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Articles

What's with Caesar and the Third Person in the *Gallic Wars*?

RUTH L. BREINDEL

Abstract: While we say that the *Gallic Wars* were written by Caesar, they were really written by the scribes. The thesis of this paper is that they used the third person singular to refer to Caesar, since they were taking down dictation and would not use “I/we,” as they were not the ones who had done the action. This use of the third person is attested to in Greek authors, and Caesar obviously was pleased with how it sounded; while he had the last word on the subject, it's the scribes who deserve the credit for style.

Keywords: Julius Caesar, Gallic War, scribes, dictation, Third person, stylistics

Who were the Scribes?

Caesari cum id nuntiatum esset eos per provinciam nostram iter facere conari, maturat ab urbe proficisci et quam maximis potest itineribus in Galliam ulteriorem contendit et ad Genavam pervenit ... ubi de eius adventu Helvetii certiores facti sunt, legatos ad eum mittunt ... (BG 1.7)

When it had been reported to Caesar that they had tried to march through our province, he hastens to set out from the city and by forced marches he hastens into further Gaul and arrives at Geneva ... When the Helvetians were informed about his arrival, they send envoys to him ...

This is our first view of Caesar in the *Gallic Wars*; up to now, it has all been geography and commentary on the Gauls, and especially the Helvetians. We first meet Caesar in the dative, as the recipient of news; Caesar then continues to be the third person singular subject in the rest of the sentence, with *maturat*, *contendit*, *pervenit*. In the second sentence, Caesar becomes *eius* and *eum*, again third person singular, not the subject but the object.

Everyone knows that Caesar had a beautiful writing style in the *Gallic Wars*: clear, concise, and full of information. There are many theories about why he uses the third person, some quite torturous, which I will go into shortly. However, I believe this is putting the cart before the horse; the workhorse here, the one who is deciding on the Latin style (with Caesar's approval, of course), is the scribe.

Caesar did decide what he wanted to say, but, as to who physically put the words down in actual writing, and how that influenced the choice of the words, we now turn to scribes.¹ A general cannot sit and write down his thoughts; he is too busy taking care of everything. As Caesar states in Book 2.20.1 of the *Gallic Wars*:

Caesari omnia uno tempore erant agenda: vexillum proponendum, quod erat insigne, cum ad arma concurrere

¹ Breindel 2016, 253-83

oporteret; signum tuba dandum; ab opere revocandi milites;
qui paulo longius aggeris petendi causa processerant arcessendi;
acies instruenda; milites cohortandi; signum dandum.

All things had to be done at one time by Caesar: the banner had to be displayed, which was evident, when it was fitting to engage at arms; the signal had to be given by the trumpet; the soldiers had to be recalled from their work; those who had gone a little farther for the sake of seeking [items for the] ramparts had to be summoned; the battle line had to be drawn up; the soldiers had to be encouraged; the signal had to be given.

Caesar's use of scribes is attested to both by Plutarch (*Life of Caesar* 17.4) and Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 7.25). Since Caesar couldn't physically write all this down, information was given to the scribes, who wrote it down.

Why "scribes" in the plural? Breindel (p. 257) states:

I came to this conclusion when teaching Book 1 of the *Gallic Wars*. I noticed that there were great differences in the purpose expressions being used: the subjunctive or the gerund/gerundive. I then went through all of Book 1, finding every example of *ut* / *ne* / *qui* etc. with the subjunctive as well as all the gerunds and gerundives.

After an exhaustive search of style in Book 1 of the *Gallic Wars*, focusing on the purpose clause using the subjunctive versus gerunds or gerundives, it is obvious that there were at least two or three scribes at work. For example, in chapters 8 through 17, there is not one use of the gerund/ive, but 8 of the subjunctive. In chapters 18 to 20, there are two uses of the gerund/ive and one of the subjunctive. Chapters 21 to 37 do not have a single gerund/ive but instead 12 subjunctives. In chapters 38 to 42, there is equal use of both constructions (4 each). Chapters 43 to 47 have 6 gerund/ives, and not one use of the subjunctive. Finally, chapters 49 to 53 are entirely subjunctive (6 uses).² From this we can draw the conclusion that one scribe (or group) liked gerund/ives, another preferred the subjunctive, and the last would happily use either.

Thus, the final conclusion to that article:

... looking at the clumps of constructions, it would seem that either a huge amount of information was written down at one time as Caesar dictated, or that the scribe made his notes and later went over them and wrote the text.

So, to answer the question: who wrote the *Gallic Wars*? I suggest it was a collaboration between the scribes and Caesar, and not Caesar alone.³

Karen Carducci, discussing the use of the supine, agrees that the scribes made choices in the writing:

Since for purpose clauses, Caesar uses the gerundive with the preposition *ad* more often than the supine, however, as a search

² Breindel 2016, 260-1

³ Breindel 2016, 267

of the *Library of Latin Texts*, Series A reveals (144 instances), a scribe might have been less likely to change the commoner form of the gerundive to the supine, a form he encountered less frequently in Caesar's texts. If, on the other hand, he was attempting to correct the text he had in front of him, he would be more likely to change a syntactical usage from one he saw less often to one more familiar to him. That is, the scribe would be more likely to alter an original supine to a gerundive than vice versa.⁴

She goes on to elaborate:

By comparison with other kinds of purposes clauses, for example, *ut* with the subjunctive, *ad* with the gerundive (144 instances according to *Library of Latin Texts* – Series A, henceforth LLT-A), or *causa* with the gerund(ive) (90 instances according to LLT-A), Caesar rarely uses the supine.⁵

How the Third Person Account Came About

If we accept the important role of scribes, we can easily see how the third person came to be used by the scribes. When Caesar was dictating, for example, "When it was reported to me...", the scribe would naturally write "When it was reported to Caesar/him" Certainly nothing was reported to the scribe! When Caesar said, "When the Helvetians were informed about my approach," the scribe wouldn't write "my," since it wasn't his approach, but "his," *eius*, referring back to Caesar.

Even in a very emotional passage,

qua in re Caesar non solum publicas, sed etiam privatas iniurias ultus est, quod eius soceri L. Pisonis avum, L. Pisonem legatum, Tigurini eodem proelio quo Cassium interfecerant. (*BG* 1.12)

In which matter Caesar not only avenged public, but also private injustices, because the Tigurini had killed the grandfather of his father-in-law L. Piso, L. Piso the lieutenant, in the same battle in which they had killed Cassius.

Where Caesar is avenging a private injustice, there is no deviation from the third person; it was not "I" the scribe who took revenge, but Caesar. Pelling, on the other hand, sees this as a distancing:

Even this early in the text—in fact, especially this early in the text, with the narrator signaling that the 'Caesar' of the text is not like other characters—we do not have to ask 'how does the narrator know what was in Caesar's mind?', because of course he knows. He has privileged access.⁶

I do not agree with this view; while Pelling sees several Caesars in the story, I see only one. This is further discussed below.

⁴ Carducci 2018, 405

⁵ Carducci 2018, 406

⁶ Pelling 2013, 49; Nousek (YEAR), 230

Who were these scribes? According to Purcell,⁷ there were four types of scribes who worked for the Roman magistrates. In addition, these men could hire themselves out to other people; they were trained for their specific purpose. This was also a way for men to rise in social status, as scribes were considered important. The poet Horace, “is said to have made his way back to a livelihood worthy of a Roman knight by buying a post as *scriba quaestorius*.”⁸ In addition,

Despite being the son of a freedman from a Samnite town, Horace had been educated together with the offspring of the Roman elite, which earned him the equestrian post of *tribunus militum* in Brutus’ army. Money, education and consequent social connections made for impressive social climbing.⁹

Certainly all the scribes were educated; they were often *legati* and came from the middle and upper classes,¹⁰ and surely had a reading knowledge of Greek in addition to their Latin. They had studied Thucydides and Xenophon,¹¹ and knew that the use of the third person had the authority of the Greek masters on its side. They would have seen this as perfectly acceptable. Caesar who, we are told, spoke Greek effortlessly and was thoroughly familiar with Greek authors, would have been fine with this, too. After all, Hirtius, Caesar’s *legatus*, wrote the 8th book of the *Gallic Wars*! We also know that Titus Labienus was of equestrian rank and a tribune of the plebs (tribune was the lowest rank in the *cursus honorum* but definitely on the ladder). In addition, Best believes that the soldiers in the Roman army were literate.¹²

Riggsby actually starts down this path:

If the so-called third-person style is useful to Caesar, we may still ask whether he found it ready for use as a genre feature or whether it represents an innovation on his part. The direct evidence here is weak.¹³

Christopher Krebs also agrees:

But the greatest facilitator of misreading the commentaries is the third-person narrator; no one would have categorized them as history if they had been written in the first person, such as: “When these developments were reported to me, I decided. . .”¹⁴

I have continued down this path to its end, stating that since the scribes wrote in the third person, and Caesar found it useful for so many reasons (perhaps as genre as Riggsby says, or to give historical accuracy, as Krebs believes), the direct evidence goes back to the work of the scribes. Certainly nothing would happen without Caesar’s later agreement.

⁷ Purcell 2001, 649

⁸ Hartman 2020, 107. Here he quotes Suetonius, *Horace* 24.

⁹ Hartman 2020, 112

¹⁰ Best 1966, 126-7, where the *equus* is given the job of reading the *tessera* with the password or commands: “When we then hear of a centurion and standard-bearer actually reading letters and poetry as a matter of course, the case for the literate Roman soldier is indeed strong from the time of Polybius.”

¹¹ Grillo 2011, 266

¹² Best 1966, 122

¹³ Riggsby 2006, 67

¹⁴ Krebs 2019, 211

How About Other Aspects of Caesar's Style?

Much has been written about Caesar's clear, concise writing. He was a skilled orator who was praised by many contemporaries. For example:

Cicero, in the *Brutus*, written in 46 BCE, twice discussed Caesar's oratorical style and concluded that Caesar was a great orator and didn't use an elaborate style.

Sallust, also a contemporary, said about Caesar – and Catiline – that Caesar was a great orator and quite smart.

Quintilian, who wrote his *Institutiones* in the first century CE, made two comments: first, that Caesar was a fiery speaker, just as he was a fiery general, and second, that his energy was remarkable.

Tacitus (late 1st – early 2nd century CE), who was a sharp commentator, stated in his *Dialogue* that he did not think Caesar's speeches were wonderful, but they were better than his poetry (that is so Tacitean – damning with faint praise). But he did agree with others that Caesar was brilliant, in both the *Dialogue* and *Annales*.

Pliny the Younger, Tacitus' contemporary, stated that Caesar belonged among the best orators.

Suetonius, a purveyor of gossip who never found a rumor he didn't repeat, a contemporary of Tacitus and Pliny, quoting Cicero, agreed that Caesar was brilliant.

Plutarch, the Greek contemporary of the above three writers, who was not interested in gossip, believed that Caesar could have been a great orator had he not desired politics above all.

Aulus Gellius, who wrote slightly later than the above group, commented in his *Attic Nights* that Caesar was brilliant.

Finally, Apuleius, a contemporary of Gellius, in his *Apology*, stated that Caesar's style showed warmth, not an attribute that we ordinarily attribute to Caesar.

Thus, according to the ancient authors, Caesar was a wonderful orator with brilliance and an exceptional style. He used a clear method of communication, which the scribes obviously followed carefully.

Modern commentators agree with this, and by using the fragments of Caesar's *De Analogia*, they view his style as a combination of various authors along with his own desire to be absolutely straight-forward. From the quote below, you can see that Caesar honored his predecessors, especially the Greeks as mentioned above, and therefore the style of writing which would use the 3rd person singular in a report.

... Caesar seems to Romanize the suggestions that may have come to him from Philodemus and interpret the 'natural' element of style as the language and ethical qualities of the Scipionic age, a generation that helped to forge the identity of the Roman people. At the same time ... he is aware of language change and proposes a communicative system that is not archaizing but based on what he says are the most essential features of the Latin language, correctness and clarity.¹⁵

This is exactly Karen Carducci's point mentioned above: that the scribe would use the most common and natural forms, not something abstruse.

How about voice or agency in Caesar? Daniel Libatique defines it thus:

Possessing agency means that one's actions or words are not circumscribed by external limitations ... The agent does something, rather than allowing the status quo to remain static or waiting passively to be swept up into the

¹⁵ Garcea 2012, 124

action of others. An agent has autonomy, exhibits control of his or her own actions, and executes those actions with intentionality.¹⁶

When looking at the first book of *BG*, the issue of voice or agency is obvious – it’s Caesar all the time! At least 89 times he is in the nominative or implied nominative (as Caesar or as the continued subject of the verbs that follow), as the person in charge to whom information is brought (at least 9 times) and as the subject of the indirect statement (at least 11 times). Caesar is active and in command.

Who is We?

Sometimes, but rarely, the scribes got carried away by the action and used the form *diximus*.

Atuatuci, de quibus supra diximus ...(*BG* 2.29)

The Atuatuci, about whom we have spoken above ...

Here they are putting themselves into the action (another thing Caesar does very rarely) and reminding the reader that information had already been given – “we told you about this before.” Certainly they would not say, “I told you about this before” – the scribe is, after all, the low man on the totem pole and would not put himself forward in any way.

Riggsby does not think that this “we” form is particularly important:

In both cases [use of “we” in 5.13.4 and 7.25.1] there is an ambiguity between two more or less idiomatic uses of “we” in Latin. On the one hand, it can stand in for the first-person singular (under circumstances that are not well understood,) and in fact the narrator does identify himself as “we” several times. If that is the case in either of these passages, then the narrator locates himself firmly as one of the Romans, Caesar being a prime candidate. On the other hand, Latin writing is ethnocentric enough that “we” can mean simply “the Romans ...”¹⁷

He continues in this vein: “There are several back-references to earlier segments of the text as well; all are brief and of forms like “as was said before” and “as we showed above.”¹⁸

Pelling takes a different tact with Avaricum:

In *Bellum Gallicum* we have the remarkable passage when we are told of an incident at Avaricum (*BG* 7.25.1) which happened as we watched: we have taken the view that it was memorable and should not be passed over in silence. ‘We’ rather than ‘I’, so the watching could have been done by any eye-witness (we will find something similar in Xenophon 47); but the ‘we’ who have thought this worth recording are surely a ‘we’ of authorship, so that we-Caesarians as providers of the material and we-Caesar as writer are melded together as constructors of the narrative.¹⁹

¹⁶ Libatique 2020, 2

¹⁷ Riggsby 2006, 150

¹⁸ Riggsby 2006, 154

¹⁹ Pelling 2013, 54

I think that Riggsby is closer to the mark, in that the “we” is not especially important. On the other hand, as for Avaricum, the scribe was presumably there at the battle too, if we accept, as most do, that the book was written at the time of action, and not years later.

Another example, which I think is more to the point of Caesar and his scribes experiencing things together: “and there then occurred, before our very eyes, something which, being worth remembering, we believed should not be passed over” (*accidit inspectantibus nobis, quod dignum memoria uisum praetereundum non existimauimus*, BG VII.25)

Caesar’s Audience

Caesar’s audience, according to various scholars, was both the educated elite²⁰ of his group and the people who looked at public readings as entertainment.

How did Caesar reach the Roman People? Here we have to bear in mind a remarkable fact. In late-republican Rome historical narrative was popular entertainment.²¹

In addition, “the audience for a history expected a largely third-person narrative relating or extolling deeds and words.”²² Riggsby agrees:

In the Republic, the annual and collegial character of the magistracies would have made the first-person records not only impolitic but hardly comprehensible (amidst a sea of different “I’s”).²³

That, of course, is another reason not to say “I” – would the person reading this aloud want people to think that he had done what Caesar did? Surely not!²⁴ How could one keep the various “I” people apart? Well, give it Caesar’s name right then and there.

Historically, “the Roman victory texts customarily presented the general in the third person singular, naming his role as consul or imperator as a way of marking that victory had been accomplished in the name of Rome.”²⁵ Modesty is always useful!

The Various Caesars

One of the major discussions about Caesar’s style with the third-person hinges on Caesar as narrator as well as Caesar as author or character. Here are the summaries, in chronological order, with a critique. This paper is only referencing the first 7 books of the *Bellum Gallicum*, not the *Bellum Civile*.

P. T. Eden²⁶ in 1962 had posited three “Caesars”:

But Caesar is simultaneously the writer, the observer and the commander-in-chief; his own name opens the long period [BG II.25.1-2] and the whole narrative of the turmoil hangs on the significant thread: *Caesar ... vidit ... vidit ... processit ... iussit*.

²⁰ Hall 2009, 24. “But the remarkable fact is that in Caesar’s close circle, most of the men we encounter are of free, indeed elevated, status, mostly politically active or prominent or ambitious in their own right, with, moreover, their own intellectual interests, or claims or pretensions to literary merit or fame...”

²¹ Wiseman 2009, Kimborough 2014, 13

²² Marincola 1997, 79

²³ Riggsby 2006, 153

²⁴ See my critique of Pelling below.

²⁵ Östenberg 2013, 827

²⁶ Eden 1962, 110

He later goes on to state: “This suited Caesar’s needs exactly: he would be his own most detached judge and expositor.”²⁷

Andrew Riggsby sees two different Caesars: “The first person is used to refer to the narrator, but the general is always in the third person.”²⁸

Christopher Pelling²⁹ neatly sums up these various “Caesars”:

... an air of impersonality, perhaps, or objectivity, or monumentality; the suggestion that this is the sort of thing that anyone can and should say about Caesar’s achievement, not just the achiever himself, thus conveying ‘a definitive account in the manner of a historian’; an impression of narratorial omniscience, masking any distinction between events that Caesar witnessed and those that he did not; a minimizing of his individuality and a ‘bolstering of his role as Rome’s agent’; or Peter Wiseman has suggested that others might be delivering Caesar’s text in and around Rome and Italy, naturally then talking of what Caesar has done in the third person.³⁰

Pelling does not like Wiseman’s idea, although of course that is one of this paper’s points, stating in footnote 33 that,

Wiseman (1998: 8 n.27): if the commentaries were written to be delivered by a speaker at a public meeting, narrating Caesar’s exploits to the people, the third-person form was unavoidable. “Unavoidable” put this too strongly. If the deliverer was seen simply as an intermediary, a first-person form would have seemed as natural as, say, the use of the first person in a governor’s letter that was being read out.³¹

In this paper, I disagree with Pelling’s criticism; as mentioned above, the reason for the third person was just that it was not the reader at the meeting who had done the deeds, but Caesar.

Pelling goes on to distinguish between 2 Caesars:

Let us begin with motive-statements: the way that Caesar the writer — I-Caesar — so frequently sets out an intention or motive of Caesar the general, he-Caesar.³²

Later in the same paper Pelling downplays the third person aspect:

So in this first panel of the text we immediately see that this is only a sort-of third-person narrative, a first-person-masquerading-as-third-person. There is no room here for a Reader B, innocently unaware of who was wielding the pen. The manner will be different when he-Caesar was not present, for instance, when the narrative of *BG* 3 describes the doings of Ser. Galba or Titurius Sabinus or P. Crassus (*BG* 3.1–6, 17–19, 20–26).³³

²⁷ Eden 1962, 94

²⁸ Riggsby 2006, 273

²⁹ Pelling 2013, 48

³⁰ Pelling 2013, 48

³¹ Pelling 2013, 48

³² Pelling 2013, 48

³³ Pelling 2013, 51

However, you can't have it both ways; either Caesar is doing a first person, by putting himself into the story, or a third person.

