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, was the second daughter of acclaimed African American novelist Charles Chesnutt. After earning her B.A. from Smith College (1902) and her M.A. in Latin from Columbia University (1925), she taught Latin for many years at Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio. She co-authored a Latin textbook *The Road to Latin* (1932), which, combining a reading-approach with traditional grammar/translation approaches, anticipated some of the now research-backed best principles in Latin pedagogy: an emphasis on reading and on learning new vocabulary and syntax in a meaningful context.¹

Eligibility:

Intended Recipients. The scholarship is intended for traditionally underrepresented groups in the Classics. We include, but do not limit the definition of “underrepresented groups” to: African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, Native-American, and Pacific-Islander students.

Residency. Applicant(s) must either reside in New England or attend a school in New England.

Level. The scholarship is intended for undergraduate and/or graduate students.

NB: CANE officers, committee chairs, or state representatives, members of the CANE award selection committees, or any of their respective family members are not eligible to apply for this award.

Award:

Purpose. The scholarship is intended to support undergraduate and graduate students, from groups historically underrepresented in the field, to further their study of the ancient world, broadly conceived both in geographic limits and time-frame, including reception-studies, which thereby extends the temporal span of the studied period down to the present day.

¹ See https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_road_to_Latin/nHcNAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed November 5, 2020; and abstract of the CAMWS presentation by Michele Valerie Ronnick: “Within CAMWS Territory: Helen M. Chesnutt (1880-1969), Black Latinist,” <https://camws.org/meeting/2005/abstracts2005/ronnick.html>, accessed November 5, 2020.

Amount of Scholarship. Up to \$5,000. This award total of 5,000 may be split among more than one applicant.

Awards associated with the Scholarship. The award comes with a one-year renewable membership to CANE and the chance to be on a future selection committee for this award.

Submitting an Application:

The Proposal. Applicants will submit a proposal setting forth their intended use for the scholarship funds.

The following is not an exhaustive list of suggested proposals: these may be for attendance at or participation in programs, workshops, or seminars not available at the student's institution; seed-money for organizing conferences, especially on non-traditional topics; field work; language-training; and support for research.

The proposal will consist of no more than two pages, double-spaced, with a standardly-used 12-point font. It will include a statement describing how the scholarship would help advance the candidate's career/research goals, and in what specific ways it would broaden their current knowledge of the field/pedagogical practice.

Two letters of recommendation. One of these should explicitly say that the candidate is a suitable recipient for this award.

Budget. The budget will clearly and succinctly itemize and explain each of the costs associated with the proposal. The budget should be under two pages, and follow the formatting guidelines of the Proposal.

Transcript(s). Official transcripts are required in order to verify that the applicant is currently an undergraduate or graduate student and to help assess the proposal.

When and How to Submit the Application. All the above elements of the Application Packet for the inaugural award of the *Helen Maria Chesnutt Scholarship for Equity in Classical Study* must be emailed on or before January 15 of the calendar year. Please check the CANE website (caneweb.org) for updated information regarding where to send application materials.

Criteria for a Successful Application:

- **Quality of the proposal.** The selection committee welcomes a variety of proposals, but will give special attention to candidates exploring non-traditional avenues of research; proposals whose aim is to broaden the applicants' skills in inclusive pedagogy or knowledge of areas falling outside of the usual limits of Classics (examples include: a course in Coptic or Hebrew; a weekend seminar on inclusive pedagogy).
- **Merit.** The applicant's merit will be assessed in a number of ways, but recommendations written on the students' behalf will carry particular weight.

Expectations of Awardee(s)

- The awardee(s) must report afterward on how they used the scholarship and how it helped them to advance their career/research goals. If the scholarship was used to further their research, the awardee(s) may instead choose to present the findings at a CANE meeting.

In Search of Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880-1969), Black Latinist

MICHELE VALERIE RONNICK

Abstract: Classical scholars have begun to delineate the dynamic pattern of black classicism. This new subfield of the classical tradition involves the analysis of the creative response to classical antiquity by artists as well as the history of the professional training in classics of scholars, teachers and students in high schools, colleges and universities. To the first group belongs Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880-1969). Born in Fayetteville, NC, Chesnutt was the second daughter of acclaimed African American novelist, Charles W. Chesnutt (1858-1932). She earned her B.A. from Smith College in 1902 and her M.A. in Latin from Columbia University in 1925. She was a member of the American Philological Association and the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. Her life was spent teaching Latin at Central High School in Cleveland, OH. This is the first full scale account of her career.