Hanson, in his MA Thesis, agrees with the concept of different Caesars:

Caesar the author makes a distinction between the narrator of the text and Caesar the character. The narrator makes asides (such as the ever-present "as we mentioned above") in the first-person, while Caesar the character is referred to in the third-person.³⁴

Again, since the scribe is the one writing this, the "we," as I stated above, can include the scribe.

Kurt Raaflaub and Cynthia Damon give the most measured view of the various Caesars:

"... the way Caesar distances himself from "Caesar" writing about himself in the third person. This is not a strategy of dissociation – Caesar wants full credit for "Caesar's" achievements – but aims, rather, to give the reader the impression of seeing Caesar's achievements from the outside and not the inside, and against a backdrop of other characters rather than as the work's only "I." It is as though the author, and through him the reader, has achieved the kind of perspective on his achievements that permits evaluation against the parameters of collective and individual virtue discussed above. Both the title [*Commentarii*] and the third-person narrative have sometimes been taken as deliberately deceptive fictions. That they are fictions is true, but only in the sense that all writing, as verbal artifact, is fictional. That they were deliberately chosen seems certain [and not deceptive]."³⁵

A somewhat nuanced view is mentioned by Ida Östenberg:

Now, as has been discussed by Batstone and Damon, Caesar by using the third person in his *commentarii* paradoxically manages to shape an intimate feeling of shared values that transmits a sense of 'us' to his readers. The recurrent character Caesar appears as an impersonal and distanced actor in the field, who fights for the good of Rome, and whose deeds appear as objective facts. This is an image of Caesar, omnipresent and highly successful, but still in the midst of equals.³⁶

Here Caesar is present not in various *personae* (character, narrator, author), but more as the prime mover.

Conclusion

This view of several Caesars - as narrator, as author, as character - seems too complicated to me. Employing Occam's Razor, it is not necessary to break it down so much; it's so much simpler to understand that the scribe wrote in the third person, Caesar thought that was fine (whether because he wanted to be like the Greeks or to give more weight to history), and that's the end of the matter! Even the first-person usage can be attributed to a scribe who was present at the action. Giving credit to the scribes is bringing to the fore

³⁴ Hanson 2015, 9

³⁵ Damon 2019, xlviii – xlix

³⁶ Östenberg 2013, 825-6

a group that has never gotten enough notice or honor for its work. Let's change that now and grant the scribes recognition for their role in preserving history.³⁷

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³⁷ This paper could not have come to fruition without the excellent advice and encouragement of Professor Timothy Joseph of the College of the Holy Cross.

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‘*Conserere Sapientiam*’, To Engage in Wisdom: The Rhetoric of Philosophical Debate and the Speech of Caecilius in Minucius Felix’s *Octavius*

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Abstract: Here I will elucidate both the rhetorical and philosophical significance of the introduction to Minucius Felix’s *Octavius*—in effect, to give voice to what Minucius Felix hoped to do in having Caecilius and Octavius *conserere sapientiam* (‘engage in wisdom’). I draw special attention to the introduction to the dialogue because (i) Minucius’ rhetorical care in establishing an appropriate *otium* (in other words, a *locus amoenus*) for his dialogue participants has been underappreciated (ii) because Caecilius’ arguments have, in general, been given short-shrift, and, (iii) because the view that the introductory parts should, instead, be read with suspicion has found a recent prominent voice in an influential recent article (Powell 2007).

Keywords: Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, Skepticism, Fideism, Dialogue, Debate

1. Introduction: ‘To Engage in Wisdom’: The Aim of the *Octavius*

Minucius Felix (fl. late 2nd century CE), by ancient accounts an accomplished lawyer from Roman Africa, is known for one extraordinary work: a dialogue called the *Octavius*, perhaps the oldest apologetic dialogue extant in Latin, and one of the few genuine glimpses we have into direct, face-to-face pagan-Christian intellectual debate in Late Antiquity. In it, two legal advocates on holiday, the pagan Caecilius and Christian Octavius aim to *conserere sapientiam*. The very rare late Latin phrase means, literally, to ‘engage in wisdom’, (perhaps more figuratively) ‘to battle in wits’, and, more specifically, and according to most interpreters, to engage in philosophical dialogue. In fact, *conserere sapientiam* is contrasted with ‘friendly’ debates among friends in Minucius’ dialogue (i.e., *in contubernaliibus disputare*): the former is a decidedly serious, challenging academic exercise.

In the *Octavius*, the Roman pagan skeptic Caecilius is desirous of just such a serious intellectual debate (*conserere sapientiam*) between himself, on the one hand, and Octavius, his Roman Christian counterpart, on the other, when he asks that the two have a fair and comprehensive hearing on the matter of religion from both pagan and Christian perspectives, so that he might repay Octavius for religious offense rendered earlier that day when Octavius chuckled at Caecilius’ paying respects to a Serapis idol.¹

¹ For the (scant) ancient evidence for Minucius’ life, see Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 6.1, and Jerome, *De viris illis*. 58, where he is said in both places to be a distinguished advocate. Eucherius mentions him at PL 50, 719. The *Octavius* and Tertullian’s *Apologeticum* may have a common source, or one may draw from the other (the question is open); both Minucius and Tertullian are from Roman Africa and of indigenous North African origin. Cyprian and Minucius’ relationship and relative priority are similarly debated (see Cousins 1997 for a helpful summary of the disputes). Powell 2007 is an excellent introduction to the textual details (including the Renaissance rediscovery of the text) and summaries of the philological debates on the *Octavius*. For more on the African identities of Minucius and Tertullian and the early African Church in general, see Rebillard 2012 and Wilhite 2017. Minucius’, Octavius’s, and Caecilius’ Africanity has been associated with conjectural evidence in the *CIL*—Minucius at 8.1964 and 12499; Octavius Januarius at Saldae, 8.8962; Caecilius at Cirta 8.7097-7098, 6996. Minucius Felix, in all likelihood, stands at the beginning of the Christian Latin controversial dialogue tradition in antiquity, and the *Octavius* is the only direct Roman pagan-Christian dialogue in Latin extant. For an excellent introduction to it (with a stellar bibliography), consult Kuper 2017. A full commentary has appeared in German by Christoph Schubert in the last decade (Verlag Heder 2014). Hasenhiüt 2008 functions as a book-length commentary on Caecilius’ speech. For an introduction to the Greek and Syriac Christian dialogue traditions, see Rigolio 2019. Recent studies of major later figures in the tradition (Augustine and Boethius) are also helpful for navigating the personal, intellectual predicaments and conflicts faced by professional, ambitious Roman Christians throughout Later Antiquity: for Augustine, see Stock 2010, 2011, Miles 2008; for Boethius, see Moreschini 2014, Lerer 1985.

In this essay I will discuss both the rhetorical and philosophical significance of the introduction to Minucius Felix's *Octavius* (both its setting and the first speech, that of Caecilius)—in effect, to give voice to what Minucius Felix hoped to do in having Caecilius and Octavius *conserere sapientiam*. I draw special attention to the opening sections of the dialogue because I think that (i) Minucius' rhetorical care in setting up an appropriate *otium* (a *locus amoenus*) for his dialogue participants (in keeping with ancient dialogue tradition) has been underappreciated (ii) because Caecilius' arguments follow in a clear philosophical skeptical lineage, and, (iii) last because the view that the introductory parts should, instead, be read with suspicion has found a recent prominent voice in an influential recent article.²

Indeed, based on his own analysis of the rhetorical technique and philosophical exposition in the *Octavius*, Jonathan Powell concludes that Minucius Felix, while feigning philosophical impartiality for an intellectual debate between paganism and Christianity, in fact only sets up Caecilius (and so, the reader) for a hasty and unwarranted conversion to a sort of watered-down Christianity, himself failing to seriously consider an opposing point of view. At its noblest, he thinks, the dialogue mimics Cicero's own lost (but plausibly reconstructed) *Hortensius* in abandoning the neo-Academic commitment to impartiality by serving as unabashed Christian protreptic, as Cicero's dialogue supposedly dropped the veneer of principled skepticism for impassioned defense of philosophy. At its lowest, Powell characterizes the *Octavius* as consisting in Christian "propaganda" (180).

Contrary to this view, I suggest that Minucius Felix in fact introduces a skeptical position through Caecilius that, even if defective, is of a high philosophical pedigree and well-respected in antiquity. Indeed, the resonances of Caecilius' speech in the *Octavius* with Cotta's in Cicero's *De natura deorum* are well-attested. Further, suggestive similarities appear in fragments of the pagan polemicist Celsus' *True Doctrine* (contained in Origen's *Contra Celsum*).³ Octavius's arguments, then, are not pitched against some sort of strawperson in Caecilius, but rather are well-suited to a particular line of typical 'urbane' skeptical line of argument, quite legible, I think, to Minucius Felix's readership among the Roman metropolitan elite.⁴ Robert Wilken identifies this line of argument as belonging to 'profoundly' traditionalist thinkers in paganism's twilight, calling Celsus himself a 'conservative intellectual'. I think this an apt description of Caecilius as well.

Powell thinks that both the initial setting of the dialogue and the philosophical content of the speech of Caecilius help to confirm his insidious reading of the *Octavius*. My reading, on the other hand, will both (i) retrieve the skeptical-fideist philosophical center of Caecilius' speech and (ii) vindicate Minucius Felix's presentation of that speech in its rhetorical art—especially in its setting in the *locus amoenus*-topos.⁵ My view, then, of the

² Namely, J.G.F. Powell (2007) "Unfair to Caecilius? Ciceronian dialogue techniques in Minucius Felix," in *Severan Culture*, Simon Swain, Stephen Harrison, and Jas Elsner, Eds., Cambridge University Press. Powell's skepticism regarding the 'genuineness' of Minucius' philosophical impartiality is anticipated by Anton Elter in his *Prolegomena zu Minucius Felix* (Bonn 1909), where he argues that the *Octavius* appears to have the elements more of a *consolatio* with an assumed Christian audience rather than a philosophical *disputatio*. For a more positive appraisal, see Von Albrecht 1987, whose casting of Minucius Felix as a 'Christian Humanist' more closely resembles my line of interpretation.

³ For an exhaustive and at times side-by-side comparison of Minucius and Origen's *Contra Celsum*, with an excellent command of the nineteenth century scholarship on the *Octavius*, see Baylis 1928. For an excellent summary of the arguments of Celsus himself, see Bergjan 2001.

⁴ This line of argument closely follows that of Cotta, one of the principal dialogue participants in Cicero's *De natura deorum*. For authoritative recent studies on Cotta and Cicero's philosophy of religion as a whole, see Wynne 2015 and 2019.

⁵ I say 'skeptical-fideist philosophical center' as I will principally concern myself with the overarching significance and argumentative approach of Caecilius' speech in this essay. I am particularly interested in the skeptical-fideist bent of Caecilius' speech that puts it in conversation with other skeptical fideist approaches to religious or mystical belief in the history of philosophy. Certain specific claims and arguments against the Christians found

Octavius as a genuine attempt at a Ciceronian-style philosophical dialogue, recognizable as such to an ancient philosophical audience, is decidedly less dim.

Regardless of whether one agrees with the conclusion of the *Octavius* (i.e., Caecilius' intellectual conversion to Christianity), I maintain that, like Augustine's early Cassiciacum dialogues, they represent a genuinely philosophical attempt to overcome pagan religion and attendant philosophical attitudes and modes of thinking (particularly Academic Skepticism as filtered through Cicero) on intellectual grounds in a neutral dialogue setting.

2. The *Octavius*: Pagan and Christian in Dialogue

The *Octavius* is a remarkable text. It is one of the very few late antique Latin works we have that details intellectual debate between pagan and Christian in a familiar classical literary setting. It may be the *only* Latin text that does so in Ciceronian dialogue form (Augustine's later dialogues do not include a practicing pagan representative).⁶ Nevertheless, despite its deep situatedness in the intellectual culture of Roman late antiquity, the *Octavius* is not a widely-read text in Classics. Consequently, I shall endeavor in this section to provide a brief and clear overview of the dialogue for the purposes of this paper.

The dialogue begins in pensive, moody, heartfelt reflection of the narrator (presumably Marcus Minucius Felix himself) on the friendship of the deceased Octavius. The first words of the piece—*cogitanti mihi* ('as I was thinking')—are borrowed from Cicero's *De oratore* 1.1, initiating the Ciceronian allusiveness that permeates the beginning of the dialogue. I shall say more about the touching, deep resonances with the themes of friendship in Cicero's *De amicitia* in a moment, though, as Powell notes, they have been well-recognized.⁷ Minucius' mind eventually fixes on a particular episode, a dialogue-debate between Octavius and Caecilius, which he recounts for us, where he played, in his words, the role of *arbiter* between the two sparring friends.

The scene opens during the late summer holidays, after the solstice as autumn has begun to cool the seaside landscape, on a retreat for the three lawyers (each of whom hail from Roman North Africa—see my note 2). The location is Ostia, port of Rome, that *civitas amoenissima* (2.3), where *lavacra marina* ('sea-baths') might soothe Minucius' unbalanced humors. The three wake up one morning for a brisk walk by the sea, and somewhere along their path the three come across an image (*simulacrum*) of Serapis. In the manner of the superstitious (*vulgus superstitiosus*) Caecilius blows a kiss to the image. Octavius rebukes him, saying that a friend ought not let a friend shipwreck on rocks in broad daylight, even if such stones are prettified, anointed, or crowned (3.1), making reference to Caecilius' perceived idolatry.

in Caecilius' speech will not be my subject here, though they would be important for a full philosophical analysis of Caecilius' speech. Many of these arguments have parallels with Celsus. Again see Bergjan 2001 for an excellent introduction into a large literature.

⁶ Possible (extant or non-extant) Latin precedents to the *Octavius* (in dialogue form and pitched between Christian and pagan) are debated. Vigorous debate in Latin and a rich African Roman Christian culture near Carthage certainly flourished in Minucius' lifetime, with Tertullian's literary output nourished in similar fertile soils. (See again Rebillard 2012, Wilhite 2017) But clear literary precedents are less clear. Non-Latin philosophical or quasi-philosophical debates between Christian and pagan are intriguing possibilities, of which Minucius may have been aware and in which Minucius hoped to be included. The *Acta Archelai*, preserved only in Latin, contained a debate between Manes (of the Manichaean faith) and the Christian bishop Archelaus. Jerome thought the *Acta* was originally written in Syriac. (*De viris illis*. 72) *The Book of the Laws of the Countries* by a follower of Bardaisan, contemporary with Minucius, was written in Syriac, gesturing to the richness of interreligious dialogue occurring in Mesopotamia and the Roman East. The reputation for cosmopolitan learnedness (arrived at through philosophical debate) in Mesopotamia was well-attested in Late Antiquity and is found in both Cassiodorus and Junillus Africanus. For some of these non-Latin points of contact, I thank an anonymous reviewer for the *New England Classical Journal*.

⁷ See Powell 2007, 182.

Caecilius stews but remains quiet; the three continue their walk to the seaside and come upon a remarkable scene of quietude. The sea gently plays at their feet, prompting a meditation on its curls; the shore curves gently as their stories about Octavius' sea adventures meander calmly; boats rest from long sea journeys above the sand, held up on oaken planks. Last, in the most arresting image, a group of boys partake in a game of skipping stones, prompting again a meditation on their game and the peace it brings to the scene.

I shall have more to say on these striking, enduring images from the dialogue in a moment. This stage-setting then brings about the abrupt outburst from Caecilius, who at 4.3, at Octavius' asking why he has remained so quiet, requests a sort of quasi-hearing and philosophical debate (a *conserere sapientiam*), hoping to both defend the traditional pagan religion and cast doubt on the new Christian one. Caecilius chooses Minucius as arbiter, even though Minucius himself is acknowledged as a convert—one who has experienced both ways of life (*diligenter in utroque vivendi genere*, 5.1).

Caecilius' speech treats several topics, but is rooted in a skeptical defense of the ancestral pagan religion and a polemic against Christianity, the relative upstart. Caecilius first doubts humankind's ability to know the ultimate truth in matters divine (5.2-3), then discourses on the nature of creation and of a unitary god, the multiplicity of religions and the importance of ancestral, indigenous religions (6), the peculiar strength and usefulness of the Roman religion (evidenced through the growth and success of the Roman empire) (*religionem tam vetustam, tam utilem, tam salubrem*, 8.1), the secrecy and vices of the Christian sects, in particular their libidinous religious practices (9.2)—for example, their rumored adoration of the genitalia of the priest—the absurdity of the doctrine of the resurrection, and so on. The charges range from inventive legitimate critique to typical anti-Christian slander of the late antique period.

Octavius responds with an elegant apologetic speech, addressing Caecilius' points with learned assurance, showing facility in both Greco-Roman learning and Christian apologetics. He especially hopes to make the new Christian religion compatible with the best of secular learning and with the arts of rhetoric, logic, and philosophy, in this way anticipating Augustine and, later, Cassiodorus. Early the speech focuses on the rational defense of Christian creationism in the face of Caecilius' skepticism. Octavius eventually meets paganism's supposed idolatry head-on with an enigmatic, staccato-style passage describing the Christian god's incorporeality (e.g., [*deus*] *visu clarior est*, 18.8). He then defends monotheism with an appeal to the Greek philosophers, especially Plato. He meets each charge of Caecilius one-by-one and refutes it, even claiming that Rome's expansion proved crime and terror, not divine providence (25).

When Octavius finishes, Caecilius and Octavius are silent, stupefied (*ad silentium stupefacti*, 39.1). Eventually Caecilius admits that he has been won over on some of the main points, and wants to call himself a Christian, though the details of the religion still prompt questions from him. The dialogue ends with the three advocates in friendship and good humor (*laeti hilaesque*) agreeing to discuss more the following day.

3. Powell's *Octavius: Captatio benevolentiae*

Caecilius' conversion by the end of the dialogue provides a good transition to introducing Powell's main criticisms of the *Octavius*.

First, he thinks the Ciceronian styling of the dialogue, both in setting and composition betray ill intent on the part of Minucius Felix. They are literary deceits, lacking the impartiality characteristic of a Ciceronian philosophical dialogue. He writes:

To a modern reader, indeed, the *Octavius* is prone to seem bland, perhaps so bland as to cast doubt on either the convictions or the capabilities of its author, but against a background in which Christians

had evidently been feared ... and in which not much was generally known or publicised about their doctrines, the blandness itself is surprising and noteworthy, and invites interpretation as a deliberate strategy rather than an unthinking effect of literary convention or a sign of failure in conception (180).⁸

On Powell's reading, the quiet and pleasant setting of Ostia by the ocean, the unhurried, organic chatting and banter between the dialogue participants as they stroll on, the careful Ciceronian style and diction employed by Minucius, all have a certain insidious lulling effect, helping to lower the pagan reader's defenses for Octavius' eventual Christian proselytization. Indeed, Powell emphasizes Minucius' adeptness at creating the *appearance* of pagan respectability, sophistication, and "urbanity" solely for the purposes of *captatio benevolentiae* (179, 181).