Keywords: African-American intellectuals, Latin language, female classicists, black philologists, high school pedagogy, classical education

My search for Helen Chesnutt began many years ago when I added an image of her from Smith College Archives to my photo installation, "12 Black Classicists," which with the support of the James Loeb Classical Library Foundation made its debut at the Detroit Public Library in September, 2003. Helen's photo was added in 2004 and the installation became "13 Black Classicists." In my efforts to stimulate interest in her, I gave a lecture in April, 2005 at the 101st annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in Madison, Wisconsin titled: "Within CAMWS Territory: Helen M. Chesnutt (1880-1969) Black Latinist." In March, 2013 I spoke about her via SKYPE to Mary Lou Burke's students at Deep Creek High School in Chesapeake, Virginia and in October of the same year I presented "Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880-1969): Pioneer African-American Latin Teacher," to the members of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States in Philadelphia. In April, 2018 I studied her father for the CAMWS panel that inaugurated the James S. Ruebel Memorial Scholarship in Albuquerque, New Mexico giving a paper titled: "Apuleius in the Work of African American Novelist, Charles W. Chesnutt (1858- 1932)."¹ Here is the most recent account of my findings, a portrait of Helen Maria Chesnutt from cradle-to-grave.

Susan Perry Chesnutt (1861-1940), a teacher who was from a well-established family in Fayetteville, NC, and Charles Waddell Chesnutt (1858-1932) were married June 6, 1878. She was four days from her seventeenth birthday, and he was just shy of his twentieth. He was a consummate autodidact and was constantly reading and working on self-improvement. He studied, German, French, and Latin on his own and at one point hired a graduate of Davidson College named Hodges to tutor him in ancient Greek.² From 1877 to 1883 he worked at the Howard Normal School in Fayetteville where he was principal for four years. In 1880 he

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Paul Hay of Case Western Reserve University for his help in locating various articles concerning Helen Chesnutt's career published in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and to Craig VanDevere, Ethel Chesnutt's great grandson for attending the presentation of this study on March 20, 2020. See Joy Hakanson Colby, "Exhibit Uncovers Little-Known African-American Intellectuals," *Detroit Free Press* (Sept. 6, 2003): B-1. See <https://camws.org/meeting/2005/abstracts2005/ronnick.html>, <https://caas-cw.org/caas/meetings/> and <https://camws.org/2018PanelsWorkshops> and Michele Valerie Ronnick, "Chesnutt, Helen Maria," <https://dbcs.rutgers.edu/all-scholars/north-american-scholars/chesnutt-helen-maria>

² Concerning her father's study of Latin, French, German and Greek see Helen M. Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1952): 16, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30 and Frances Richardson Keller, *An American Crusade: The Life of Charles Waddell Chesnutt* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978): 49, 60-61, 76-77.

started a Latin class at his home where ten men and women met twice a week in the evenings. Each paid one dollar a month -which turns out to be roughly thirteen cents a session.³

Their first three children were born in Fayetteville: Ethel in April, 1879, Helen Maria in December, 1880, Edwin Jackson Chesnutt in September 1883. Dorothy Katherine was born in Cleveland in December, 1890.⁴ By 1884 the Chesnutts were settled in Cleveland and all four children would attend Central High School (CHS) there. In September, 1893 Ethel and Helen entered CHS, and both took the classical course.⁵ After the sisters' graduation Cleveland's Western Reserve University was immediately considered for college, but Charles and Susan found the girls acting disillusioned and dispirited. After inquiry they learned that a student at CHS had told the sisters: "After all. . . you are negroes. We know that you are nice girls, and everybody thinks the world of you, but Mother says that while it was all right for us to go together when we were younger, now that we are growing up, we must consider Society and we just can't go together anymore."⁶ That is when Charles and Susan decided on Smith College in Northampton, MA. Charles had visited Northampton in March, 1889 at the invitation of his friend the writer George Washington Cable and he had liked what he saw there.⁷

With trunks full of beautiful clothes, which Helen described as "[c]hallis dressing sacks with flutings of gay ribbon all round them; lounging robes of French flannel and eiderdown; dresses, the skirts of which were lined with silk and interlined with horse hair, and edged with brush braid to stand the wear as they swept along the sidewalks. Braids and buttons and bands for trimming; leg o' mutton sleeves, collars heavily boned to stand up straight behind the ears; these filled the wardrobe with beauty, and the hearts of the girls with joy," the two girls arrived at Smith in the fall of 1897.⁸ And their parents, as Helen recalled "were both going to college along with their daughters."⁹ Soon after on September 30, 1897 Charles advised Ethel: "Remember that you are there not only to have fun, but to study and prepare yourselves for future usefulness."¹⁰

Documents from Smith College Archives reveal that Helen and Ethel took four years of Latin and one of Greek. Ethel also took courses in French and German. Helen took courses in French and Italian as well.¹¹ Their stay at Smith was not without trouble. A diary notation written on January 9, 1899 by Professor Mary Augusta Jordan, one of Smith's best-known English professors, described the situation. "Then I had a sad interview with the younger Miss Chesnutt. They are experiencing the color line in a place where they ought to be secure. I appealed to the President who proposes to take a hand himself." The president at that time was L. Clark Seelye, and what he did is not clear for the incident is not mentioned in his personal papers.

We do know that Helen and Ethel had four different residences during their years at Smith. About this Nanci Young chief archivist at Smith College told me: "While boarding students off campus was not unusual at this time ... I do think that it is unusual to have

³ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 26.

⁴ See the collections of photographs at the Cleveland Public Library, *The Miscellaneous Memorabilia of Charles W. Chesnutt* <https://cplorg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4014coll12>.