Second, he thinks that the position that Caecilius is made to defend in the *Octavius*—namely, that anything divine is uncertain but the traditional gods should nevertheless be believed in and revered—is so inconsistent on its face that Octavius, in his speech, is given a quick and total victory from the start. This, he says, is in contrast to a traditional Ciceronian dialogue, where "the integrity of the interlocutors' positions is generally respected and conversion is a rare event," and in which "the supreme values are rational examination of all sides of a question and the reader's freedom of judgement to make up his or her own mind (182)".⁹ For Powell, then, the resemblance between the *Octavius* and a genuine Ciceronian dialogue is superficial. Again, he writes:

These literary techniques are also a way of giving an impression of fairness and impartiality in philosophical debate which, when one examines the actual positions attributed to the characters, turns out to be quite unjustified. The impression we are meant to have is that Christian Octavius has won in a fair contest; but in fact, although Caecilius the pagan is given some reasonable individual points to make, it is clear enough by the end that the dice have been loaded against him from the start. (181)

I think Powell's reading of the opening parts of the dialogue, if it is to convince us that Minucius Felix is knowingly being deceptive in crafting his introduction, needs both of these points to turn out to be right. But I think both fail to be convincing. We will take up my criticisms and motivate my alternative reading in the next section.

4. A New Interpretation of the Introduction to Minucius Felix's *Octavius*: The Rhetoric of Philosophical Debate and Caecilius' Urbane Skeptical Fideism

A. The Rhetoric of Philosophical Debate

In this section I will reproduce some relevant passages from the Latin text of the first sections of the *Octavius* and, for each, give a short explication. In so doing I hope to argue against Powell (and others who, in my view, unfairly doubt the intentions of Minucius Felix in his commitment to free inquiry) by constructing plausible alternate readings of both the initial set-up of the *Octavius* and the philosophical point Caecilius is trying to make in his speech on behalf of the traditional Roman pagan point of view.

I will start, then, with the introduction of the dialogue. Minucius, the narrator, recalls a conversation he had between his two friends, Caecilius, a pagan, and Octavius

⁸ Blandness, of course, figures prominently here. Beaujeu 1964 anticipates Powell in finding the staging of the *Octavius* insidiously 'bland'.

⁹ For an authoritative summary of the elements, aims, and *Nachleben* of the Ciceronian dialogue form, consult Schofield 2008.

(now deceased), a Christian, in which Octavius ‘remade’ (*reformavit*) Caecilius so that he would accept ‘true religion’ (*veram religionem*), and he did so by serious argument (*disputatione gravissima*) (1.5). Minucius begins his narration of the dialogue by telling of the vacation the three took together to Ostia, where the discussion (and conversion) took place. Minucius then takes pains to describe the setting by the sea, resulting in the aforementioned stunning passage:

cum hoc sermone eius medium spatium civitatis emensi iam liberum litus tenebamus. Ibi harenas extimas, velut sterneret ambulacro, perfundens lenis unda tendebat: et, ut semper mare etiam positus flatibus inquietum est, etsi non canis spumosisque fluctibus exibat ad terram, tamen crispis tortuosisque ibidem erroribus delectati perquam sumus, cum in ipso aequoris limine plantas tingeremus, quod vicissim nunc adpulsum nostris pedibus adluderet fluctus, nunc relabens ac vestigia retrahens in sese resorberet. (3.2-5)¹⁰

Passing through the middle of the city in conversation, we were now coming upon the open beach. There was a gentle wave stretching over the outlying sands, as it lay out like a promenade: and, as the sea is always restless even with still waters, it was driving at the earth with light waves, not white and crested sprays; nevertheless we were delighted thoroughly by its curled, coiled wanderings, as we touched our feet at the very limit of the water—as now the advancing wave played around our feet, now it slips back and, retracing its steps, absorbs into itself.

I think Powell underestimates the literary quality of these opening passages when he lumps them in with just so much “bland” stage-setting.¹¹ More importantly, to miss the point of these introductory passages risks Minucius’ attempts to connect his dialogue with well-worn, legible rhetorical tropes meant to signal to his reader the aims and intent of this *disputatio gravissima*.

Far from lulling the reader into some sort of daze, the colorful wordplay here invites the reader to read on—in a state of relaxation, admittedly—moved as she might be by the description of the gentle lapping of the waves on the seashore. The poetry and rhythm of the above passage is apparent; the liquidity of the diction also plain to see. Minucius, we might think, is not just describing a pretty sunset or the meandering chats of a few friends without legitimate philosophical purpose: he is preparing us for philosophy—i.e., the readers—via rhetoric for leisure that is conducive for intellectual activity and refinement. In a word, for *otium*.¹²

I call this literary set-up the “rhetoric of philosophical debate” to emphasize its role in providing the enabling conditions for philosophical-scholastic activity, but in so doing I draw on a well-worn rhetorical topos literature. This setting is clearly within the *locus amoenus* topos, given its classic formulation in Ernst Robert Curtius (1953/2013, 195). But rather than its being solely grounded in literary allusion or in persuasion for persuasion’s sake, I hold that this rhetorical setting has philosophical grounds: namely, it follows from a belief widely held in ancient philosophy regarding the interrelation between *otium* and *philosophia*.

Indeed: the setting of the *Octavius* seems to be consistent with the ancient belief

¹⁰ My translations throughout. The Latin text matches the Loeb Classical Library edition of 1931, with reference to the standard critical edition (Kytzler 1981).

¹¹ Indeed, in the words of an anonymous reviewer for the *New England Classical Journal*: “Minucius’ scene-setting, in my opinion, is one of the most striking of any Latin dialogue from any period.”

¹² For the meditative aspects of ancient dialogue form, see Hadot 1995. See also Stock 2010, 2011.

(shared nearly universally across Greek and Roman philosophical sects, and a good number of religious traditions, besides) in the importance of relaxation and unbothered attention in providing the material conditions for *otium*, namely, learned leisure aimed at intellectual refinement and truth-seeking.¹³ Augustine later goes to similar lengths to provide for leisurely conditions for the philosophical investigations of his Cassiciacum dialogues (especially in the *De beata vita*) so that he might be able to effect for himself a genuine *Christianae vitae otium* (*Retractions* 1.1.1).¹⁴

The setting is no doubt alluring and picturesque (as is the further description of the boys skipping stones at 1.6), but it would seem that we would need our minds already made up to think that the careful stage-setting Minucius has chosen suggest he merely means to bore or stupefy his reader. It rather seems the opposite is true, that the introduction to the dialogue effects a kind of spiritual exercise to awaken and arouse the mind of the reader through meditation, rendering it more plastic and fluid as it encounters new philosophical ways of thinking and being in this world; and that deceptive, insidious “blandness” (to make up for the explosive, counter-cultural truths of Christianity) would seem far from Minucius’ plan.

And while Powell acknowledges that this opening setting adds to the “respectability” of the Roman Christian participants by placing them in a “comfortable social setting” (179) such as Ostia, I think he fails to appreciate how this passage fits in with a long tradition of similarly dreamy settings (themselves sparkling examples of the *locus amoenus*) in Platonic and Ciceronian philosophical dialogues (and which speaks to Minucius’ *genuine*, good-faith appropriation of the Ciceronian dialogic genre to a Christian subject matter).

To be sure, Platonic dialogues are often set in scenes of tranquillity and repose, removed from the business and commotion of the city. The tense drama of a Platonic dialogue—the exchange of ideas between participants in philosophical cross-examination—is often juxtaposed with a scene deliberately fashioned to be mundane or ordinary, or secluded and set apart. The *Republic* starts off famously with its simple “I went down to the Piraeus,” and depicts a house party *during*, but set apart from, the commotion of the Panathenaea. The *Symposium* takes place during a hangover. The *Phaedrus* outside the city walls near a stream. The *Laws*, of course, on a long trek, only interrupted by occasional natural sights. Cicero too takes pains to set his dialogues in secluded villas and during country walks, making room for leisure and philosophy. Augustine’s later Cassiciacum dialogues, similarly inspired by Ciceronian dialogic conventions as Minucius Felix, take place in a country villa, far away from the business and bustle of Imperial Milan. In short, given that the rhetorical precedent of a leisurely setting for a philosophical dialogue already existed in the Platonic and Ciceronian dialogue forms, and given that the description of Ostia is, as we have seen, carefully crafted and appealing and has a plausible legitimate philosophical purpose (i.e., to prepare the mind of the reader for philosophy), it appears a stretch for us to suspect that Minucius Felix is, rather, being deliberately deceptive when he opens the *Octavius* in the idyllic surrounds that he does. We may do so: but it risks being inadmissibly uncharitable.

In addition to its above purposes, I think the stage-setting of the *Octavius* serves even deeper philosophical and formal ends in the dialogue’s plan. I bring attention in particular to the remarkable use of water, naval, and marine imagery (including possible

¹³ See Andre 1966, Sadleir 2004. For ancient Roman exempla, see Seneca’s *De otio*, Cicero, *De officiis* 3.1-4, and *Pro Sestio* 45.98 for an influential formulation of the ideal of *otium liberale*: *Id quod est praestantissimum, maximeque optabile omnibus sanis et bonis et beatis, cum dignitate otium* (that which stands first, and is most to be desired by all healthy, good, and happy people, is leisure with dignity).

¹⁴ For a growing, fine literature on Augustine’s adaptation of classical dialogue techniques to his own intellectual journey in his early works, see, to start, Foley 1999, 2019, Clark 2008, Kenyon 2018, Miles 2008. For this period in his life, see Brown 2000, 2.11: “*Christianae Vitae Otium*: Cassiciacum,” for the classic treatment.

allusions to ritual washing and healing), the description of the boys' game of tossing stones as a possible metaphor for the contest of philosophical debate itself, the theme of retracing one's steps, and the possibilities for a metatextual interpretation for the dialogue's introduction.¹⁵ Throughout the introductory stage-setting there is a repetition and rhythm that are highly suggestive of careful and intentional literary craft; in Powell's words, they should catch the attention of the 'alert reader'. I end my rhetorical analysis with a suggestion that the introductory setting may serve a metatextual purpose—that conversion for a pagan skeptic may take just such a ritualistic repetition, wanderings even (*erroribus* is Minucius' word), through both life and a text like the *Octavius*. In this way the *Octavius* can remind us of Socrates in the *Phaedo*, where ritualistic 'chants' are needed for the aspirant philosopher-in-training's overcoming the fear of death.

I first begin with the purpose of the repeated uses of water, marine, and naval imagery. In 2.3 Minucius introduces the healing properties of the sea (and especially the famous sea-baths at Ostia). At 2.4 the sea breeze promises to reinvigorate and refresh each of the participants. But then Octavius alludes to the great destructive power of the sea at 3.1 when he chides Caccilius' veneration of the Serapis idol by comparing his doing so to a shipwreck.

The sea returns as a restorative, renewing force in the next passage. We saw above the delicate, rhythmic, supple prose Minucius employs to suggest water's cool receding and returning embrace. Octavius' 'adventures' at sea are discussed as the three enjoy the walk along the shore at 3.5. For Minucius and Octavius, the sea performs its medicinal rites, cooling and calming their humors. For Caecilius, overwhelmed with jealous anger at Octavius' affront, the sea fails to bring calm and repose.

In 3.5 great ships await their next voyage, suspended in air on oak planks. Octavius, too, and his companions find themselves 'suspended', just before the action of the rest of the dialogue. The seaside setting proves to be the place not just for philosophical debate, but another sort of 'game', the description of which immediately precedes the rest of the dialogue.

In 3.5-6 we see young boys playing a game of stone skipping on the shore. I reproduce the passage below to bring attention to its noteworthy features:

... pueros videmus certatim gestientes testarum in mare iaculationibus ludere. Is lusus est testam teretem iactatione fluctuum levigatam legere de litore, eam testam plano situ digitis comprehensam inclinam ipsum atque humilem quantum potest super undas inrotare, ut illud iaculum vel dorsum maris raderet vel enataret, dum leni impetu labitur, vel summis fluctibus tonsis emicaret emergeret dum adsiduo saltu sublevatur. Is se in pueris victorem ferebat, cuius testa et procurreret longius et frequentius exsiliret. (3.6)

We saw some boys eagerly playing a game by tossing stones into the sea. The game is to choose a stone from the shore, one smoothed down by the tossing of the waves, grab hold of the flat side, then bow and stoop low so that the stone spins as far as it can above the waves, so that the little projectile either skims the surface of the sea and swims on, gliding on gently by the impulse, or shaves the tops of the waves, leaping and emerging as it is raised up in its regular skips and hops. The boy whose stone went out longest and made the most jumps was proclaimed the victor.

¹⁵ I owe my treatment here of the theme of 'retracing one's steps' to an anonymous reviewer at the *New England Classical Journal*. I am thankful for this suggestion.

I bring attention to this passage as it immediately precedes the main action of the dialogue, the philosophical conversation between Octavius and Caecilius. In fact, Minucius notes that they were wrapped in the joy (*voluptate*) of looking at this spectacle (*spectaculi*) before Caecilius himself leaps into his first speech. Here the sea serves again as the neutral, ambivalent setting for the two sides, bringing restorative and pleasant effects to Octavius and Minucius, while allowing Caecilius to fester in his anger and offense (the seas of error batter Caecilius again later in Octavius' speech, 16.4).

But again, far from serving as only just so many merely literary fireworks, I think Minucius' placement of this meditation on the contest of skipping stones directly before the succeeding philosophical exchange suggests a comment from Minucius on those very episodes. The game of skipping stones, I think, is meant to serve as a metaphor for the philosophical debate Caecilius himself requests. The 'game' of philosophy (if the metaphor is to line up) consists in picking up an argument (in the metaphor, the *testa*), one smoothed and refined by a philosophical or religious tradition (the successive waves—*fluctibus*), and finding a victor once one's speech or argument has gone on longest (*longius*) and made the most flashy splashes (*frequentius exsiliret*). Caecilius wrongly suspects he has the most refined and smoothed stones (supported by the traditions of the Roman religion and the antiquity of Greek philosophy); Octavius shows him in the course of the dialogue that the stones at the disposal of the new Christianity are in fact the most refined and smoothest of all, themselves being more effective than the missiles of the philosophers (*philosophorum telis*), while being easier (*facilem*) to use and more pleasant (*favorabilem*). (39.1)

Last, water features prominently in an enigmatic comment made by Octavius amid his philosophical speech, where spirit and water find their place among the oldest of the pre-Socratic philosophers. Octavius mentions Thales of Miletus, famous for his priority among the philosophers and his view that water was the organizing principle of the universe:

Sit Thales Milesius omnium primus, qui primus omnium de caelestibus disputavit. Idem Milesius Thales rerum initium aquam dixit, deum autem eam mentem, quae ex aqua cuncta formaverit (cp. Cic. *Nat. deor.* 1.10.25). Eo altior et sublimior aquae et spiritus ratio, quam ut ab homine potuerit inveniri, a deo traditum; vides philosophi principalis nobiscum penitus opinionem consonare. (19.4-5)

Let us begin with Thales of Miletus, the first of all philosophers, who was first to discuss heavenly matters. Thales said that water was the beginning of everything, and that god was the mind that formed everything from water. This is a theory of water and spirit too deep and sublime to have been invented by a human being—it was passed down by god; you see that the opinion of the first philosopher is fully consonant with ours.

This theory (*ratio*) of water and spirit that Octavius mentions is, it would seem, a reference to Genesis 1.2, when God's 'spirit' or 'wind' hovers over the face of the primordial waters of creation ("the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" Gen. 1.2 NRSV). This interpretation of the opening to Genesis—where the waters represent a primary formless substance—is a familiar one (see, e.g., Philo's *On Creation* 11.38, Augustine's *Literal Commentary on Genesis* 4, also Tertullian's *Adversus Hermogenem*; for Thales in a discussion of Genesis in particular, see Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.14.2). Octavius expresses himself in an extremely compressed way, but means to point out to us the importance of this consonance between

Thales' and Moses' respective cosmogonies. Breath and water in both combine to create order and understanding. Octavius' and Caecilius' seaside philosophical dispute may be just that sort of creative, generative dialectical microcosm.

Retreading rhetorical flourishes from across the dialogue may seem overwrought. Did Minucius intend for us to read the *Octavius* in this way? I think there are strongly suggestive clues to such a hermeneutical approach in the stage-setting of the dialogue. As mentioned above, treading, steps, retracing one's steps, and making circles permeate the beginning of the *Octavius*. I here show a few places that point to the importance of this for the dialogue as a whole.

Again, retracing and retreading figure prominently in the start of the philosophical exchange.¹⁶ At the very start, Minucius remarks on the memory of Octavius (now deceased) and the incredible power it has on his mental faculties. Thinking about him makes him seem to return to the past itself (*in praeterita redire*) rather than just to remember him (*revocare*) long gone. Octavius, Caecilius, and Minucius' seaside walk is cast as *inambulando* (walking up and down). Minucius' memorable description of the curling and repeating waves at 3.3 includes the waters' retracing steps and finding their way back into themselves (*nunc relabens ac vestigia retrahens in sese resorberet*). Again, the party goes back the way they came (*viam rursus versis vestigiis terebamus*). Caecilius' speech notes the great difficulty of *investigation* of truth (itself an *in-treading*) (*taedio investigandae penitus veritatis*). At the very conclusion of the dialogue (39-40), Minucius sits silent (*tacitus*) after Octavius has finished speaking, turning over (*evolvo*) the speech of Octavius in his mind, lost in admiration (*magnitudine admirationis evanui*) before Caecilius interrupts him, prompting the explicit end to the dialogue.

These textual reminders point to the author's hope that we too turn over the arguments again and again. That, if we like, we too can bring Octavius before our mind's-eye and re-turn to this investigation, weighing the arguments *pro* and *con* and make our own judgment as to the strength of each, as Minucius himself is tasked to do by Caecilius.

Indeed, these images of tracing and retracing serve well the last aim of my rhetorical analysis of the introductory setting of the dialogue. In particular, I think the setting serves a metatextual purpose, where both memory of Octavius' friendship and the dialogue between Octavius and Caecilius on the seashore point to the cognitive difficulties pagans in general (and pagans of a philosophical stripe in particular) may face in their own 'conversion story'. Crucial to overcoming these difficulties in Minucius' view, I think, is retracing, rethinking, repetition, and rereading.

Minucius, if we recall, is described by Caecilius as well-practiced in both pagan and Christian ways of life (5.1). Importantly Octavius was not only his friend when on the correct path, but also his dear friend in his wanderings (*ipse socius in erroribus*) (1.4). Octavius gently brought him back to truth, treating him with love and patience while he, Minucius, was in the depth of darkness (*tenebrarum profundo*). The gentle sea-foam curls and wanders too at 3.2 (again, *erroribus*), but comes back into itself at regular intervals. Octavius describes Caecilius as wandering (*errantem*), wavering constantly through error (*per errorem*) at the beginning of his speech (16.1-2). He promises to argue for the truth to finally free Caecilius from doubt and wandering (*vagandum*). Caecilius himself admits that he has triumphed over this wandering and losing one's way (*ego triumphator erroris*) (40.1).