See also various materials at the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH <https://www.wrhs.org/research/search/>, The Charles Chesnutt Archives and Special Collections at Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC <http://library.unccsu.edu/archives/about-special-collections/finding-aid-for-charles-w-chesnutt/biographical-information> and in the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library at Fisk University, Nashville, TN <https://www.fisk.edu/academics/library/special-collection-and-archives/>

⁵ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 66.

⁶ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 75.

⁷ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 50, 76.

⁸ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 79.

⁹ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 81.

¹⁰ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 82.

¹¹ See the letter dated April 16, 1971 written by Helen B. Bishop, Smith College Registrar, to Frances Richardson Keller who had inquired at the time about the courses Ethel and Helen took in the Smith College Archives.

students reside in 4 different places over the 4 years. Whether the 'colorline' the Chesnutts [were] was experiencing was within the Smith community or the town community, I am afraid I can't determine."¹²

Letters sent to and from Cleveland reveal that the sisters were also concerned with social activities. Helen's father, the man who had spent much time in his youth teaching himself Latin, jestingly told Helen in a letter dated February 28, 1898: "It pains me to learn that you haven't time to learn how to 'skee.' I haven't the faintest idea of what 'skeeing' is, but it is a keen disappointment to me that you don't learn everything in the curriculum. Can't you take up 'skeeing' in your second or third year? Is it harder or easier than Latin? Perhaps you could drop mathematics and take it up."¹³

On October 12, 1900 the sisters' parents met the parents of Julia Harwood Caverno (1862-1949), who would rise during her career at Smith College from Instructor to Professor of Greek, at the home of Chesnutt family friends, the Amblers. Otelia Cromwell, the first black student to graduate from Smith College, had lived in Caverno's home for two years.¹⁴ In 1905 Caverno was the only woman on the founding committee of Classical Association of New England (CANE) and she served as the association's president in 1926-1927. About the Cavernos, Charles wrote to his daughters: "They expressed their intention of looking you up, or hoping to see you at Northampton ... I hope you may meet them as they are very nice people."¹⁵

Not long after Helen suffered a bout of severe eye strain and debilitating headaches, and she returned home to Cleveland. After six weeks at a Normal High School learning techniques of pedagogy, she went to Baltimore to teach English for a short time at a colored high school, and then in March, 1902 she returned to Smith College to finish her degree.¹⁶

On November 26, 1902, after graduating from Smith College Ethel married Edward Christopher Williams (1871-1929).¹⁷ The couple's wedding was held at the Chesnutt home on 64 Brenton Street in Cleveland and Reverend Wilson Reiff Stearly, rector of Emmanuel Episcopal, a white Church, to which the Chesnutts belonged, officiated.¹⁸ Williams had trained as a librarian at Adelbert College and is considered today to be the first professionally trained black librarian. He was principal of Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. and in 1916 became Librarian at Howard University where he also served as chair of the Romance Languages Department. Between 1925-1926 he published as a serial in the *Messenger* an epistolary novel of the Harlem Renaissance titled *When Washington Was in Vogue*.¹⁹ Helen's own interests were 'stellar' shall we say in their own way. In 1901 she was a Senior Member of the Telescopium Society at Smith College.²⁰

¹² See my earlier examination of this incident in Michele Valerie Ronnick, "Classical Education and the Advancement of African American Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Women Classical Scholars: Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly*, eds. Rosie Wyles and Edith Hall, Oxford University Press, 2016): 189-192. Criticism across racial lines was not unilateral however. In 1914 after appointment as a probation officer to the Juvenile Court in 1914, Dorothy was described by Mrs. P. Johnson Tarrer and Mrs. Lethia Cousins Fleming, two well-known African-American women, as "not 'in touch' with her people of the community." See "Cleveland Sixth City," *Cleveland Gazette* (January 24, 1914): 2.

¹³ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 90.

¹⁴ See George E. Dimock, "Caverno, Julia Harwood," <https://dbcs.rutgers.edu/all-scholars/8600-caverno-julia-harwood>. See "Otelia Cromwell: The First African American to Graduate from Smith: Class of 1900," <https://smithbs.tripod.com/id15.html> Caverno also gave shelter to another African American student, Carrie E.S. Lee, class of 1917 when her would-be roommate objected Miss Lee's presence. See <https://libex.smith.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/black-students-alliance/carrie-lee>

¹⁵ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 153.

¹⁶ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 164.

¹⁷ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 166-168; 183.

¹⁸ *Cleveland Gazette* (Nov. 29, 1902); 3; *Colored American* (December 6, 1902): 2.

¹⁹ E.J. Josey, "Edward Christopher Williams: A Librarian's Librarian," *Journal of Library History* (April, 1969): 106-122. He also published a short essay titled "Latin Again," *Howard Record* 17(Dec., 1922): 66-67.

²⁰ On the members of the Telescopium Club in 1901, see *Smith College Annual*, 1901, p. 108. Helen also published an essay during this period titled, "The Problem of the South," *Smith College Monthly* (November,

Helen was not happy, however, about returning to Cleveland, and told her father: "I am not comfortable in Cleveland and never was, and I have always vowed that I would not settle down in that city ... And now you ask me to return ... I can't imagine anything more distasteful. I tell you all this because I want you to know exactly where I stand in this matter."

Despite her misgivings, ultimately her father's wishes prevailed and she reluctantly accepted his plan: "It seems to be up to me to do it. Well, I have stood a lot more than people give me credit for, and a few more blows won't materially affect my ultimate good."²¹

Helen began her career working as a substitute teacher at CHS from 1902-1904; in 1905 she taught biology and in 1910 Algebra and Latin.²² CHS was not only the oldest school in Cleveland, it was the first free public high school west of the Allegheny Mountains.²³ College preparatory work was its focus. In 1918 for example the school had four full time Latin teachers.

Her sister, Ethel, had also been teaching, and at William H. Council's school (today Alabama A & M University) was an instructor of Latin and English in 1905-1906.²⁴ Council (1848-1909) had been born in slavery in Fayetteville, and was sold south to Alabama where he had seen two of his brothers auctioned away in 1857, never to see them again.

The Williams were a dynamic couple and *inter alia* gave an evening reception for W. E. B. Du Bois at their Cleveland home, 71 Elberon Avenue, on December 10, 1903. Ethel was herself busy writing, lecturing and teaching. In 1906 the *Cleveland Gazette* announced that Ethel had "earned a literary reputation in her own right. She is the author of some very meritorious poems which have been published here and there in a number of magazines and newspapers. Mrs. Williams is at present engaged in teaching at Normal, AL being the instructor of Latin and German at Prof. W. H. Council's school."²⁵

9719 Lamont Avenue was the Chesnutt family home from 1904 to 1936. It was a spacious and book filled house. And Helen was a serious gardener. *The Cleveland Gazette* noted in 1916 the "garden of 3,000 tulips" that she had planted.²⁶

Her sister Dorothy, younger by eleven years, also studied classical and modern languages, but she did this at Western Reserve University (WRU). In May of 1911 she dressed up as the goddess Themis at Western Reserve.²⁷ After her graduation from WRU's College for Women, Charles wanted Ethel's husband, Edward, to help Dorothy get a position at Dunbar High School in Washington, but she did not like Washington and returned to Cleveland. She worked in the probate court for two years and later taught French, Latin, and English in Wilson Junior High School. In the summer of 1921, she studied at the University of Chicago. In March, 1924 she married John Gamaliel Slade (1890-1976), a physician who had trained

1902):116-121.

²¹ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 165.

²² See *Central High Monthly*, (Feb., 1913): 15. *Central High Monthly*, (1905): 8 which lists biology and *Central High Monthly* (1911): 31 which lists algebra and Latin.

²³ "Central High School," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, <https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/central-high-school>

²⁴ See *Organization Lists of the Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations in the United States: U.S. Department of Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, December, 1905): 8. See Christopher Blue, "William Hooper Council (1849-1909)," <https://www.blackpast.org/african-americanhistory/council-william-hooper-1849-1909/> and Alabama American history, <https://alafrikanamerican.com/2013-honorees/william-hooper-council/>

²⁵ *Cleveland Gazette* (Dec. 12, 1903):3; *Cleveland Gazette* (May 19, 1906): 3. See also Ethel's address at the Y.M.C.A. "At the National Capitol," *Indianapolis Freeman* (Feb. 19, 1901): 1. On hosting her sisters. see "The Week in Society," *Washington Bee* (Dec. 24, 1910): 5 and "Mrs. Williams Received," *Washington Bee* (Dec. 30, 1911): 5. *Cleveland Gazette* (Sept. 25, 1909):3 reported on Ethel's plans to teach at Tuskegee.

²⁶ See "Sixth City," *Cleveland Gazette* (May 20, 1916): 3.

²⁷ Sarah Starr, Western Reserve Historical Society Library and Archives, personal correspondence (Nov. 29, 2003) provided a description of the writing on the back of a photo of Dorothy dressed as Themis: "DKC in the Golden Mean [. . .] presented by the College for Women [Fee?] Day, May 6, 1911." Dorothy's wedding was announced in the papers, "Cleveland Social and Personal," *Cleveland Gazette* (April 19, 1924): 3 and the invitation that W.E.B Du Bois received to the event is in the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. <https://credo.library.umass.edu/vew/full/mums312-b026-i229>

at Howard University's Medical School. They had a son, John Chesnutt Slade (1925-2001) and resided in Cleveland.²⁸

Between 1914 and 1919 Helen was regularly mentioned in Chicago's leading black newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*, as one of the women teaching in Cleveland's schools. The columnist Alexander O. Taylor, who mentioned her over the years, wrote on September 21, 1918: "Our citizens of Cleveland have reason to feel proud of the splendid recognition given our girls as teachers in the mixed schools of the city regardless of color. We have fifty-five race girls and women teaching ... Cleveland can rightfully claim to be the banner city in this respect."²⁹

In 1910 Helen suffered digestive trouble, and that summer Booker T. Washington invited her to stay at his home, The Oaks, on the campus of the Tuskegee Institute. Her brother Edwin had begun working as Washington's secretary that same year and would stay on until 1912. During her stay she was especially thrilled "by the awe-inspiring experience to see Halley's Comet spreading out all over" the Alabama skies.³⁰