The intricate setting of the *Octavius* suggests both the trials and difficulties awaiting the pagan convert to Christianity as well as the calming reassurance and inevitability of the victory of an interlocutor like Octavius. Wanderings provide for both

¹⁶ Again, I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer at *New England Classical Journal* for the suggestion of inclusion of this rhetorical theme—especially to the wordplay contained in *investigandae*. I am thankful for these comments.

the necessary leisure and reinvigoration of the body and the senses, while they are also limited to regular intervals, curled back into themselves like so many cresting waves. The dialogue of the *Octavius* itself, I suggest, could be seen as one of those productive, generative wanderings, a stone-skipping contest, that, if brought to mind once and again, retraced and retreaded as if we are there, could assist the conversion experience of the skeptically-minded unbelieving pagan.

Though this intellectual exercise (retracing and rehashing an argument) might seem extra- or even sub-philosophical, I am reminded of Socrates' mention of ritual 'chants' to face the fear of death in the *Phaedo* 77-78. There Socrates thinks that the recollection argument has sufficiently shown the pre-existence of the soul, but now seeks to employ new argumentation to dispel the fear that upon death the soul "blows away" and "dissipates" (77e). Socrates characterizes this as a child's fear, and Cebes responds:

"Try to convince us, Socrates," he said, "as if we do have that fear. Or rather, not as if we have the fear—maybe there's a child actually inside us who's afraid of things like that. So try to convince that child to stop fearing death as if it were the bogeyman."

"Well," said Socrates, "you must chant (*epadein*) spells to him every day until you manage to chant it away."

"Where then, Socrates," he said, "will we find a good enchanter (*epodos*) for such things, given that you," he added, "are leaving us?"

"Greece is a large place, Cebes," he said, "and there are no doubt good men in it. There are also many races of foreigners. All of these people you must comb in your search for such an enchanter, sparing neither money nor effort, as there's nothing on which you'd be better off spending your money" (77e-78a).

The *Octavius*, on my reading, is an attempt to capture just such an enchanter (*epodos*) at the height of his powers, brought back as if to real life (*in praeterita redire*), a friend in both times of affection (*amoris*) and in wanderings (*erroribus*), who will not leave you in the middle of your journey into truth (*non respuat comitem*), but, as you read, will in fact lead you on your way (*quod est gloriosius praecurrit*) (1.1, 4).

Still, we might think that those less trusting of Minucius Felix's intentions in his arrangement of this intricate *locus amoenus* and the metatextual function of both the dialogue and character of Octavius are in fact generally skeptical of what I have termed the preparatory *rhetoric of philosophical debate*. Rather than seeing these literary features of a Ciceronian (or Platonic, for that matter) dialogue as conducive to creating the conditions for the mental exercises that will be required of us upon entering into a particular philosophical investigation, they may think that these detract from the philosophical quality of the piece in question by interfering with the purity of the argument.¹⁷ It is not my aim here to respond directly to this criticism. It is longstanding and without an easy resolution. Some interpreters might indeed think this (i.e., that the dialogue form may corrupt via rhetoric)—but if they do, I would point out, I do not think there is *special* reason to think Minucius Felix uses the dialogue form to deceive or lull his readers into a trap. One would have to think Plato, Cicero, and Augustine do roughly the same.

B. Caecilius's Intellectual Position: Urbane Skeptical Fideism

But the first point of criticism from Powell I have addressed in this article, namely, that Minucius Felix is being somehow deceptive in his opening to the *Octavius*—

¹⁷ For a helpful, comprehensive study of this (very) longstanding skepticism (dating at least to Plato's own *Republic* where the "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry" is first mentioned [*Republic* 607b5-6]) see Teixeira 2007.

that his attempts at “blandness” and mere *appearance* of pagan respectability are meant only to establish a dishonest intellectual trust between him and the reader—really only succeeds if Minucius in fact has Caecilius defend an obviously absurd or weak position in the course of the dialogue. Otherwise, our view of Minucius Felix’s rhetorical techniques in the *Octavius* would likely be similar to our view of other thinkers’ using literary flourishes in the Platonic dialogue tradition.

It is my view that Caecilius defends a position which is, indeed, difficult, but one which is not ridiculous or obviously inconsistent; and, rather, one that is defensible from a certain skeptical stance. In fact, I think it has a strong forerunners in Cicero’s Cotta in the *De natura deorum* or, perhaps, the Celsus of the *True Doctrine* in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*, and, more broadly, represents a certain cultural attitude among elite metropolitan Romans common at the time of the *Octavius*’ composition.¹⁸ I call this philosophical outlook “urbane skeptical fideism”.¹⁹

According to this view, since all is able to be doubted (including the truth of *both* the ancestral pagan religions and the Christian upstart one), we ought to cleave to what brings the most social benefit (i.e., the Roman pagan religion) *provisionally*, lest we risk our individual reputation, safety, and the widespread social unrest that might arise with wholesale societal conversion to a new religious mode of life.

I will now discuss this point by appealing, again, to the Latin of the *Octavius*.²⁰

Caecilius’ speech in defense of traditional Roman pagan religion is the first delivered in the course of the *Octavius*. In it, Caecilius defends two main theses. The first is that in all things (but especially divine matters) there is no certainty (For this, Caecilius relies on stock Academic Skeptic arguments regarding the unreliability of the senses.).²¹ The second is that, given that all is uncertain (including, of course, novel religious movements), Romans ought to continue in practicing traditional pagan religion. He supports this second claim with an appeal to the virtue and character of the Roman people and their successes in war and empire. Throughout the speech other points are made, but it is on these two theses that Caecilius’ position rests.

Caecilius represents an interesting mixture of two views: he is both skeptic and traditionalist. These may at first seem to be in tension, but can be synthesized into a view that, even if unattractive to some, is consistent. This view, as mentioned above, I call “urbane skeptical fideism.”

I will consider the first thesis now. Caecilius says:

¹⁸ For the Academic Skeptic orthodoxy surrounding traditional religion as a matter of practice, not science, see Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 1.62, 3.5, 3.43. For a sampling of the recent flourishing of literature surrounding the intellectual and social situation of paganism in late antiquity, see Watts 2015 (though his study is principally concerned with the latter half of the fourth century, many of its themes find expression in the second and third), Humphries 2018, Grig 2018, O’Loughlin 2018, Krausmüller 2018. For evidence of the material culture of the slow decline of Late Antique paganism, see Lavan & Mulryan 2011. Fowden 1982, 1993 are helpful for illuminating Late Antique pagan mysticism, especially Hermeticism. Rüpke 2018 is an authoritative survey, with chapters 9–12 being especially relevant to this essay.

¹⁹ “Skeptical fideism” was coined in Delaney 1972. The term has found use especially in discussion of 17th and 18th century French skeptic and quietist movements, many which were directly inspired by Ciceronian Academic Skepticism; see Maia Neto 2015. From a growing literature, consult Carroll 2008, Strandberg 2006, Popkin 1992, 1964, Penelhum 1984.

²⁰ It should be noted again that my aim here is principally to motivate a general skeptical fideist reading of Caecilius’ speech. Each of Caecilius’ specific claims against the Christians will not be addressed in detail. Minucius’ inclusion of Caecilius’ slanderous attacks in a philosophical dialogue (as do Celsus’ in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*) open up fruitful lines of inquiry, not addressed in this essay. Why does Minucius think it important to include such scathing criticisms? What does this suggest regarding the new Christian religion’s views regarding self-examination?

²¹ See Brittain 2006 for a now standard introduction to the Academic Skeptic school, broadly, and for more on these arguments, particularly.

nullum negotium est patefacere, omnia in rebus humanis dubia, incerta, suspensa magisque omnia verisimilia quam vera. (5.2)²²

it is no trouble to make clear, that all things are doubtful in human affairs, and moreover that all things are suspended as probable rather than true

He goes on to suggest that the Christians err in proclaiming knowledge about divine things and exhorts knowledge of the self and political affairs:

et beati satis satisque prudentes iure videamur, si secundum illud vetus sapientis oraculum nosmet ipsos familiaris noverimus (5.5).

And, if what that old oracle of the wise man says is true—that we know ourselves more intimately—then it's enough to be happy and wise [to focus on knowledge of ourselves].

After Caecilius spends time considering the vicissitudes and unpredictability of the universe and the incomprehensibility of having one creator as its sole artificer, he says:

cum igitur aut fortuna certa aut incerta natura sit, quanto venerabilius ac melius antistitem veritatis maiorum excipere disciplinam, religiones traditas colere . . . (6.1)

since, therefore, either fortune is certain or nature uncertain, how much more reverent and better it is to accept the teaching of our ancestors as the priest of truth, to cultivate the religions handed down (to us) . . .

This last point is the most relevant for our purposes, and the place where Powell thinks Minucius has given Caecilius an inconsistent point to defend.

Indeed, the move from the skeptical position that no knowledge of divine affairs can be had, on the one hand, to espousal of traditional Roman religion, on the other, may seem difficult to swallow at first. In fact, Octavius himself pushes this very point at 16.1-2. But, while I think that the view Caecilius at first holds is in some sense difficult to understand, it is important to note that it is not obviously inconsistent or a ridiculous view to hold. It is, in fact, a somewhat common skeptical move in the history of philosophy. When global skepticism has shown everything to be in doubt, sometimes the safest option is thought to be to continue on in ways that are tried and true. It is a certain kind of conservatism—different, of course, from unceasing, unflinching commitment to the truth of tradition, rather, just that it has been tried—in that in the face of uncertain novelty it recommends the status quo.

It seems to me that Caecilius does not hold the obviously inconsistent view that i) the existence of the pagan gods is doubtful and ii) we should nevertheless believe that they exist. Rather, he takes the more consistent skeptical position of arguing i) certainty about any divine matters is unlikely to be had by a human mind (5.2-8) and ii) given this uncertainty, we should nevertheless still practice Roman religion because of its social

²² There is a wide literature on *verisimile* and the *probabile* (the 'plausible') in Academic Skepticism; see Glucker 1995 for a helpful discussion of their uses in Cicero. Bett 1989 is a helpful start for navigating the Greek origins of the idea.

benefits (6.1). Indeed, notice that later Caecilius does not say that we should *deis traditis credere* (as he has already expressed doubt as to whether anything certain can be known about them), but rather *prioribus credere*, namely, that we ought to believe in, trust in, our ancestors, and *religiones traditas colere* “cultivate the handed down religions.” Here Caecilius means the rites, rituals, and practice of Roman religion, not anything like a system of belief in the pagan deities.²³

But it remains to say a word on what the perceived social benefits of Roman religion are which Caecilius describes in his speech. In Caecilius’ view, and, no doubt, to many Romans, Roman religion was essential to making Rome into the empire that it was. He says:

sic eorum potestas et auctoritas totius orbis ambitus occupavit, sic imperium suum ultra solis vias et ipsius oceani limites propagavit. (6.2)

thus the power and authority of those people (i.e., the Romans) has occupied the circuit of the whole world; thus it has extended its empire beyond the paths of the sun and the limits of the ocean itself.

Caecilius goes on to say that the religious rites of the pagan religion played no small part in Roman military successes and the overall inculcation of Roman virtue. His point is no matter the metaphysical truth of Roman religion—which he thinks is just as uncertain as Christianity’s—the ritual and practice of paganism has resulted in a great many social goods. A related point in his speech, which I will not focus on here, is that Christianity seems less likely to produce such goods (e.g., 8.3, 12.5-7).

Again, together the two intellectual currents of Caecilius’ speech, i.e., skepticism and traditionalism, stand in apparent tension, but not outright contradiction. Caecilius rejects certain knowledge about gods and the cosmos, but points to the successes of the Roman empire in the human realm and argues that Roman religion had no small part to play in such successes.

One might, on the other hand, think that a skeptical point of view results in disavowal of all things traditional and a refusal to assent on any matters metaphysical. This, of course, is one possible route for the skeptic. But another, which we have been discussing here, and which has been tried by a number of philosophers in history, is rather to practice skepticism with respect to matters divine (*divina*) but accept the traditional religion, morals, and social mores in matters civil (*civilia*).

This practice—of assenting to the truth of nothing in matters divine (*divina*) while accepting the ‘truths’ civil (*civilia*) for their perceived personal, social, and political benefit—does not just have ancient precedent.²⁴ It is a recurring theme in the history of Western philosophy.²⁵ Indeed, one is reminded of Descartes’ famous *morale par provision* ‘provisional morality’ in the *Discourse on Method*, where, in the midst of a method of global doubt, Descartes accepts traditional Catholic moral teachings lest he cease to be able to live in society.²⁶ Indeed, Pascal, Kierkegaard, William James, and Wittgenstein

²³ For an interesting discussion of Late Antique pagan ‘belief’ systems and codification as a reaction to Christian challenges to the pagan religion in the public square, see Watts 2015, ch. 5, where he describes the reactionary principle of Julian and its legislation of belief through the infamous ‘School Laws’ in 362 CE. See also Banchich 1993.

²⁴ See Brittain 2005 for Cicero’s in-depth discussion of the Academic skeptical attitude toward morality and the importance of the *probabile* (the ‘plausible’) in making provisional practical decisions. See Burnyeat 1980, Bett 2011, 2013 for the difficulties associated with living out skepticism in a practical (or ethical) way in antiquity.

²⁵ For a prominent contextualist ethical framework that shares some similarities with this trend, see Timmons 1999.

²⁶ See Shapiro 2017. For more on other early modern skeptical fideists, see Popkin 1964, 1992.

have all have been termed ‘skeptical fideists’ of one stripe or another.²⁷ Caecilius, then, is in abundant philosophical company.

4. Conclusion

In this essay I have shown that the introduction to the *Octavius*, namely, in its stage-setting at Ostia and its first speech, that of Caecilius, admit of a much more charitable interpretation than as mere props for Minucius Felix’s “Christian propaganda.” I think that, for one, the setting of the dialogue is far from “bland,” but rather that it is charming, inviting, and part of a venerable literary tradition in Platonic and Ciceronian dialogue form. I call the rhetoric cultivated at the beginning of the *Octavius* one of impartial philosophical debate, a continuation of the *locus amoenus* trope in European letters, begun at least since Plato, but likely earlier. I then pointed the reader to further highly suggestive imagery in the introduction to the *Octavius* that shows philosophical care and intention in their composition befitting a Christian *protrepticus* for a pagan audience. Further, I argued that the position defended by Caecilius in the *Octavius* is not inconsistent on its face, as Powell and other interpreters have claimed, but that it is instead a form of conservative skeptical fideism (which I called ‘urbane skeptical fideism’, tying it to the cultural milieu of the metropolitan Late Antique Roman elite) which also has a long serious history in Western philosophy. Taken together these point to my much more optimistic reading of the *Octavius* as a genuine attempt at both literary imitation of the Ciceronian dialogue form and intellectually responsible Christian philosophy.

In sum, when Caecilius asks that Octavius whether they might *conserere sapientiam* (engage in wisdom/philosophical debate), not merely *in contubernalibus disputare* (debate among friends) he was serious; and, when Octavius accepts, he delivers on the challenge.²⁸

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²⁷ For more, see Amesbury 2017.

²⁸ The author wishes to thank John Wynne for his many comments on, and interest in, this essay. A seminar he taught at Northwestern University (on the ‘earliest Christian Latin’) in which I was a participant served as its genesis. His careful reading and helpful suggestions resulted in a superior paper. The author would also like to thank an anonymous reviewer at the *New England Classical Journal* and Aaron Seider for their extensive and sympathetic comments. All contributed to the strengths of this essay; errors found within it are my own. The phrase appears to be unique to Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 4.4-5). See Baur 1835, 163, Seiler 1893, 54. Seiler reads *conserere sapientiam* as a Greek elocution for the more regular *conserere pugnam sapientiae*. *Modo* and *more* have been suggested as interpolations, as in: *conserere [modo/more] sapientIUM* (i.e., to engage in the way of the wise people). The *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* gives only one parallel, itself from Tertullian, another African Christian: *Adv. Mar.* 3.2 ‘hinc gradum consero, an debuerit Christum tam subito venisse’. (TLL v. 4, 416, l. 48)

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Localizing Early Epic Material in Pindar's Sicilian Odes: Epichoric Concerns and Panhellenic Fame

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Abstract: Pindar's Sicilian odes composed for Hieron and Chromius are embellished with various mythological narratives that are also encountered in early epic material. I suggest that Pindar not only localizes - to some extent - these originally Panhellenic mythological narratives in order to embed them in the foundation narratives that he constructs for the Sicilian victors but that the poet creates a complex interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic elements within the context of the Sicilian odes. In this way, Pindar creates for Hieron and his newly-founded city a mythical past and legitimizes his right to rule before the eyes of local and Panhellenic audiences.

Keywords: Pindar, Sicily, Panhellenic, Epichoric, Early Epic, Foundation Narratives

1. Introduction

Pindar's encomiastic mission in the Sicilian odes was a difficult one. Hieron was not a descendant of a well-established royal line and the foundation of Aetna was quite recent.¹ There were no well-diffused Panhellenic myths concerning Hieron and his new *polis*. The lack of strong Sicilian epichoric myths was also an obstacle.² In order to praise the Sicilian victors to the original audience of the Sicilian odes, Pindar had to construct an epichoric mythical heritage for Aetna -in other words- to create a "manufactured" epichoric "genetic inheritance" for his Sicilian patrons.³ In order to better serve the Deinomenids' aspiration for attaining a Panhellenic status,⁴ Pindar also had to link their epichoric mythical heritage with facets of well-known Panhellenic myths.⁵ Pindar set himself the task of creating these resources and he looked to early epic poetry for materials.⁶

In this article, I suggest that Pindar's praise of Hieron's colonial activity was not expressed in one or two isolated cases, as many scholars have already argued,⁷ but was part of Pindar's poetics in the Sicilian odes.⁸ I focus on the Pindaric "reception" of the mythological narratives contained in early epic material and not on any other similarity

¹ As Donnellan rightly remarks, when the foundation of a city is quite recent "the relatively recent beginnings of these new settlements offered an opportunity for reshaping existing myths and genealogies and especially for developing new ones" (see Donnellan 2015, 41–42). Pindar, in particular, seems to use references to epic material when there is a greater need to legitimize the authority of his patron(s). See on this Athanassaki 2003, 119. See also Rose 1974, 155–56.

² See Eckerman 2008, 46–47.

³ See Malkin 1998, 16.

⁴ For the Deinomenids' (especially Hieron's) Panhellenic aspirations expressed through Pindar's poetry see Hubbard 2004, 74, 89–90; Harrell 2006, 132; Eckermann 2008; Morgan 2015, 132–33; Lewis 2019, 156–71.

⁵ On how a localized genre, such as Pindar's *epinicia*, attains a Panhellenic status see Nagy 1990, 157–98, 410–11.

⁶ See examples of Pindar's "intertextuality" with other poets and genre-blending in Pindar's *epinicia* in Kurke 1988; Kurke 1990; Nagy 1990; Kyriakou 1994, 32–45; D' Alessio 2005b; Nagy 2011; Pavlou 2012; Morgan 2015, 275–82; Nieto Hernández 2015; Stamatopoulou 2017, 52–102.

⁷ For Pindar's praise of Hieron's colonizing activity (the foundation of Aetna) in *Pyth.* 1 see, for example, Dougherty 1993, 92–97; Athanassaki 2003, 120; Hubbard 2004, 74; Stamatopoulou 2017, 53–62. For *Ol.* 1 see Nagy 1990, 293–313; Athanassaki 2003, 121–22; Eckerman 2013, 17; Foster 2013, 307.