She resumed teaching at CHS. In January 1913 the Olympian Club for Latin students put on a play titled, "The Roman School House," by Susan Paxson of Omaha, Nebraska. The play was performed in full costume and the *Central High Monthly* in February, 1913 reported that the "Cicero students took much pleasure in the flogging of Catiline."³¹ She was also working with the Girls Literary Society that year.³²

During this period she set up the Home Garden Club. A photo of Helen with the club shows her with one of CHS's most famous pupils, Langston Hughes, who was vice-president of the club.³³ But she knew other talented students such as Robert Coleman, the fourteen-year-old class valedictorian in 1930. Helen was quoted in the *Pittsburgh Courier* saying: "Robert is one of the most remarkable boys I have ever taught ... Latin and mathematics, which are usually the most difficult subjects to teach, are his favorites. He seems to grasp the most complicated assignments with amazing swiftness. To me he is a genius."³⁴

In the summer of 1921, Helen taught Latin at the Foreign Language School at Western Reserve University.³⁵ In January, 1923 she gave a party for the senior high school women teachers. The party started at 4 p.m. There were thirty-two guests, music by the high school orchestra, and supper.³⁶ By then already in her early 40s she entered the graduate school of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University. On October 28, 1925 she graduated with an M.A. degree in Latin.³⁷ She was two months from her 45th birthday.

We do not know who her professors were, but on the staff at that time were: Grace Goodale, Frank Moore, Gertrude Hirst, Nelson McCrea, Eugene Strittmatter, Cassius Jackson Kesyer, William Westermann, Charles Knapp, William Oldfather and Moses Hadas.³⁸ Wes Lawrence who interviewed Helen for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in 1967

²⁸ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 276, 295.

²⁹ Alexander O. Taylor, "Brief News from the Buckeye State: Banner City for Race Teachers," *Chicago Defender* (Sept. 21, 1918): 3; See also n. a. "Cleveland, Ohio," *Chicago Defender* (Sept. 22, 1914): 2; n. a., "Cleveland, Ohio," (July 4, 1914): 2; Alexander O. Taylor, "Brief News from the Buckeye State," *Chicago Defender* (Feb. 2, 1915): 2; Alexander O. Taylor, "Brief News from the Buckeye State," *Chicago Defender* (Sept. 18, 1915): 2; Alexander O. Taylor, "Cleveland Women Appointed Teachers," *Chicago Defender* (Sept. 22, 1917): 2; Alexander O. Taylor, "The Buckeye State," *Chicago Defender* (Oct. 14, 1919): 15.

³⁰ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 234-237.

³¹ See *Central High Monthly* (Feb. 1913): 15.

³² See *Central High School Annual* (1913): 52.

³³ See Helen M. Chesnutt, "The Home Garden Club of Central High School," *Cleveland Women* 1 (March 9, 1919): 18; "Cleveland Social and Personal," (Jan. 12, 1918): 3; *Central High School Annual* (June, 1919) lists her as faculty advisor and Hughes as the club's vice-president.

³⁴ See "14 Year Old Lad Class Valedictorian," *Pittsburgh Courier* (June 7, 1930): 5.

³⁵ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 289.

³⁶ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 292.

³⁷ Abby M. Lester, Assistant Archivist, Columbia University Archives and Columbiana Library, personal correspondence, (May 13, 2003): "There is no listing of a master's thesis for Helen Chesnutt."

³⁸ Personal correspondence with Jocelyn K. Wilk, Associate Director, Columbia University Archives and

quoted her as saying: "I got a master's degree from Columbia. . . But this was years later, in 1925, and I got it as a matter of convenience. They kept asking me to teach summer school in Cleveland, and I tired of it. So I went to summer school at Columbia and got my degree."³⁹ She had joined the American Philological Association (APA) five years before in 1920 and was on the group's Executive Committee in 1920. She remained a member until 1934, and it is quite likely that she is the first black woman to join the APA.⁴⁰

In 1925 Helen published an article in the *School Review* entitled "The Story of the Fasces at Central High School." In it she described her students' interest in the fasces on the U.S. dime, and how her students had drafted a letter on the chalkboard to send to A.A. Weinman, the coin's designer. They were thrilled when he replied. Helen wrote: "Then the Olympian Club ... composed of eleventh and twelfth grade Latin students ... acquired a romantic and thrilling interest in the beauty and significance of the fasces [and] decided to adopt it for its symbol."

With parents' help, the students made a life size model and put it up on a classroom wall. They decided that new initiates to the Olympian Club would have to wear pins of miniature fasces, and that they would make them out of twine, gold-colored safety pins and twigs. These little pins and the club were wildly popular, and Helen noted: "One little boy from the junior high school came in to ask: How long does a fellow have to take Latin before he can wear one of those things?"