⁸ I agree with Felson and Parmentier who regard that this is a special type of textual modality manifested in Pindar's odes, that is, the poet anticipates the "intertextual" construction of a cycle of odes by the audience. See Felson 2015, 269, n. 11.

between the Sicilian odes and early epic poetry.⁹ I place emphasis on the Sicilian odes composed for the victories of Hieron and his associates that contain mythical narratives that in ancient Greek literature represent the act of founding a city¹⁰ (*Ol.* 1, *Pyth.* 1, *Pyth.* 3, *Nem.* 1, *Nem.* 9).¹¹ These myths have to do with fighting monsters (Zeus and Typhoeus in *Pyth.* 1, Heracles and the Giants in *Nem.* 1), mingling with local women (Pelops and Hippodamia in *Ol.* 1, Apollo and Coronis in *Pyth.* 3, Alpheus and Arethusa in *Nem.* 1, Hades and Persephone in *Nem.* 1), founding athletic games (Adrastus in *Nem.* 9) and receiving posthumous privileges (Pelops in *Nem.* 1).

Regardless of the fragmentary condition of many early Greek epic compositions, it is possible to discern that in Pindar's work there are deviations from the accounts found in early epic poetry. I argue that these alterations in well-known myths are politically motivated.¹² Pindar's victory odes were a localized and highly occasional genre. They were originally commissioned for a specific occasion, to be performed by a chorus assembled and trained for that one original occasion.¹³ Pindar seems to localize this mythical material, that is, to make it relevant to the victors and the original audience of the Sicilian odes.

The localization of this material happens in two ways. Pindar emphasizes features of the natural landscape and weaves traditional Greek myths into descriptions of local physical spaces¹⁴ (*Pyth.* 1, *Nem.* 1). In addition to this, the geographical sites of the athletic victories in which foundational acts took place are occasionally connected with the athlete's hometowns (*Ol.* 1, *Nem.* 1, *Nem.* 9).¹⁵ The victor's hometown is once connected with the dominion of the god who is the hero of the foundation narrative (*Pyth.* 3). The poet also draws a parallel between the Deinomenids' historical deeds and the actions of a Panhellenic cultic figure (*Ol.* 1, *Pyth.* 1, *Nem.* 1, *Nem.* 9).¹⁶ In other words, within the context of the Sicilian odes, the athletes by their victory re-enact the acts of foundation done by the hero or god in a primordial time and allows them to be celebrated in the *hic et nunc* of the choral performance.¹⁷ The localization of this mythological material -to the extent that it happens- is an answer to the epichoric concerns of the Deinomenid dynasty. Such epichoric concerns are the legitimization of their claim to rule over their people, to act as colonists and to be respected and honored by their local community.

Although it would have been natural for the poet to localize this traditional material in order to assert the Sicilian victors' right to rule and justify their foundational activity by endowing it with mythical authority, Pindar creates a complex interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic elements within his Sicilian odes. The poet by tying the victors and the Sicilian landscape to well-known Panhellenic myths and sites and

⁹ My approach is -in this regard- similar to these of Schwartz 1960, 138–47, 562–70; Kyriakou 1994; D'Alessio 2005b; Stamatopoulou 2017, 52–102.

¹⁰ As Calame has suggested, foundation narratives in ancient Greek literature are closely interwoven with a variety of other repeated motifs or structures that recur both within specific narratives and across narratives treating similar subjects. See Calame 2003, 55–111. For a summary of the most common motifs or structures that represent foundational activities in ancient Greek literature see Segal 1986, 68–71; Dougherty 1993, 15, 61–119, 136–56.

¹¹ Pindar has composed for Hieron's victories *Ol.* 1 and *Pyth.* 1–3. For the victories of his associates, he has composed numerous victory odes (e.g., *Ol.* 2–6, 10–11, *Isthm.* 2, *Nem.* 1, *Nem.* 9).

¹² See on this the approaches of Calame 2009, 4–5; Beecroft 2010, 8; Brillante 2014, 91–112.

¹³ See Nagy 1990, 114.

¹⁴ See Lewis 2019.

¹⁵ Čulumović argues that Pindar often blurs the lines between the site of the victory and the site of the songs' performance. See Čulumović 2016, 350–53.

¹⁶ On the relationship between mythical heroes and athletes in Pindar's odes see Rose 1974, 155–56; Nagy 1990, 199–215; Felson 2015, 267, 275.

¹⁷ According to Burnett, each individual victory by an athlete could be perceived as a re-enactment of a mythical deed of a local hero. See Burnett 2005, 49–50. See also Kirichenko 2016, 6.

letting originally Panhellenic material to resonate¹⁸ through his songs, helps the victors to attain a Panhellenic status and advertises their dynastic claims and colonial activity to the Panhellenes.¹⁹ I suggest that this interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic concerns -as manifested in many of the Sicilian odes- could not have been anything else but a premeditated plan aided by Pindar's use of early epic material to construct his foundation narratives.

2. Creating a Regional Monster

Founder heroes, at least in foundation narratives, wish to promote civilization. They are forced to enter into conflict with wild, untamed forces that prevent it. Although Hieron is not presented as slaying any regional monster,²⁰ in the first *Pythian*, composed for his win in chariot race in 470 BCE, Pindar narrates how Zeus imprisoned Typhoeus under Aetna.²¹ Within the context of the first *Pythian*, the Panhellenic myth of Typhoeus is linked to the Sicilian landscape of Mount Aetna, which gives Sicily Panhellenic stature. Moreover, the partial identification between Zeus and Hieron allows Hieron's historical deeds, especially the foundation of Aetna, to be celebrated in the same way as Zeus' defeat of Typhoeus.

A long ago before the foundation of Aetna, in what seems a primordial time,²² Zeus fights and overcomes a monster in the site of Hieron's new city. The subdued monster does not vanish, instead, Typhoeus becomes a part of the landscape, in other words, a regional monster.²³ He is now visible to all with the effect that his imprisonment has over the Sicilian landscape. A Panhellenic myth is linked to the Sicilian landscape.²⁴

In Pindar's account, Typhoeus is one of whom Zeus does not love and are deprived of the ability to enjoy the singing of the Muses (lines 13-14). Typhoeus has a hundred heads and lies in Tartarus (lines 15-16). He is an enemy of the gods: "that enemy of the gods" (θεῶν πολέμιος, line 15). After his defeat, he is imprisoned by the cliffs above Cumae and Sicily which lie heavy on his chest (lines 15-20). Aetna holds the monster down (lines 18-20). Typhoeus lives inside the volcano and causes its activity (lines 21-29).

¹⁸ My approach takes as a premise that the early epic material that resonates through Pindar's *epinicia* for Sicilian victors is traditional. Pindar's appropriation of this material is not a case of mere imitation of specific epic compositions -which I view as representatives of traditions of songs- but a case of traditional referentiality. For the term traditional referentiality see Foley 1999, 33-34; Graziosi 2005, 9. In this case, a collective tradition of early epic poetry resonates through Pindar's words, phrases, motifs or story patterns encountered in his Sicilian odes that contain foundation narratives.

¹⁹ It was essential for Pindar to advertise to a Panhellenic audience the activities of the Sicilian rulers. Hubbard convincingly argues that the Sicilian rulers and their associates were despised in the mainland because they were blamed for not contributing to the Greek cause of the Persian wars. See Hubbard 2004, 74. On the Deinomenids' image in mainland Greece, and their need to engage in a public relations campaign see also Morgan 2015, 25-45. For the "transcendent occasionality" of Pindar's compositions see Nagy 1990, 114.

²⁰ The defeat of a monster is a typical accomplishment of a city founder. See Trumpf 1958. For the defeat of a monster embedded in a foundation narrative, see the approach of Franzen 2009.

²¹ Pindar briefly refers to Typhoeus and Zeus also in *Ol.* 4 for Psaumis of Camarina. The ode, composed around 462 BCE, reveals its association with Hieron by drawing on the image of Typhoeus under Aetna -that Pindar had created in *Pyth.* 1- and embedding it in a prayer to Zeus the Aetnaean. See on this Van de Groenendaal 2010, 393; Nicholson 2016, 241.

²² As Pavlou remarks, Pindar refers to the past by using the indefinite conjunctions τότε, ὅτε and πότε, followed by a relative pronoun (line 16). As the present is concerned, Pindar normally refers to it by using the adverb νῦν, as in this case (line 17). See Pavlou 2012, 101-2, n. 22. For πότε in Pindar see Young 1983, 35-36, with more bibliography. For the use of time in Pindar's foundation narratives see also Calame 2003, 39.

²³ To the best of my knowledge, Rose was the first to suggest that Pindar in this ode presents Typhoeus as a local monster. See Rose 1974, 156, n. 28.

²⁴ See Lewis 2017, 2019, 171.

The most well-known account of the battle of Zeus and Typhoeus during Pindar's time was in Hesiod's *Theogony*.²⁵ The Hesiodic account resonates through Pindar's version of the events.²⁶ Typhoeus' story is part of the Greek succession myth which explained how Zeus came to rule the gods. According to Hesiod, Typhoeus is the son of Earth and Tartarus who was born after Zeus had driven the Titans from the sky (lines 820-21).²⁷ Typhoeus was monstrous in form. His most terrifying feature, according to the *Theogony*, was his multiple snake-like heads (lines 823-35). Typhoeus attempted to overthrow Zeus for the supremacy of the cosmos. The two fought a cataclysmic battle. Defeated, Typhoeus was cast into Tartarus (lines 857-63). In Hesiod's account, Zeus after destroying Typhoeus takes up the kingship and apportions honors to the other gods (lines 881-85).

As other contemporary scholars have rightly argued, in the first *Pythian*, Pindar alters the Hesiodic account of the events.²⁸ The other gods are not mentioned, and we can only speculate that all the other defeated Titans are just names on a list of those whom Zeus does not love. Pindar does not focus on the description of the monster or his terrible features, and the description of their battle is almost absent. Pindar's center of attention is the Mount Aetna and its volcanic activity, which is caused by the monster. The poet describes this activity at length (lines 19-30), mentioning images that may have been familiar to its inhabitants.

Hieron is closely associated with Zeus in this ode. Zeus is said to frequent the Mount Aetna (lines 28-30) which is part of Hieron's new-founded city.²⁹ Zeus is being called upon as the patron deity of the city of Aetna (lines 29-33).³⁰ Hieron is described as an *oikist* who glorifies Aetna with his victory: "whose namesake city near at hand was glorified by its renowned founder" (τοῦ μὲν ἑπωνυμίαν / κλεινὸς οἰκιστὴρ ἐκύδανε πόλιν / γείτονα, lines 31-33).³¹ Hieron pleases Zeus since the victor had the god's name pronounced by the herald when announcing his victory (lines 29-33).³² Zeus grants Hieron's success and good fortune and the city's prosperity (lines 68-70). As Pfeijffer argues, the juxtaposition of Zeus presented as the patron deity of the new-founded city, and Hieron, presented as the founder and the benefactor of Aetna, suggests an association between Hieron and Zeus.³³

Pindar uses a Panhellenic myth to explain a local topographical feature, and its conclusion celebrates Hieron not only as a victor but also as the founder of the new-established Aetna.³⁴ Hieron is also celebrated as the defender of Greece from the

²⁵ Eumelus in his *Titanomachy* refers to this battle but almost everything is lost. Tsagalis argues, based on a scholium in Oppian's *Halieutica*, that Eumelus' *Titanomachy* may have included an episode in which Zeus defeated Typhoeus. See Tsagalis 2013.

²⁶ Pindar's description of the battle has marked linguistic similarities with Hesiod's *Theogony*, as other scholars have suggested. See Debiasi 2008, 90–91; Stamatopoulou 2017, 58–60. The meter used is dactylo-epitritic, a meter closer to the dactylic hexameter than the other meters used by Pindar (e.g., the Aeolic meter). See on this see West 1982, 35, 48, 70; Nagy 1990, 439–64; Maslov 2015, 78–81.

²⁷ For the *Theogony*, I follow the text and the translation of Most. See Most 2006.

²⁸ See West 1966, 406; D'Alessio 2009, 140; Scully 2015, 98; Phillips 2018, 270–75.

²⁹ Hieron founded the cult of the Aetnaean Zeus in his new city. See Nicholson 2016, 242–43. Stamatopoulou believes that the reference to Zeus the Aetnaean recalls Hieron's foundational activities in this ode. See Stamatopoulou 2017, 53.

³⁰ See Pfeijffer 2005, 19.

³¹ I follow the text of Bowra. See Bowra 1980. I follow the translation of Arnson-Svarlien unless otherwise stated.

³² See Pfeijffer 2005, 19–20.

³³ See Pfeijffer 2005, 20.

³⁴ See Dougherty 1993, 93–94, 101; Athanassaki 2003, 120–21; Morgan 2015, 20–21; Stamatopoulou 2017, 52–55; Phillips 2018, 261, 270; Lewis 2019, 137–38.

barbarians and a true Panhellenic hero.³⁵ Zeus' victory over Typhoeus could operate as a symbol of Hieron's prevailing over the Carthaginians and the Etruscans and his subduing of the indigenous people of Aetna.³⁶ As Zeus defends his supremacy by defeating Typhoeus, Hieron defends Greece from the barbarians (lines 71-80).³⁷ Hieron, like Zeus, fights untamed forces and when he subdues them, they are sometimes incorporated into his realm.³⁸ By creating an imprisoned regional monster, Pindar adds local flavor to a Panhellenic story. At the same time, he promotes Hieron's image as a Panhellenic monster-slayer. By letting Hesiodic material to resonate through the ode, Pindar further associates Hieron, his colony, and his own *epinicion* with a Panhellenic audience.

It is likely that Pindar localized another monster in his Sicilian odes. In the first *Nemean*, composed for Chromius' of Aetna victory in the chariot race of 476 BCE, Pindar briefly mentions Heracles' victory against the Giants (lines 62-68). Within the context of this ode, Heracles is under the auspices of Zeus the Aetnaean (lines 1-6), father of Hebe and his father-in-law (lines 69-72).³⁹ The Giants are depicted as some of the monsters that Heracles will slay: "lawless monsters" (θηρας αἰδροδίκας, line 64). Pindar situates the Gigantomachy in the plain of Phlegra (lines 67-68). As other scholars have suggested, the plain of Phlegra was localized by the fifth century in the fields of Campania and Cumae where Hieron had defeated the Etruscans.⁴⁰ Chromius, probably, has taken part in this battle.

The earliest appearances of the Gigantomachy in Greek literature are encountered in early Greek epic. Both Homer and Hesiod narrate this conflict between the gods and the Giants.⁴¹ The Gigantomachy is the subject of many works of art, and it also appears in many variants in later Greek and Latin literature.⁴² According to some of these sources, at least one of the Giants, Enceladus, was buried under Aetna.⁴³ The Gigantomachy was often related to volcanic activity, and it could have provided an *action* for the volcanic activity of Aetna.⁴⁴ The hero is not linked with Enceladus or any other Giant that was buried under Mount Aetna in any of the known versions of the myth. Nonetheless, in at least in one of the artistic depictions of the Gigantomachy, the portrayal of Zeus fighting a single Giant in combat bears similarities to other artistic depictions of Zeus fighting Typhoeus.⁴⁵ It is mere speculation, but Typhoeus' battle with Zeus in Aetna could have been conflated with Zeus and Heracles' battle against the Giants in a Sicilian

³⁵ As the importance of Hieron's victory over his enemies had significance only for the west, but minimal impact on the rest of Greece, this can be considered as part of Pindar's plan to extoll Hieron's virtues to the Panhellenes. See Hubbard 2004, 74; Harrell 2006, 132.

³⁶ See Athanassaki 2003, 121; Harrell 2002, 446-47.

³⁷ Hieron is credited with defending Hellas from the western barbarians at the battles of Cumae and Himera. See also Pfeijffer 2005, 38-40.

³⁸ Not all the Sicilians became part of Hieron's colony. Nonetheless, various Sicilians were incorporated into the larger Deinomenid realm and the non-Greeks acknowledged his authority.

³⁹ Chromius was Hieron's son in law. See Rose 1974, 169, with more bibliography on the similarities of Heracles and Chromius' situation. The reference to Zeus the Aetnaean is a reference to Hieron's foundational activity. See on this Foster 2013, 294-95.

⁴⁰ See Slater 1984, 258-59; Morgan 2015, 388; Lewis 2019, 132-33.

⁴¹ See Hom. *Od.* 7.59-61, 10.120 ff.; Hes. *Th.* 184-86. Heracles' battle against the Giants is briefly discussed in fr. 43a MW of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. For the *Catalogue of Women*, I follow the edition of Most (see Most 2007) but I retain the numbering used in the edition of Merkelbach and West.

⁴² See Hanfmann 1937 for the evidence in art.

⁴³ See Callimachus fr. 117; Apollodorus 1.6.1-2. See also Quint. Smyrn. 14.582-85; Verg. *Aen.* 3.578 ff.; Stat. *Theb.* 11.8; Claud. *Rapt.* 1.153-59, 2.151-62, 3.186-87. See also the poem *Aetna* (perhaps written by Lucilius Junior) lines 71-73; Philostr. *VA* 5.16.

⁴⁴ See Farnell 1882, 305.

⁴⁵ It is the earliest depiction of the Gigantomachy in Greek art (about 580 BCE), found in the pediment of an Archaic temple in Corfu. See Hanfmann 1937, 476, with more bibliography.

myth, just as it was likely conflated in pictorial art. In this case, Pindar repeats a local variant of the myth of the Gigantomachy and allows other variants that were contained in early epic material to resonate through his description, mixing epichoric and Panhellenic elements.

3. Mingling with Local Women

In many foundation narratives, founder heroes mingle with local women and create a long line of royal descendants.⁴⁶ The descendants of the heroes and the local women are the ancestors of the ruling dynasties of Greek cities. In his need to create mythical models for his honorands to imitate or avoid, since the Deinomenids are not connected by blood to Greek gods or heroes, Pindar employs mythological narratives that come from early epic compositions. Within the context of these odes, Sicily and Aetna are linked to a series of Panhellenic landscapes. Aetna is linked to Olympia (*Ol.* 1). Sicily is linked to the Peloponnese (*Nem.* 1). Hieron's dominion is linked to Delphi (*Pyth.* 3). The landscapes of the Deinomenids' colonies attain a Panhellenic status through the athletic achievements of the victors. Pindar by narrating the affairs of gods and heroes with local women constructs a mythical map of Sicily and Aetna that are linked to various sites of the mainland allowing a local audience to feel that belongs to a broad community. At the same time, the poet emphasizes the victors' ties to sites of Panhellenic importance giving them Panhellenic stature. The fact that Panhellenic poetry resonates through these narratives, adds an additional layer of interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic elements within the Sicilian odes.

In his victory ode for Hieron's victory at a single horse race, Pindar includes a story about the marriage of a Greek hero, Pelops, and a young woman named Hippodamia that took place at a very remote time⁴⁷. This is the first *Olympian*, composed around 476 BCE. As other scholars have suggested, Hieron is linked to Pelops in this ode.⁴⁸ According to myth, Pelops became the king of Pisa in the Peloponnese. Pelops won the crown of Pisa or Olympia from King Oenomaus in a chariot race and then married Oenomaus's daughter, Hippodamia. Pelops and Hippodamia have many children.⁴⁹

Pelops' story is encountered in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. Pindar's version is in accordance with the account found in the version of the Hesiodic epic that we have. In the *Catalogue*, fr. 189-191 MW refers to Pelops, Hippodamia, and their offspring, but there is nothing regarding Pelops' meeting with Oenomaus or his wedding to Hippodamia. Fr. 259a MW is quoted by Pausanias, according to whom the fragment belongs to the *Great Ehoiai* and informs us that Oenomaus killed a series of Hippodamia's suitors. According to fr. 259b MW, which is a scholium to Pindar's first *Olympian*, Oenomaus killed thirteen suitors. We are not in a position to know if all the details mentioned in the first *Olympian* were also present in the Hesiodic version of the myth of Pelops. There are no obvious morphological similarities between the fragmentary text of the *Catalogue of Women* and Pindar's account of the myth of Pelops. Pindar's diction in

⁴⁶ See Dougherty 1993, 60–76, 146. For the similarities between the process of colonization and marriage see Pl. *Leg.* 776a-b. De Boer argues that Pindar's descriptions of "divine rapes" are "ktistic" stories of the divine origin of the victor's family or his city. See De Boer 2017.

⁴⁷ For an analysis of the temporalities of *Ol.* 1 see Athanassaki 2004. For the chronological terms used in this ode see Pavlou 2012, 98.

⁴⁸ See Nagy 1990, 293-313; Athanassaki 2003, 121–22; Currie 2005, 311; Eckerman 2013, 17, 25; Foster 2013, 307; Morgan 2015, 226–27.

⁴⁹ For the myth of Pelops see Paus. 6.21.9-11.

lines 21-93 is traditional.⁵⁰ The meter used in the first *Olympian* is extremely complex.⁵¹ Nonetheless, many modern scholars argue that the Hesiodic account of the myth of Pelops, as encountered in the *Catalogue of Women*, lies behind Pindar's first *Olympian*.⁵²

Pindar modifies a diffused version of the myth of Pelops that is represented by the surviving text of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.⁵³ The poet focuses on the landscape. Olympia is described as a settlement founded by the Lydian Pelops: "in the settlement of fine men founded by Lydian Pelops" (ἐν εὐάνορι Λυδοῦ Πέλοπος ἀποικία, line 24), as Aetna was.⁵⁴ This reference to Olympia not only unites Pelops as a founder hero of the sanctuary of Olympia, with Pindar's patron, the founder of Aetna, a colony consisting of Peloponnesians but also Aetna with Olympia. The inhabitants of Aetna are encouraged to think that they are part of a community of Peloponnesians. This reference does not only serve epichoric concerns. Both Hieron and Aetna are related to Olympia, a site of Panhellenic importance. At the same time, the audience, is left to make the association with the Panhellenic version of the myth that was represented by the account of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.

The most renowned story about the affair of a god and a local girl is located in the third *Pythian*, composed and performed in 474 BCE for the victory of Hieron in horse race. This is the story of Apollo and Coronis, which results in the miraculous birth of Asclepius. This story is well-known from the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. We find this story in fr. 50 MW, 53 MW, 59 MW and 60 MW. All these fragments come from the indirect tradition, except for fr. 59 MW. The Scholiast or the authors who quote them attribute to Hesiod two different versions of the birth of Asclepius. It is possible that the *Catalogue of Women* contained both versions.⁵⁵

According to the first version, Coronis, daughter of Phlegyas, was loved by Apollo but married Ischys, thus incurring the god's wrath. Fr. 60 MW comes from a scholium to Pindar (Schol. *Pyth.* 3.52b = II pp. 70.14-71.3 Drachmann) that may belong to the *Catalogue of Women*⁵⁶ and describes how Coronis, impregnated by Apollo, marries Ischys and a crow brings the news to Apollo at Delphi, and Apollo is infuriated. A papyrus fragment (fr. 59 MW), written by the same hand as other *Catalogue* fragments (fr. 10a.55-65, 91-103 MW and 25.21-5 MW), preserves three lines from an *choia* describing a woman almost certainly to be identified with Coronis.⁵⁷ This girl is a beautiful, unwed virgin who dwells in Thessaly.

⁵⁰ Many words are also encountered in epic compositions, such as: εὐάνορι (line 24) also in Hom. *Od.* 4.622, 13.19; τεύχει (line 30) and in Homer (e.g., *Od.* 1.277, 8.276); φῶτες (line 46) also in epic poetry (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 17.377); βαρύκτυπον (line 72) an epithet of Zeus in Hom. *Hymn Dem.* 3 and Hesiod (*Op.* 79).

⁵¹ See Itsumi 2009, 141-53.

⁵² See Krummen 1990, 168-211; Gostoli 1999, 15-24; Hansen 2000, 19-40; Athanassaki 2003, 121-22; Pavlou 2012, 109.

⁵³ The myth of Pelops as narrated in *Ol.* 1 has provoked much debate among scholars. The bibliography is extensive. See, for example, Kakridis 1930, 463-77; Pini 1976; Nagy 1986, 71-88; Hubbard 1987, 16 n. 2; Burgess 1993; Pitotto 2014.

⁵⁴ As other scholars have stressed, it is strange that a part of the Peloponnese, the Greek motherland *par excellence*, is depicted as a colony. I am also of the opinion that Pindar in *Ol.* 1 constructs Olympia as a colony of Pelops to link the colonial enterprise of Pelops with the colonial enterprise of Hieron. See on this Nagy 1990, 293-313; Athanassaki 2003, 121-22; Eckerman 2013, 17; Foster 2013, 307.

⁵⁵ See Wilamowitz 1905, 123-24; Edelstein 1945, 24-34; Ercolani 2001; D'Alessio 2005a, 209.

⁵⁶ D'Alessio (see D'Alessio 2005a, 208-10, with more bibliography) argues that the most economical solution is to assign Coronis to the *Catalogue* and Arsinoe to the *Great Ehoiai*. On the contrary, Most believes that Coronis was the mother of Asclepius in the *Great Ehoiai* and Arsinoe in the *Catalogue of Women* (see Most 2007, 310-1, n. 24). West (1985, 69-72) claims that Coronis was not featured in the *Catalogue of Women* or that she was not related to Asclepius.

⁵⁷ See D'Alessio 2005a, 208; Most 2007, 246-48.

According to another version of Asclepius' birth, the mother of Asclepius is Arsinoe, daughter of Leucippus. This version is included in fr. 50 MW, which comes from the indirect tradition. It consists of a scholium to Pindar's third *Pythian* (Schol. *Pyth.* 3.14 = II p. 64.11-20 Drachmann) and of a quotation of Pausanias (2.26.7). According to the Scholiast, Arsinoe or Coronis was the mother of Asclepius. According to Asclepiades, Arsinoe was the daughter of Leucippus and the granddaughter of Perieres. She was pregnant by Apollo and gave birth to Asclepius and, probably, to a daughter named Eriopis. The Scholiast quotes a few verses that might belong to the *Catalogue of Women* that describe the birth of Asclepius in Arsinoe's chambers asserting Apollo's paternity of the child. Pausanias attests that Hesiod, or another poet who interpolated the verses of Hesiod's poems, called Arsinoe the daughter of Leucippus. Arsinoe appears as Apollo's lover and Asclepius' mother in Philodemus' list of the mortal lovers of Poseidon and Apollo, which appeared either in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* or in the *Great Ehoiai* (Phld. *De Pietate* B 7430-46, 7454-80 Obbink). According to fr. 53 MW, which is quoted by a Scholiast of Homer (Schol. D Hom. *Il.* 4.193 = p. 177 van Thiel), Arsinoe or Coronis was the lover, not the mother, of Asclepius and was the mother of his son, Machaon. According to the Scholiast of this Hesiodic fragment, the mother of Machaon was Xanthe in Hesiod's account.

Pindar's version of the affair of Coronis and Apollo is in accordance with the Hesiodic version, according to which Coronis is the mother of Asclepius.⁵⁸ In Pindar's third *Pythian*, we learn that Coronis, the daughter of Phlegyas, lived in Thessaly. She was giving birth to Asclepius in her bedroom with the help of Eileithyia when was stricken by the golden arrows of Artemis (lines 8-11). What caused Apollo's wrath was Coronis' infidelity. Coronis had a clandestine affair (line 13) with Ischys, her father's guest from Arcadia. Her fault was even greater because Coronis was already pregnant with Asclepius by Apollo (lines 14-15).

Pindar refers to the crow that is present in the Hesiodic version (fr. 60 MW) at line 27: "but she did not elude the watcher" (οὐδ' ἔλαθε σκοπόν). In the third *Pythian*, we learn that Coronis did not hide from Apollo. Although Apollo was in Pytho, perceived her treachery with the help of his all-knowing mind (lines 27-30). Apollo sent his sister to Lacerea to punish Coronis (lines 31-34). When Coronis was placed in her death pyre, Apollo pitied his offspring and snatched it from her corpse (lines 38-44). The third *Pythian* is composed in dactylo-epitrite. Besides the fact that the diction of these lines has traditional elements,⁵⁹ there are explicit parallels between the diction of lines 27-30 and Hesiod's 60 MW, as Stamatopoulou remarks.⁶⁰

In the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 60 MW), special prominence is given to Coronis' affair and the message containing this information. In the third *Pythian*, there is no wedding between Coronis and Ischys. The sole culprit is the mortal woman, not because she was seduced by a god and carried his child but because of her infidelity to her divine lover and her eagerness to mingle with a mortal who lived far away (lines 14-26). Apollo, in this way, is completely exonerated.⁶¹ Emphasis is again placed on a landscape. As Stamatopoulou observes, the poet replaces the Hesiodic phrase "most holy Pytho" (Πυθῶ ἐς ἡγαθέην)⁶² with a more elaborate reference to Delphi as a cultic and oracular center.⁶³ Pindar dedicates several lines to extoll Apollo, the dweller of flock-receiving

⁵⁸ See Kyriakou 1994, 32-33; D'Alessio 2005b, 232, 234; Morgan 2015, 277-78; Stamatopoulou 2017, 66-68.

⁵⁹ εὐίππου (line 8) also in *Hom. Hymn to Aphrodite* 210; Hes. P. Oxy. 1358.21; δαμείσα (line 9) also in epic poetry (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 18.432); μετχθεῖσα (line 14) and in epic poetry (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 9.275, *Od.* 22.445; Hes. *Theog.* 927, 970).

⁶⁰ See Stamatopoulou 2017, 72-75.

⁶¹ See Young 1968, 35-40; Kearns 2013, 57; Stamatopoulou 2017, 72-75.

⁶² This translation belongs to Stamatopoulou.

⁶³ See Stamatopoulou 2017, 71-72.

Delphi who resides in his temple (lines 27-30) and amply describes the god's thoughts and actions (lines 31-46). Pindar celebrates Apollo's power in an ode composed for a victory at a festival in his honor. In this way, he praises the victor who is connected to this site, catering for the encomiastic purposes of the *hic et nunc* of the ode.⁶⁴ Hieron's connection with Delphi would have allowed for Asclepius to come to Syracuse to his rescue (lines 63-76). Thanks to Hieron, his city is further linked to the mainland. By relating Hieron to Delphi, a site of Panhellenic importance and the dwell of Asclepius' father, Pindar allows a Panhellenic audience to relate anew with the content of the ode. The poet draws the attention of his epichoric and Panhellenic audience(s) in the fact that the more Panhellenic account of the events, as represented in the Hesiodic composition, lies behind his version of the myth through his use of diction (line 27) and creates a complex interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic elements.

In the first *Nemean* ode for Chromius of Aetna, Pindar refers to stories of local female figures who, according to myth, have been abducted. These are the nymph Arethusa and the goddess Persephone. In lines 1-2, the poet refers to Ortygia as the sacred place where Alpheus breathed again, through which he implicitly mentions the union of Alpheus and Arethusa. The poet proceeds by mentioning Persephone's union with Hades. According to Pindar, Sicily is the wedding gift of Zeus to Persephone (lines 13-18). In the first *Nemean*, Pindar uses the dactylo-epitritic meter, and the short references to the abduction of these female figures abound in what is considered epic vocabulary.⁶⁵

Arethusa was a local nymph of Arcadia. The river god Alpheus pursued her and she had to flee from her homeland and come up as a freshwater fountain on the island of Ortygia. Alpheus insisted and flowed through the sea to mingle with her waters.⁶⁶ The earliest source for this story is, probably, Ibycus of Rhegium. While mentioning Olympia, Ibycus described the undersea connection between Olympia and Ortygia by speaking about a "cup of Ortygia" that, thrown into the river at Olympia, would always reappear at Syracuse (fr. 323 *PMG*). There is also a possibility that Hesiod's fr. 360 *MW*, which refers to the Hesperides and attests that one of them was Hesperethusa, refers to the Arethusa who mingled with the river god in the west.⁶⁷

As other scholars have suggested, Arethusa's union with Alpheus operates as a symbol for the union of Sicily with the mainland.⁶⁸ More specifically, Arethusa, as part of the Sicilian landscape, is linked to the Peloponnese. The union of the local nymph of Arcadia and the river god also embodies Hieron's colonial plan.⁶⁹ In other words, the union of a local nymph with a god expresses both epichoric and Panhellenic concerns. In the case that Arethusa's mingling with the god was also represented in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, it is possible that Pindar created an additional layer of interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic elements letting the epic version resonate through his.

Pindar's text, as we have it, does not attest that Persephone was abducted by Hades. In the first *Nemean* ode, Persephone is only described as the bride of Hades, receiving Sicily as a wedding gift. Nonetheless, according to the Scholiast of Pindar (Schol. ad *Nem.* 1.20), the poet alluded to the Sicilian version of the myth, since Persephone's rape took place on the island of Sicily. Pindar certainly localizes a Panhellenic myth to cater for the epichoric concerns of his patrons. The rape of the goddess was frequently located

⁶⁴ See Kyriakou 1994, 33, 39; Stamatopoulou 2017, 71–74.

⁶⁵ See, for example, θάλος (line 2) and in epic poetry (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 22.87, *Od.* 6.157; Hom. *Hymn* to Ceres 66, 187); δέμνιον (line 3) and in Homer (e.g., *Il.* 24.644, *Od.* 4.297); κατένευσέν in line 14 and in Homer (e.g., *Il.* 1.524, 558, *Od.* 15.464).

⁶⁶ The myth of Arethusa is narrated in many later sources. See Paus. 5.7.1-5; Ov. *Met.* 5.710; Strabo 6.2.4.

⁶⁷ See on this Philipps 1953, 55; Malkin 1998, 193; Motta 2016, 372.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Dougherty 1993, 68–69; Eckerman 2013, 1–10; Lewis 2019, 31, 56–58, 118.

⁶⁹ See Dougherty 1993, 68–69; Foster 2013, 294–95, 316; Lewis 2019, 56–58.

in Sicily in later versions.⁷⁰ The earliest source for the localization of the rape in Sicily seems to be Carcinus, a fourth-century-BCE Athenian tragic poet.⁷¹ As well as Carcinus' reference, there are similarities between Pindar's account and other poetic compositions. Pindar uses the verb *μίγνυμι*: "horsemen often wedded to the golden leaves of Olympia's olive" (Ὀλυμπιάδων φύλλοις ἐλαϊᾶν χρυσοῖς / μειχθέντα, lines 17-8,) to describe the association between the Olympic Games and the people of Sicily. The erotic connotations that the verb carries have not been left completely unnoticed by modern scholars,⁷² but it is has not been stressed enough that this verb is often encountered in epic poetry to describe a union between a god and a mortal or between two gods.⁷³ There is also a parallel between Pindar's short description of Zeus' gesture of validation (κατένευσέν, line 14) and *Iliad* 1.527 (ὃ τί κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύσω, once I bow my head to it).⁷⁴ A variant of this verb (νεύω) referring to Zeus' approval of something, and Persephone herself, seems to have been used in the *Minyas* or in the Hesiodic *Descent of Peirithous to Hades*.⁷⁵ "[he has come to seek] illustrious Persephone, saying that Zeus whose sport is the thunderbolt [has given approval, and according to the go]ds' customs, to contract for her as his wife" (Ἰ ἐνωευδε[] ἄγαυήν Φερσεφόνειαν /] ας φὰς ν[εῦσ]αι Δ[ί]α] τερπικέραυνον / ἄθανά] των τε νόμοις, ἵνα ἐδνύσσειεν ἄκ[ο]ιτιν, lines 12-14).⁷⁶

In the first *Nemean*, Zeus is linked to Hieron⁷⁷ and the localization of this event in Sicily might have helped him to enchain his image as a founder hero in his subjects' eyes. More specifically, the localization of this foundational Panhellenic mythical event conferred fame, the protection of the goddess and a claim to divine power, as Lewis remarks.⁷⁸ Pindar's version of Persephone's story belongs to known to its audience(s) traditional epic contexts that the poet localized. Traces of this more Panhellenic version survive in Pindar's text as we have it.

4. Athletic Games and Posthumous Privileges

Founder heroes are linked to athletic games. They often institute athletic games in foundation narratives.⁷⁹ After their death, their tomb is placed in an eminent place and a hero cult is commenced.⁸⁰ Their cult sometimes involves athletic games.⁸¹ In Pindar's Sicilian odes, we encounter mythological narratives concerning athletic events. These events are sometimes associated with the posthumous honors that the hero receives. The main character in these narratives is a mythical figure who is somehow linked to the victor. Pindar by associating the victors with these mythological figures keeps fresh in the minds of the local audience the Deinomenids' foundational activity that, in Hieron's case, also involves the foundation of athletic games.⁸² The poet also hints at the possibility that

⁷⁰ See Diod. Sic. 5.2-5; Cic. Ver. 4.106-8; Ov. Fast. 4.417-620, Met. 5.337-591; Claud. Rapt. passim.

⁷¹ See Carcinus fr. 5.

⁷² See Rose 1974, 167, n. 65, 168.

⁷³ See LSJ s.v. *μίγνυμι*.

⁷⁴ See Houghton 1954, 217; Rose 1974, 167. I follow the text and the translation of Murray.

⁷⁵ The attribution of P. Ibscher col. i to any of these works is disputable. See on this Merkelbach 1950, 156; Cingano 2009, 127-28; Santamaría Álvarez 2013, 48-51; Tsagalis 2017, 312-15. Merkelbach suggests that it could be part of the *Great Ehoiai*, but this is far from certain (see Santamaría Álvarez's arguments in 2013, 48, n. 13, with more bibliography).

⁷⁶ I follow the text and translation of West. See West 2003.

⁷⁷ See Rose 1974, 169; Morgan 2015, 387-89; Meister 2019a, 368-69, with more bibliography; Meister 2019b, 105, n. 85.

⁷⁸ See Lewis 2019, 81-82.

⁷⁹ For example, Heracles, a hero of many foundation narratives, is considered the founder of the Olympic Games. For Heracles as a protagonist of foundation narratives see Lacroix 1974, 38-39; Berman 2017, 43-44.

⁸⁰ See Malkin 1987, 193-194.

⁸¹ See Malkin 1987, 206. Ancestral heroes often received annual games in their memory. See Proietti 2014, 207.

⁸² Hieron established the short-lived Aetnaean Games in honor of his patron, Zeus of Aetna.

the victors will receive posthumous honors by their communities. At the same time, the victors are linked to sites and heroes of Panhellenic importance and borrow some of their glory. The early epic material that resonates within the context of these odes, creates an additional layer of interplay between epichoric concerns and Panhellenic fame.