Helen's principal suggested that the club make 200 of the pins to "send as souvenirs to the members of the Ohio Latin Conference which was soon to meet at Oberlin." After two weeks of careful work, Helen said "200 little fasces had been made. They were tagged with ribbon that said 'Compliments of the Olympian Club, Central High School,' & packed into a 5 pound candy box for shipment to Oberlin."⁴¹ Some fifty years later in 1985, a friend of Langston Hughes, Rowena Jelliffe recalled CHS as 'quite an extraordinary place' "having an unusually competent group of people. . . [t]here was Helen Chesnutt's excitement, even in the teaching of Latin, which made her classes something that everybody wanted to get into."⁴² According to Wes Lawrence, Helen was "remembered by hundreds of Clevelanders and former Clevelanders as the vivacious and brilliant teacher under whom they studied Latin at Central High School."⁴³

In November, 1927 she suffered a ruptured appendix and was rushed to the Cleveland Clinic Hospital. Peritonitis set in and she was very sick. She was back in the hospital in June, 1928, but after some months of rest her health was restored, and she sailed to Europe in July, 1929 with her friend and fellow teacher Alta Myrtle Bien. They stayed until September.⁴⁴

In January 1931 she published "Ecce Vergilius" in which she described how her students celebrated the bimillennium of Vergil's birth by putting on an elaborate production of Frank Justus Miller's 1908 play "Dido the Phoenician Queen."⁴⁵

In 1932 she co-authored with Martha Taylor Whittier Olivenbaum (1880-1959) and Nellie Lucille Price Rosebaugh (1896-1989) a beginning Latin textbook entitled *The Road to Latin: A First-Year Latin Book* with the John C. Winston Company which was edited

Columbiana Library (May 15, 2003) who sent catalogue pages with faculty for the years 1922/23, 1923/24, 1924/25 and 1925/26.

³⁹ Wes Lawrence, "The Road to Latin," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (February 23, 1967):11.

⁴⁰ *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 61(1930): lxxvi shows 1920 as her first year of membership and *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 65(1934): lxxxviii shows 1934 as her last. To learn more about African American members of the APA see Michele Valerie Ronnick, *Twelve African American Members of the Society for Classical Studies: The First Five Decades (1875-1925): A Special Publication for the Sesquicentennial of the Society for Classical Studies* (New York, Society for Classical Studies, 2018).

⁴¹ See Helen M. Chesnutt, "The Story of the Fasces at Central High School," *School Review* 33(1925): 303-306.

⁴² See St. Clair Bourne, "Rowena Jelliffe on Langston Hughes," *The Langston Hughes Review* 15(Winter, 1997): 79.

⁴³ See Wes Lawrence, "The Road to Latin," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Feb. 23, 1967): 11.

⁴⁴ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 299, 302, and 309.

⁴⁵ See Helen M. Chesnutt, "Ecce Vergilius," *Classical Journal* 26 (Jan. 1931): 273-278.

by Emile de Sauzé, (1878-1964), director of Foreign Languages of the Cleveland Board of Education.⁴⁶ The reviews of *The Road to Latin* were favorable. Dorrance S. White of the University of Iowa wrote: "The subject matter is cleverly chosen and arranged. It affords an excellent medium for teaching Roman private life, legend, myth and history. It has in mind the pupil who can take only one year and would like to get the most out of his Latin study ... Despite several blemishes, the reviewer would place it among the few leading first year Latin textbooks." A few years later Mark E. Hutchinson made a brief mention of the book in a survey article that he wrote, and B. W. Mitchell summed up the book in his 1939 review as one that "supplies a very adequate road, paved solidly and smoothly. There are no detours, no aimless wanderings ..." ⁴⁷ The book was published again in subsequent years: 1938, 1945, and in 1949.

Helen's co-authors were of Caucasian descent. Nellie Lucille Price Rosebaugh was a student at Central High School in 1914 whom Helen must have met at the time. She went on to earn a B.A. at WRU's College for Women in 1918, and an M.A. from the same institution in 1942. Martha Taylor Whittier Olivenbaum earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in 1904 with a thesis titled: "The Influence of Politics upon Art at Athens" and in 1906 an M.A. from Ewing College.⁴⁸

The book, 544 pages in length, is very well illustrated and has more women in it than one might expect including matrons, slave girls, and hand maidens. Suffice it so say a full analysis of the book has yet to be made. It was advertised in an issue of *Auxilium Latinum* published in Brooklyn NY in November, 1932, and it was used at the University of Michigan as the book to use for its correspondence course in Latin in 1938.⁴⁹

In 1935 John Winton issued a companion volume titled *A Workbook to Accompany The Road to Latin* by Virginia Gatch Markham (1898-1999).⁵⁰ Markham, who had earned an M.A. from the University of Chicago in 1925, taught in the Cleveland schools from 1930-1963. Emile de Sauzé was the editor of her book, and it is not clear why Markham did the work and not the original authors. But they came together again in 1940 to write *The Cleveland Plan for Teaching of Foreign Languages with Special Reference to Latin*, (John C. Winston, 1940). Both the textbook and the workbook were advertised in the *Classical Journal* in October, 1939.