Pelops, a figure known from the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, as mentioned above, receives posthumous privileges in Pindar's Sicilian odes. According to Pindar, Pelops is the founder of Olympia (*Ol.* 1.24). His tomb is situated beside the ford of the Alpheus and has many visitors. He receives blood sacrifices, as we learn in the first *Olympian* dedicated to Hieron's victory (lines 90-93). Pelops' tomb is honored by the Olympic Games (*Ol.* 1.93-100). Although Pelops is mentioned in the *Catalogue of Women*, it is impossible to know Pindar's alterations of the Hesiodic mythical narrative concerning the exact circumstances of the hero's burial and the particulars of his worship or his role in the foundation of the Olympic Games.

As already suggested, in the first *Olympian*, Pelops seems to operate as an "alias" for Hieron. By referring to Pelops and the *Pelopeion* at Olympia, Pindar further links Pelops, the founder of Olympia, with Hieron, the founder of Aetna, and constructs Hieron and Pelops as prestigious analogs to one another.⁸³ Hieron, the hero founder and Olympic victor, will receive posthumous honors as Pelops had before him, as Gelon, his brother, has already received.⁸⁴ The reference to the tomb of Pelops and his posthumous honors emphasizes the ties between the tyrant and the local founding hero of the Peloponnese and hints at the honors that the tyrant/*oikist* will receive by his local community,⁸⁵ catering for Hieron's epichoric concerns. On the other hand, Hieron is again linked to one of the founding heroes of Olympia, a Panhellenic site of worship and, possibly, Panhellenic epic material resonates throughout the ode.

In the ninth *Nemean* ode, composed for the victory of Chromius of Aetna in chariot race around the year 474 BCE, Pindar briefly refers to Adrastus' foundation of the Sicyonian Games (line 9). He then proceeds with depictions of Adrastus as an important hero, in which one of his virtues was founding festivals and contests in his city, that is, Pindar attributes to him a quality that foundation heroes have (lines 11-12). The poet then refers to Adrastus' exile in Sicyon due to his conflict with Amphiaraus (lines 13-17). There is no reference to his posthumous privileges in the ninth *Nemean*. Nonetheless, Adrastus after his death was worshipped in several parts of Greece, as at Megara, at Sicyon where his memory was celebrated in tragic choruses, and in Attica.⁸⁶ Adrastus is linked to Chromius because the latter was a victor in the games that the former founded.⁸⁷ Chromius was also connected to Adrastus, as they were both transplanted from another city and tried to establish a new political order in place of the old.⁸⁸

According to myth, Adrastus succeeded Polybus on the throne of Sicyon because the king died without heirs. Adrastus during his reign in Sicyon is said to have instituted the Nemean Games. This story is attested by various sources.⁸⁹ The only source coming from the Archaic times that refers to Adrastus' reign in Sicyon is Homer. Adrastus appears in the *Iliad* amidst the catalog of the Greek kings, heroes, and ships that have come to

⁸³ See Slater 1989, 491-94, 499; Currie 2005, 311; Eckerman 2013, 26.

⁸⁴ Gelon had received a hero cult upon his death in 478 BCE, just two years before the victory celebrated in *Ol.* 1. See Eckerman 2013, 26; Morgan 2015, 245.

⁸⁵ Hieron's cult as an *oikist* might have started or been planned many years before his demise, that is, during the composition of Pindar's Sicilian odes. According to Diodorus, Hieron desired a hero cult while he was still alive (11.49.2, 11.66.4). Pindar promoted Hieron's cult as an *oikist*, as we know from his *hyporchema* for Hieron (fr. 105b S-M) where he refers to the heroic honors that Hieron will receive at Aetna.

⁸⁶ See Hdt. 5.67; Paus. 1.30.4, 1.43.1.

⁸⁷ Chromius won a chariot competition at a festival at Sicyon. See on this Hubbard 1992, 79.

⁸⁸ See Hubbard 1992, 109.

⁸⁹ See Hdt. 5.67; Paus. 2.6.3.

Troy (2.572). Adrastus also seems to appear in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 192 MW). The Scholiast of the *Iliad* (23.679b) who quotes the fragment, mentions that Argea, the daughter of Adrastus, came to Oedipus' funeral in Thebes. We are not in a position to know whether the *Catalogue* or another epic poem contained references to Adrastus' foundational activity during his reign.⁹⁰ There is no reference in early Greek epic to his cult. Nonetheless, Adrastus' story appears in catalogic (i.e., traditional) material. The brevity of the reference to Adrastus in the *Iliad* is an indication that the same theme was treated in greater detail in another epic, perhaps genealogic, poem, if not in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. The institution of the games in Sicyon is, usually, attributed to Cleisthenes.⁹¹ It is likely that Pindar's version was based on a local Sicyonian tradition.⁹²

Pindar's reference to Adrastus' founding of athletic games reminds to the audience the Deinomenid's foundation of the Aetnaean Games. Sicyon is linked to Aetna from the first lines of this ode as the Muses are summoned to proceed from Sicyon to Aetna, Chromius' homeland (lines 1-5). Aetna is linked to the mainland through Chromius' victory and Adrastus' myth is localized. In the case that Adrastus' death and worship were the subject of early Greek epic poetry, Pindar by letting this material resonate through his ode points to the commence of a cult of Chromius by his local community.⁹³ At the same time, the reference to Adrastus, not only assists Chromius in solidifying his links with the Dorians of the Peloponnese who formed half of Aetna's new population⁹⁴ but connects the victor with a Panhellenic cultic figure creating an interplay between epichoric and Panhellenic concerns within the ode.

5. Conclusion

In his *epinicia* for Hieron and Chromius, Pindar employs Panhellenic mythological narratives. These narratives consist of repeated motifs and appear to form a series or cycle of odes. These mythological narratives describe the whole process of the foundation of a city: a god or a hero deals with "regional" masters, mixes with women, gets connected with athletic games, and receives posthumous privileges. According to Pindar, some of these events took place at a very remote time. In some of the Sicilian odes, this time is marked as such (*Ol.* 1, *Pyth.* 1). The best representatives of the oral tradition to which these narratives belonged to were early epic compositions. Indeed, some of these narratives are encountered in traditional epic material and others belonged to similar contexts. The diction of these mythological narratives in Pindar usually contains what is regarded as "epic" vocabulary, and most of the odes in which they are found are in the dactylo-epitrite meter (*Pyth.* 1, *Pyth.* 3, *Nem.* 1, *Nem.* 9). At times, the poet marks his "allusive" activity by using specific words that recall the former context of the mythological narratives he rejects (e.g., in *Pyth.* 3.27).⁹⁵

The poet tries -to some extent- to localize these Panhellenic mythological narratives; thereby making them relevant to his patrons and the original audience of the Sicilian odes. The battle of Zeus and Typhoeus is localized in Aetna (*Pyth.* 1). The same is probably true for the Gigantomachy that is localized in the fields of Campania and Cumae (*Nem.* 1). Persephone's rape is localized in Sicily (*Nem.* 1). Arethusa mingles with Alpheus in Ortygia and links Hieron's dominion with the mainland (*Nem.* 1).

⁹⁰ Some scholars have tried to reconstruct a lost epic tradition that has as its theme Adrastus' foundation of the athletic games in Sicyon. See Hubbard 1992, 86, n. 18, with more bibliography on this. Hubbard rightly argues that every attempt to reconstruct this tradition is doomed to fail (see Hubbard 1992, 86, 91, n. 31).

⁹¹ See Hdt. 5.67.

⁹² See Hubbard 1992, 92.

⁹³ Currie argues that there are indications of Chromius' worship in Pindar's odes. See Currie 2005, 1-2.

⁹⁴ See Hubbard 1992, 80, 108.

⁹⁵ Maybe also in *Ol.* 1.36. The versions of the myth of Pelops that the poet omits could have been the subject of early epic compositions.

The Deinomenids' land is linked to Olympia (*Ol.* 1), Delphi (*Pyth.* 3), and Sicyon (*Nem.* 9) through the athletic achievements of Hieron and Chromius. Pindar builds links between the Deinomenids' dominion and the mainland and allows the original audience of the Sicilian odes to feel part of a wide community.

In these odes, the one who acts, a hero or a god, is frequently linked to the victor. Pelops has a connection with Hieron in the first *Olympian*. Zeus is associated with Hieron within the context of the first *Pythian*. Heracles is connected to Chromius in the first *Nemean*. Adrastus is associated with Chromius in the ninth *Nemean*. In this way, the victory of the athlete operates as a re-enactment of the mythical deed of the character who originally performed it. In other words, the Sicilian athletes vicariously participate in foundation acts that took place in the past. Hieron battles untamed forces, creates a dynasty of descendants, is linked to athletic games and will receive posthumous honors. Chromius takes part in battles and has a connection with the foundation of athletic events. The identification between the victors and these figures allows the Deinomenids' historical deeds, especially the foundation of Aetna, to be celebrated in the same way as these past foundational activities. In this way, Pindar extolls Hieron's fervent colonial vision legitimizing and celebrating his recent colonial activity in front of the original audience of the Sicilian odes; thus, Pindar caters for his patrons' epichoric concerns. Hero-cult might have been one of these concerns.⁹⁶

The epichoric concerns of the Sicilian victors and the original audience were relevant only to them and Pindar. Nonetheless, it is well-known that Pindar's victory odes were re-performed. Indeed, in the Sicilian odes, Pindar does not hesitate to refer to the wider fame that the victor can attain through his song (e.g., *Ol.* 1.6-11, 115-6), hinting at the athlete's literary immortality through his poetry (*Pyth.* 1.92-94). Modern scholars have compellingly argued that Pindar has created the potential for a re-performance of his odes, i.e., the potential for their Panhellenic dissemination by the manipulation of space⁹⁷ and time;⁹⁸ the Sicilian odes are not an exception to this. Pindar's poetry within the context of the Sicilian odes is tied to various Panhellenic sites. His Sicilian odes can be re-performed in either of these sites. By placing the accomplishments of Panhellenic gods and heroes at a remote time in some of these odes, Pindar also creates mixed temporalities. A Panhellenic audience could easily relate to the Panhellenic foundation narratives -even when they were localized- that are said to have taken place at a different time than the time of the first performance of the Sicilian odes.

I suggest that Pindar found an additional way to inscribe into his Sicilian odes their potential for their re-performance by imbuing them with a Panhellenic quality. The very fact that early epic poetry often resonates in Pindar's mythological narratives situates them within the complex network of Panhellenic poetry. Since the nature of most of early epic material is traditional, we should take into account that these mythological narratives could operate as hypertextual tools. As Tsagalis argues, "by selecting a name (...) the bard opens a path to the hypertextual web of myth, to a labyrinthine mental adventure where relevance is open-ended and conceptual navigation the norm".⁹⁹ This early epic material, not only refers to traditions other than the one that it belongs to, but also functions as a hypertextual tool that aids the composer and the audience in engaging in a

⁹⁶ Hero-cult is often the cause of localizing Panhellenic myth. See on this Currie 2005, 56; Nagy 2005, 80–81, 107, 113; Nagy 2012, 34–35, 38, 47.

⁹⁷ For Pindar's manipulation of space hitting at the re-performance of his odes, see especially the influential work of Lewis 2019. There is a vast bibliography regarding the re-performances of Pindar's odes. I indicatively mention Nagy 1990, 157–98, 410; Currie 2004; Hubbard 2004; Morrison 2007; Budelmann 2017; Currie 2017.

⁹⁸ See Calame 2003, 39. According to Budelmann, Pindar creates in his odes mixed temporalities that hint at their re-performance. See Budelmann 2017, 43–49.

⁹⁹ See Tsagalis 2010, 323.

complex intertextual web. In other words, the “intertextuality” of Pindar’s Sicilian odes with these Panhellenic epic compositions, allows a Panhellenic audience to better relate to their content. In this way, Pindar’s foundation narratives became an additional way for the Panhellenic concerns of the Sicilian victors to be diffused to a Panhellenic audience, aiding the Deinomenids to attain Panhellenic fame.

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Book Reviews

Emily P. Austin, *Grief and the Hero: The Futility of Longing in the Iliad*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021. Pp. 192. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-472-13232-4) \$54.95.

In this stimulating book, Emily Austin explores questions so basic to the *Iliad* that we may forget to ask them. For example, why *does* Achilles' anger arising from his grief for Patroklos become so excessive? Well, one might reply, excessive anger is central to Achilles' semi-divine heroic persona—witness Books 1 and 9. Yet Austin's analysis explores a richer investigative vein, opened through a single, striking textual observation: that “the *Iliad* describes Achilles' grief, and his alone, with the language of *pothê* (or longing)” (2). The character of the grief, she goes on to show, explains the character of the anger, as well as many related features of the narrative.

Grief and the Hero is a deeply humanistic book. A “broadly literary” (3) study, it seeks both to illuminate the *Iliad* and to discover what that text can teach us—*i.e.*, human beings—about grief. The book concludes with the thought that Achilles' “fundamental desire for companionship” makes him, “for all his otherworldly features, a paradigmatically human figure, capable of speaking to diverse audiences at the core of who we are” (154).

This approach is in keeping with certain robust traditions of Homeric criticism. It also offers a useful corrective to any readers of Homer who, like me, have sometimes found ourselves so mesmerized by Achilles' awful inhumanity as seen from a Trojan point of view, and so dismayed by his willingness to wish harm on his own people, that we forget to ponder the humanity of his responses to the death of a dear friend. On the other hand, some readers may wish that this book gave some consideration to questions of cultural and historical context. The Introduction's subsection “Achilles' Story: Singular, yet Universal” (10-14) is excellent on how unique or representative Achilles' story might be for Homeric warriors, but does not take up the question of how Achilles' story (or Austin's reading of it) translates across cultural borders, modern or otherwise.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork by surveying all Iliadic occurrences of ποθή, ποθέω and πόθος, under the umbrella term *pothê* (justified at 6-7 and 28 n. 32). The chief results: *pothê* terms are found typically to express a sense of felt absence (‘x is missing’) combined with a psychological shading (‘I miss x’), in a particularized way (‘and no one else will do’): as when Hektor tells Helen that his men long (ποθήν ἔχουσι) for him (18).

Turning to contexts of grief, we find that *pothê* language is used four times for grief for Patroklos: twice of Achilles' own emotions; once each of his immortal horses and of the Myrmidons. Austin argues plausibly that the latter two cases should be read as extensions of Achilles' own grief. True, a single occurrence of *pothê*-grief is felt not by Achilles, but by Diomedes' wife in a hypothetical (5.414). But this exception underlines the marked character of the restriction to Achilles (22-23 n. 17), by showing the motif's potential for broader application (similar to Penelope's *pothê* for Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, 8).

The chapter concludes by exploring what Patroklos meant to Achilles. Austin emphasizes their camaraderie and the intimacy of a shared life. One excellent close reading discovers in Achilles' silent signal to Patroklos in Book 9 evidence of the “closeness ... born of many years of shared life. In a poem where speech is prominent, it is striking to see Achilles and Patroklos able to communicate silently.” (39) All of this is important for Austin's larger points, because what Achilles will long for in his grief is not just Patroklos but the life they shared (26-27). On this analysis rests Austin's oft repeated formulation that Achilles' grief reflects a feeling of “sundered wholeness.”

Chapter 2 contextualizes Achilles' anger as just one of his several responses to grief. All of these responses "share qualities of relentlessness, unpredictability, and futility," (50-51) as a result of their common origin in longing for "a ruptured shared life" (82). Their futility reflects a basic mismatch between "function (what is achieved) ... and purpose (what is sought)." The poem invites us to contemplate the mismatch between Achilles' grief-driven actions and the longing that drives them: "not even thus did [Achilles] raise [Patroklos] up," says Hekabe as she laments for Hektor (68, citing *Il.* 24.756).

Chapter 3 reads the story of Achilles' grief-driven wrath in light of the earlier chapters' results. It considers and rejects two possible explanations for the vastness of Achilles' rage in Books 18-22: 1) that rage is part of his character, and 2) divine intervention. Instead, Austin maintains, "the magnitude, volatility and relentlessness of Achilles' anger are best accounted for when we read this narrative in light of its roots in *pothê*" (82). Thus, while Achilles' onslaught is superhuman in its destructiveness, it is his humanity, especially his capacity for grief, that explains his anger's continuation beyond Hektor's death, and its mitigation in Book 24. This last topic is a highlight. Though some see a "reconciliation" between Achilles and Priam, Achilles' anger and grief are still evident at the end of their meeting. Austin threads the needle by arguing that the quality of insatiety, derived from longing, is what has vanished. Achilles thus releases, not his anger or his grief, but his *pothê* (111). To explain this release, we should look not to any "new understanding of the universal experience of suffering" on Achilles' part (115), nor to sheer "weariness," as some have argued, but rather to "the moderating force of his underlying desire for shared life" (118).

Chapter 4 asks why the Trojans' grief for Hektor is never described with *pothê* language. It answers in terms of narrative aims. In the case of the Trojans, the poet emphasizes civic grief over personal grief: "the story of a communion of persons, captured by *pothê*, is subsumed to a story of civic survival" (119). There is a temporal dimension to consider too: while Achilles' grief represents the "yearning for a lost past," in the Trojans' grief we see a "dread for the future" (146). While *pothê* language underpins Achilles' "vacillation between motionlessness and frenzied activity," the Trojans by contrast grieve passively in the face of coming doom (148).

A brief Conclusion treats the story of Niobe told by Achilles to Priam in Book 24. Niobe's grief resembles the Trojans' in its passivity, in contrast with Achilles' volatility. Achilles' choice to tell this story to Priam underscores that he has released his *pothê*.

Even after Chapter 4's discussions, there remains something paradoxical about concluding that the Iliadic Achilles becomes paradigmatic of all humans (154) on the basis of a motif notable precisely for being restricted to him "alone" (2). Perhaps exploration of this paradox could launch further research.

On the whole, I found this book clear, thought-provoking, and refreshingly streamlined. It exhibits only the rarest, minor typos and infelicities. The slim section on 'Scholarly Context' (14-16) is limited, but many future footnotes help fill in the picture (I found note 54 on page 76 particularly helpful, as well as engagement with Holst-Warhaft on page 80). Appendices with detailed tables presenting Homeric *pothê* usage may assist future research. *Grief and the Hero* is recommended not only to Homerists and advanced students, but to any scholars with an interest in Homer — including, given the importance of Austin's work for central themes of the *Iliad*, all those who teach Homer in translation.

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Cynthia Jordan Bannon, *A Casebook on Roman Water Law*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020. Pp. 262. Paper (ISBN 978-0-472-03786-5) \$34.95.

Cynthia Bannon, a recognized authority on water rights in Roman law, has now written a casebook on the subject. If you are a North American reader of this review and have not studied Roman law, let alone Roman water law, you are not alone: Roman legal sources are notoriously complicated; very little of the secondary scholarship is in English; reading either requires specialized knowledge and legal reasoning skills that few who have not had the benefit of formal legal or Romanist training possess; and in North America at least there are now only a handful of competent experts engaged in research or teaching. All of this is a pity, since (as many are fond of saying) Roman law is a major intellectual achievement in its own right and important to study both in the context of the Roman imperial project and the development of the European and North American legal traditions. We should thus applaud scholars like Bannon who choose to spend their time and energy writing casebooks in English for those who would set out to explore the Romanist foothills. In this connection, this is in fact but one of a growing collection of such casebooks written by Bruce Frier and his students: B. W. Frier, *A Casebook on the Roman Law of Delict* (1989), B. W. Frier and T. A. J. McGinn, *A Casebook on Roman Family Law* (2004), and soon B. W. Frier, *A Casebook on the Roman Law of Contracts* (2021).