The membership list of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South for 1935-1936 included three of the four women: Rosebaugh, Markham, and Chesnutt. Helen had been a member of the Association since 1917, and again as in the case of the APA, she

⁴⁶ Dr. Sauzé created the "Cleveland Plan" for foreign languages which emphasized listening and speaking as well as reading and writing to teach foreign languages in Cleveland's schools. See Walter W. DuBreuil, "A Tribute to Dr. Emile de Sauzé," *The Modern Language Journal* 32(1948): 608-609.

⁴⁷ See Dorrance S. White, "Chesnutt, Helen M., Olivenbaum, Martha W., and Rosebaugh, Nellie P., *The Road to Latin*: Philadelphia, The John C. Winston Company (1932) Pp. xvi+544. \$1.05," *Classical Journal* 28(1932-1933): 540-544; Mark E. Hutchinson, "Some Needed Research in the Teaching of Latin," *Classical Journal* 29(Feb. 1934): 350; B. W. Mitchell, "The Road to Latin. A First Year Latin Book. By Helen M. Chesnutt, Martha Whittier Olivenbaugh, Nellie Price Rosebaugh, Edited by E.B de Sauze, Ph.D. director of Foreign Languages, Cleveland Board of Education. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company (1932). Pp. xvi, 544." *Classical Weekly* (May 11, 1939): 188-189. D.P.L. "Book Notes: The Road to Latin by H. M. Chestnutt, M. W. Olivenbaum and N. P. Rosebaugh," *Classical Outlook* 16 (November, 1938): 19 makes brief mention of the 1938 edition noting: "To the former edition have been added at the chapter ends Latin proverbs, word derivation, interesting additional notes on the material in the chapter, vocabulary exercises, etc. At the back of the book five pages of review have been added in the form of completion, identification and translation exercises."

⁴⁸ On Rosebaugh see *Central High School Annual* (1914): 19, 22, 102 and *The College for Women in the City of Cleveland: Catalogue for 1918-1919* (Western Reserve University Press, Cleveland, OH, 1919) "degrees conferred June 12, 1918," on page 75. Personal correspondence with Tom Steman, archivist at Case Western Reserve University Archives (June 18, 2004), states that Nellie earned "an M.A. from the graduate school on 1942." On Olivenbaum see *University of Wisconsin Yearbook*, (1904): 124 and *A Detailed Record of Delta Delta Delta, 1888-1907*, eds. Amy Olgen Parmalee and Rachel Louise Fitch (Mail Print Company, 1907): 164.

⁴⁹ University of Michigan, *Supervised Correspondence Study Courses, 1938-1939* 40 (Dec. 7, 1938): 15.

⁵⁰ Virginia Gatch Markham, *A Workbook to Accompany The Road to Latin* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1935).

may be the first black woman to join the group.⁵¹

Helen's family was starting to shrink. Her father had died in 1932, her brother Edwin, who had earned his B.A. at Harvard and his D.D.S. at Northwestern University, died in 1939 at the age of 56.⁵² Her mother died the following year in 1940.⁵³ Helen was still teaching at CHS in 1943 with three other Latin teachers, Sylvia Excell, Juanita C. Thomas and Helen M. Gates, but retired not too long after, an event which Langston Hughes mentioned in his *Chicago Defender* newspaper column.⁵⁴

She began working on a biography of her father. Titled *Charles Waddell Chesnutt Pioneer of the Color Line*, the book was published in 1952 by the University of North Carolina.⁵⁵ In November of the same year Helen was at the Festival of Music at Fisk University leading a seminar with Sterling Brown about her father.⁵⁶ In 1958 she helped set up an exhibit about him at the Cleveland Public Library on the hundredth anniversary of his birth and appeared on the library's radio program "Book That Live," in June, 1958 to advertise the exhibit.⁵⁷ During these years she lost both of her sisters.⁵⁸

At some point she moved from 1337 East Boulevard N.E. into a senior living facility, the Margaret Wagner House at 2373 Euclid Heights Boulevard.⁵⁹ Earlier this year Sandra Everett who had met Helen in 1967 sent me this account:⁶⁰

"When I was a young librarian at Cleveland Public Library, I was employed in what was then a department that served those outside normal library usage, i.e. the hospitalized, the blind, the prisoners, and shut-ins. Miss Chesnutt lived at the Margaret Wagner House in Cleveland Heights and was a regular borrower of the few books in Latin that the Library owned. She read them over and over and seemed to never tire of them. One day when I visited she was so excited to tell me that Langston Hughes had sent her the book "Best Short Stories by Negro Writers" and her father's story was the first chapter. I was surprised to learn he had been her student! I do remember being shocked the day she told me about the "Short Stories" book because I had known her for over a year at that point and had no idea she considered herself to be African-American. I'm pretty sure she mentioned having written a Latin textbook but not a biography of her father. I had never heard of him but I must have "looked him up" immediately. I mostly remember her being a lovely and very proper sort of lady with white hair."

⁵¹ Helen's name is listed in "Membership List of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South," *Classical Journal* 12(June, 1917): 639. Helen, Virginia and Nellie are listed in "Membership Directory, 1935-1936," *Classical Journal* 31 (June, 1936) on pages 606, 608, and 609 respectively. Membership lists are lacking of the early years of CAMWS as is the case for the American Classical League. Until we have them no reliable conclusion can be drawn.

⁵² See "Obituary, Dr. Edwin J. Chesnutt," *Cleveland Gazette* (Oct. 7, 1939):1.

⁵³ See "Widow of Author Dies in Cleveland," *Chicago Defender* (June 29, 1940): 12; "Cleveland Social and Personal," *Cleveland Gazette* (June 29, 1940):4; "Death Takes the Widow of Famous Colored Novelist," *Negro Star Wichita Kansas* (July 12, 1940): 3.

⁵⁴ See Langston Hughes "Here to Yonder: Cleveland—A Good Town," *Chicago Defender* (May 25, 1946): 14.

⁵⁵ For reviews of the book see Gertrude Martin, "Book Reviews," *Chicago Defender* (June 29, 1940): 12 and David Tilden, "A Pioneer Negro Writer," *Herald Tribune* (Nov. 16, 1952): n.p.

⁵⁶ "Festival of Music and Art at Fisk U. April 16," *Chicago Defender* (April 5, 1952): 20. and J.A. Wadovick, "Tribute to be Paid to Pioneer Writer of Color Line," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (April 9, 1952): 5.

⁵⁷ See "Exhibit to Honor Early Fighter on Race Rights," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (June 18, 1958): 8.

⁵⁸ See "Beaman, Ethel C. Williams," *Evening Star Washington DC* (March 3, 1958): A-18. Dorothy died on December 29, 1954 and was buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Cleveland, Section 5, Lot 861-B. 63. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/78158106/dorothy-katherine-slade>

⁵⁹ On the Margaret Wagner House see <http://www.chhistory.org/People.php?PeopleContent=MargaretWagner>

⁶⁰ Personal communications with Sandra Everett (Jan. 19, 2021).

Helen died on Thursday August 7, 1969 at the Margaret Wagner House.⁶¹ Her funeral was held at Ohio's leading African American funeral company, The House of Wills. The building, which still stands in Cleveland, was very elaborate. It had a Grecian Temple and an Egyptian Slumber Room, both of which suggest a pre-Christian perspective on the soul's immortality.⁶² Helen was buried with other members of her family in Lakeview Cemetery, Cleveland, Section 5, Lot 861-B.⁶³

In January of 1881 Helen's father recorded in his diary a conversation he had had with a former slave named Robert Hill in Fayetteville.⁶⁴ Hill had been talking with John McLaughlin, a poor white man who worked as a clerk in a local store and who was curious about Chesnutt. "What kind of a fellow is this here Chesnutt? ... What kind of education has he? Does he think he's as good a white man?" Hill replied "Every bit of it, sir." And Hill then brought up the idea of "the equality of intelligence." This was beyond McLaughlin's comprehension at the time, but it speaks volumes to us today. "Equality of intelligence" was clearly the Chesnutt family's operant principle. They were - except for Edwin - a family of teachers. We should, I think, take a lesson from Helen and her family today by making that principle our own.

Wayne State University
aa3276@wayne.edu

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⁶¹ See "Helen Chesnutt Dies; Was Teacher, Author," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (August 8, 1969): 28.

⁶² On John Walter Wills see *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, <https://case.edu/ech/articles/w/wills-j-walter-sr>. For photos of the building's interior, see "House of Wills: Long Abandoned Cleveland Funeral Home with Fascinating Past," <https://www.cleveland.com/life-and-culture/g66l-2019/10/85aceb239f5112/house-of-wills-long-abandoned-cleveland-funeral-home-with-fascinating-past-gets-new-life-photos.html>

⁶³ See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/74592068/helen-maria-chesnutt>

⁶⁴ Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt*, 25.

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The 2021 Classical Association of New England Student Writing Contest

Re-Singing Myth

Ovid begins the *Metamorphoses* by explaining that his genre-breaking epic will be about “forms changed into new bodies”. In the 15 books that follow, the poet proceeds to reinvent a panoply of Greek myths, both well-known and obscure, using his signature wit and imagination. Some of the stories he recounts according to the traditional versions, but others he changes completely in the service of different aims. In the same way, in the centuries and millennia since the body of Greco-Roman mythology was first written down, poets, authors, and artists have engaged with these myths by re-inventing them for their own contexts. For example, Luciano Garbati’s sculpture of Medusa holding the head of Perseus imagines a post-#MeToo world where the “hero” may not actually be all that heroic and the victim of sexual assault and misogyny is empowered to change her destiny. In the words of the sculptor himself when asked about the rationale behind the piece: “There are lots of depictions of Medusa, and they are always describing the myth at its worst... What would it look like, her victory, not his? How should that sculpture look?”

As we strive to bring a more just and equitable approach to studying classics, how might we re-sing the ancient tales? Whose voices have been excluded from the stories and whose stories have never been told?

For this writing contest: provide your own short story, poem, essay, or dialogue re-singing a myth or myths from the classical tradition. 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, 2021.**

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 [here](#). The winner receives their award, and reads their winning entry, at the banquet at the annual meeting banquet of CANE in spring of 2022.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the 2021-2022 NASSP List of Approved Contests, Programs, and Activities for Students.