Bannon in her introduction says that her aim in this casebook is

to cross historical and disciplinary boundaries by making the primary evidence for Roman water rights accessible. Reaching a wider audience is critical to this project because Roman law makes important contributions to contemporary debates about water rights and the management of the environment. (2)

The wider audience Bannon has principally in mind seems to be undergraduates, although one could imagine this book being useful for graduate students and even law students or legal historians engaged in comparative study. The pedagogical purpose, then, is clear and, for the reasons noted above, vital to the continued study of Roman law.

The book begins with a general introduction and includes four substantive chapters. The introduction briefly sketches the sources for Roman law, the development of the juristic tradition, and the main ways in which water rights were articulated and negotiated in Roman law (i.e., property rights, legislation, interdicts, servitudes, etc.). The introduction also includes short section on modern approaches to water rights and a final note to instructors on how to use this book in a classroom. Bannon then proceeds through her assembled material: (1) the action for warding off rainwater; (2) servitudes; (3) the law and interdicts governing rivers and seas; and (4) aqueducts. There is a generous topical bibliography at the end, as well as a general topical index.

The chapters are collections of “cases,” with each chapter prefaced by a brief, but helpful overview. The cases are further grouped into thematic categories (e.g., 3.II.A *River Interdicts*) and each case is numbered and given a short title (e.g., Case 3.34. *What is a River Bank?*). Typically, a case consists of one or more Roman law texts from the *Digest* in Latin (with Gaius’s *Institutes*, the *Codex Theodosianus*, and the *Codex Justinianus* playing supporting roles), followed by a translation and a set of study questions. The cases are drawn from a period that spans the law of the Twelve Tables to that of the late fifth century CE.

One of the interesting features of this book is the inclusion of not only literary (as opposed to legal), but also epigraphic texts. So, thirteen cases stem from inscriptions from Italy, Spain, and Africa (2.4, 3.25, 3.29, 3.33, 4.3, 4.4, 4.10, 4.25, 4.31-35, and

more obliquely 2.21), while a large portion of Chapter 4 on aqueducts is excerpts from Frontinus. The diplomatic transcriptions of the inscriptions faithfully signal lacunae and restorations. I did not systematically check the legal texts, but I also found no significant errors. Only one case addresses the issue of interpolation (1.23), while another asks students to consider alternatives presented by the manuscript tradition (3.15), which is not otherwise discussed. The translations are admirably precise, clear, and accessible.

The study questions are largely legal in nature, asking students to think about how responsibility or liability was divided between parties; whether certain juristic analogies, limitations, or extensions are apt; to comment on the applicability of interdicts to changed or hypothetical fact patterns; etc. Several study questions, however, ask students to consider or reconstruct social norms (e.g., question 1.8.3 [p. 35]: “What assumptions do Labeo and Pomponius make about the relationship between neighbors? How realistic are their assumptions? What sticking points might make it difficult to get a neighbor’s permission to undertake a particular work project?”), or technological or economic practices (e.g., question 3.30.2 [p. 142]: “A drain could be either a hollowed-out place where waste collected or it could be fitted with pipes (*D.* 43.23.1.4, 6 *Ulp.* 71 *ad Ed.*). What particular risks or challenges does each type of drain present?), or even draw comparisons across time and place (e.g., question 4.29.4 on *CJ* 11.43.8, 474 or 479 *CE* [pp. 206-7]: “Compare the right of management for aqueducts in different places and at different times in Rome’s history. Who exercises the right? How were these individuals held accountable? Which system do you think would be most effective at funding and performing maintenance on the aqueducts? Why?”). The questions thus encourage a mix of standard legal reasoning, law-and-economics approaches to problem-solving around water rights, and legal realism in the Roman world. Some of these questions, as is obvious from the examples above, require quite a bit of background knowledge to answer, and perhaps are best used to encourage students to interrogate their assumptions about the interplay of norms, technology, and law, not to mention their specific assumptions as to how neighbors in the Roman world might have related to each other (ideally or practically), how pre-industrial hydraulic infrastructure worked or ancient economic transactions were structured or enforced, or what they need to know in order to make a productive and cogent comparison of legal institutions and property rights between Augustan Rome and Zeno’s Constantinople.

So much for what is in the book; what is not included is also worth noting, particularly in light of Bannon’s stated purpose and intended audience. The cases are not dated unless the date is itself part of the translation, e.g., a translation of a consular dating. There is no glossary of technical or legal terms or of the principal jurists and no timeline of the principal texts or authorities. There is no *index locorum*. There are no plans or schematics of Roman water works or maps of the routes of the aqueducts or localities from which the major inscriptions come. The bibliography is good, but there is virtually no connection between it and the rest of the text. Finally, although Bannon stresses that she would like the students to make connections between Roman and “modern” law, such laws (which laws?) and theories are rarely, if ever, explicitly cited, stated, explained, or compared in the study questions.

Now, this is a casebook, not a book or even a textbook of Roman water law, and as such it was not meant to be a systematic, holistic treatment of the topic. Indeed, Bannon in her introduction describes the ways in which she supplements this material with other resources. Even so, one could be forgiven for missing some of this pedagogical apparatus, precisely because one finds it thoughtfully included in the other Roman law casebooks mentioned at the beginning. The embeddedness of this book in what seems the particular pedagogical expertise and experience of a specific scholar also helps to explain the striking brevity of some of the technical discussions.

Bannon has thus written a solid casebook of Roman water law, but for whom?

How many instructors are there today interested in or prepared to teach a class on Roman water law primarily as an exercise in legal reasoning? Water law, of course, is not a self-contained or coherent conceptual area of Roman law, like contract or delict: indeed, its second-order nature constitutes both its intellectual interest, representing the intersection of property, contract, procedure, and regulation over a vital but mercurial natural resource, and its weakness as an introduction to Roman law, at least to undergraduates. From a different perspective, the connections to contemporary (American) law and environmental regulation are not nearly robust enough for this book to find its way onto many law school syllabi with an interest in comparative environmental law. Yet the material is excellent and certainly graduate students and scholars studying the agricultural or environmental history of the Roman empire, or even the conceptual boundaries between *natura* and *cultura*, are likely to find these texts and problems interesting—provided that they either have the necessary background or sufficient interest and incentive to read up on Roman law along the way.

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

There remain important questions that need to be asked about the Roman republic, and its rise to dominance across the Mediterranean world. Its political culture undoubtedly instilled a powerful sense of identity, one shaped both by defeat and victory, and, as the Roman writings so often tell us, a persistent need to defend themselves against other belligerent powers. Caesar presents the invasion of Gaul as a response to a genuine perceived threat, and a duty to defend allies. Cicero in his *De officiis* argued that Roman war was never harsher than necessary, and committed in defence of allies or to uphold the Roman sense of *imperium*. Even Sallust, who can often offer a more nuanced historical perspective, creates a bifurcated narrative of virtuous war in the mid-republic against great powers such as Carthage, set against a self-destructive instinct born through dominion and avarice in the late first century BCE. Defensive imperialism may have been, for the large part, dismantled and the aggressive nature of the Roman city and its emergent republic exposed (not just in the late republic as Sallust indicates), but this does not always leave us with a clear picture of how and why the Roman armies of the republic were so often victorious. Most modern treatments focus upon key shifts in Roman military thought and practice (e.g., Marius' Mules) or instead can suggest a logical (and sometime teleological) set of battles that create the shining early- and mid-republic we so often find in Roman historiography. This can reduce Roman military history to a series of snapshots that create a clear and logical narrative, but ignore the wider concerns, especially the social and political framework(s) that create these Roman and allied armies. What can we know about the ordinary Roman citizen soldier? How can we interpret their motives, and their beliefs? To what extent was Roman success in arms based upon the civic-ethos and belief of the ordinary legionary?

Steele Brand's book is in part a foray into this world. Pitched towards a general audience, this is a book that covers an impressive array of topics and ideas, but also one that does not fully answer the questions asked at the start. Brand sets out to show how Rome's farmers were transformed into highly competent soldiers, and how Rome "perfected civic militarism in a way no other civilization ever has" (9). This optimistic

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interpretation of Rome's Republican armies is visible throughout, and in Brand's approach this has ramifications not just for the ancient world, but also for modern America. Brand identifies a connection between a "republican spirit" and the "citizen-soldier" and, in so doing, provides a clear narrative of the republic and its citizen armies. The crucial distinction between this and other popular military accounts is how often Brand weaves in discussion of American history and contemporary military service, leading to some far-reaching ideas in the final pages (e.g., 319-23).

The book is most useful as an entrance point into Roman military history. Brand has a clear understanding of ancient war, and the later structure of the book is geared around five important military engagements: Sentinum, New Carthage, Pydna, Mutina, and Philippi. Each of these are discussed with great precision, and the analysis in particular of Pydna and Mutina are useful in re-evaluating the traditional trajectory of Roman military supremacy. As an example, Brand shines an important light on Lucius Aemilius Paullus (later Macedonicus), the victor in 168 BCE, and notes quite rightly "something insidious lurking in the background" (197). This is the potential for military leaders to circumvent the normal constitutional confines of state. The observation is particularly astute as ordinarily we look later for the terrible seeds of military ruin and the rise of the military potentates. The flow of the battles, the possibilities for victory and defeat, are the strongest sections of the work. Alongside this, the book also delves into the link between the republic and early American political ideas (best seen in the passionate prologue), the ancient citizen soldier, federalism and civic beliefs and the decline in the dying years of the republic. A lot of ground is covered.

There are four issues that undermine Brand's argument and approach. First, the idea of a "republican spirit". The notion of civic responsibility is useful in any discussion of Rome's military prowess. We must remember, however, the sources that tell us this reflect the perspectives of the Roman elite, who were irrefutably bound-up with notions of republican political ideologies. They created them. We look at Cicero as the last great republican statesman, because that is what he tells us, and that is how he acts. It is worth remembering, I think, that Augustus' claims to restore the republic did not fall on deaf ears. The republic was always more an idea, than a reality, and moreover an idea created by the elite. Can we really trace the idealistic notions of Cicero into the lived behaviour and responsibility of ordinary Roman citizen-soldiers? When Sulla first marched on Rome, Appian is at great pains to tell us that no officers followed him (barring a single *quaestor*). That does not speak to republican virtue (220-21). Second, if the argument about civic belief is to stand up (albeit housed within sources reflecting the aristocracy), one way to supplement this would have been to engage with the Roman family in a much more detailed manner. The Roman family was the most crucial component in the complex network of republican society, where the past, and the achievement of those whose name you bore, always mattered. Third, the focus on Roman legionaries provides a good skeleton to the book, but a Roman army was always more than just legionaries (who, depending on when we are looking, may not have identified as distinctly, or solely, Roman). Much more could have been made of the auxiliaries and allies. Fourth, Brand also appears to suggest that modern republics (American included) have lost sight of some of their core ideals through the professionalisation of modern military forces. Brand is a former soldier as well as an academic historian, and this adds an interesting dimension to the book, where civic responsibility links both the author and the historical subject. Brand recognises that "[g]one is the sort of killing instinct among modern republics, and it is probably for the better" (321), but these ideas needed to be grounded in a much greater study of modern military theory and practice.

The book is best viewed as an informed and fluently written military history of the Roman republic, full of interesting tidbits and snapshots. Brand offers an interesting discussion around civic-responsibility and warfare. The arguments made are not entirely

successful, and should be challenged, to further recognise our understanding of the political and social realities that allowed Rome to succeed in matters of war, when so many others across Italy failed. Rome was built by (and upon) its political culture, its military might, and in the minds of some aristocratic writers perhaps also a wider sense of civic responsibility. It was also however built upon its cultural realities grounded in the Roman family, the backbone of the republic.

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James Uden, *Spectres of Antiquity: Classical Literature and the Gothic, 1740-1830*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 284. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-19-091027-3) \$74.00.

In a way like the Gothic, James Uden's outstanding monograph (henceforth *Spectres*) may strike some readers as 'unclassical' in insight—and that is central to what makes the book so good.

On its surface, *Spectres* offers a series of case studies, moving chronologically from important precursors to the Gothic (Edward Young, Edmund Burke, Richard Hurd) through influential proponents of the genre's first wave (Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis)—all British but not all English—to an intriguing American example (Charles Brockden Brown) before concluding with a crucial crossover with second-generation Romanticism (Mary Shelley, centrally but not only *Frankenstein*). Each of these studies is historically detailed and compellingly argued. Focusing of course on the writers' engagement with ancient materials, including but not limited to traditional scholarly approaches to the Classics like knowledge of Greek and Latin, Uden shows how they develop their own complex images of 'the classical.' That alone would make the book valuable: a significant study of classical receptions in English-language literature in a genre that has continued to play a role in more recent cultures and must therefore have an effect on modern understandings of ancient worlds.

What truly distinguishes *Spectres*, however, runs deeper, as Uden explores the possibility that the authors' Gothic visions of antiquity may be taken all together to suggest a way of theorizing engagement with the past that "go[es] beyond the somewhat bland metaphor of reception"—namely, 'haunting' (232, discussion 230-33; cf. 215-16). The book accomplishes this in a way that is coherent and meaningful but, fittingly, not simply classical: it does justice to its materials by gently evoking their own cherished aesthetic principles, above all the idea of an ancient but unclassical sublime. It is characteristic of Gothic works to locate the sublime at an intersection of the sensory and memory or elegy, a paradox in which present experience is most intense, even overwhelming, when centered on something past or otherwise lost.

Uden emphasizes forms of this idea throughout. For example, Shelley's patchwork creature, in *Frankenstein* an impossibly reanimated assemblage of bodies whose individual lives are past (194-95; cf. 208-11 on "Valerius: The Reanimated Roman"), may be read as a literalized embodiment of notions that Burke put more abstractly (39-46) and that Radcliffe made concrete in imagery of faded tapestries and formerly stately buildings gone to ruin (esp. 86-87). A central interest of the Gothic is thus the unbidden encounter with a remnant—sometimes a revenant—of the past that makes otherwise vague awareness of mortality especially vivid. The experience is sublime since it emphasizes the incomprehensibility of time, dwarfing human civilizations and *a fortiori* human lives. Even the sublimity of natural landscapes could be sharpened

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by juxtaposition with human makings, as in the final disappearance of *Frankenstein's* statuesque creature (193-94, 203-5) into Arctic wastes.

Hence the Gothic trope of ancient ruins—and yet, as Uden explicates, his authors' collective realization that, insofar as those are entered into artistic representation, they could be either actually ancient structures that had been ruined over time or artificial 'ruins' that were created in the present to seem as if from the distant past. If that last is a general way of describing any new depiction of old things, with present *ekphrasis* only representing the past, scholarship has emphasized how the Gothic in particular is deeply conscious of that possibility: the paradoxically powerful sublimity of 'the counterfeit' (esp. Jerrold E. Hogle's "The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Progress of Abjection"; Uden makes warmly clear how large Hogle looms behind *Spectres*). This is at the core of Uden's argument: an important 'ghost of the counterfeit' is Gothic authors' haunted realization that 'classical antiquity' is not a natural fact but a matter of continuous re-invention in culture.

If that of course is the major premise of reception studies, Uden shows that it takes vivid form in Gothic texts, with significant implications for theory. It was clear already to Horace, in his influential *Ars Poetica*, that old materials *could* be put together in new ways and indeed *must* be for there to be any literary or artistic history—but Horace also insists that the combinatoric potential must be constrained by an aesthetics of the 'natural.' As Uden discusses (60-63), a later Horace thought otherwise, and his ideas and experiments in form became foundational: Horace Walpole, referring to and consciously riffing on his ancient namesake in *The Castle of Otranto*, thus "replaces an earlier eighteenth-century mode of classical imitation and emulation"—'the classical tradition'—"with one of *collection*" (57, italics original).

In this changed aesthetics of the ancient, "[c]lassical objects, phrases, and ideas are detached from their original context, fragmented, and playfully set in startling and disorienting juxtapositions" (57). This extended to other materials (as Uden observes, with reference to Emily Jane Cohen's "Museums of the Mind," 98 n. 45), but Uden argues cogently that it was applied with special force to 'the classical.' In some cases, this meant "exchang[ing] classicism for a 'classical effect,' an aspect of rhetoric, which approximates the scope and prestige of the classical while dimming its literary and historical specificity" (86; the case in point is Radcliffe's novels). This is significant in itself and insofar as similar aesthetics of 'classical effect' have continued in various cultural forms: for example, film adaptations of ancient stories are often more invested in perceived authenticity than in scholarly accuracy (e.g., Jon Solomon, *The Ancient World in Cinema*; Marcus Becker, "On Visual Cogency").

As Uden starts to suggest in the conclusion (227-34), his argument in *Spectres* has potential upshots that go well beyond his discerning case studies. Uden's own suggestions there are modest, and I think they can be pushed further, including by considering 'haunting' as a mode of reception already at work in antiquity. For example, Walpole's practice of 'detachment from context,' innovative in its time, had been an element of Greek and Roman allusion, in which phrases could be redeployed without reference to their original settings (e.g., Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style*). More generally traditions of rhetoric in antiquity made for different literary-cultural distinctions amongst categories like allusion, imitation, original composition, and translation (e.g., Siobhán McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation*). Indeed, late antiquity saw the emergence of a literary mode centered on *recomposition*, the *cento* (esp. Scott McGill, *Virgil Recomposed*; cf. more generally his *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*). As in Uden's examples from the Gothic, that was echoed in other areas of ancient culture, including architecture (e.g., Helen Saradi, "The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments").

These and other historical practices would therefore seem to provide contexts for extending the concept of 'haunting,' as Uden has identified it in the Gothic, to materials

from other times. Think, for example, of a revenant Rome in brick, haunting the marble fantasies of Augustan literature, an image that would resonate as well with Modernist classicisms (after Ellen Oliensis, *Freud's Rome*; cf. Manya Lempert, *Tragedy and the Modernist Novel*) in the wake of Mary Shelley's depiction of a future Rome haunted by 'the last man' (as Uden discusses, esp. 221-24). Such possibilities, long the stuff of 'classical effect' in fiction, can be made more clearly material for scholarship thanks to Uden's theorization: although he stays judiciously focused on his specified era, his approach is richly open to extension.

I therefore cannot recommend *Spectres of Antiquity* highly enough. I will certainly assign at least whole chapters in classes, and I predict its effect on my own engagement with classical materials. Already I am encouraged to feel more like the farmer in the first book of Virgil's *Georgics*, who encounters a huge armored skeleton in his field and stands in wonder at that ancient haunting ...

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Message from the President

LINDSAY SEARS

Sodales,

The pandemic may be ongoing, things may continue to feel uncertain -- and for those reasons, I'm writing to encourage you to renew your membership in the Classical Association of New England and to get involved in the organization.

Your membership in CANE supports many great resources and your access to them:

- Grants and scholarships for teachers and students in New England, including you!;
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- Advocacy for Classics programs throughout New England;
- The *New England Classical Journal*, CANE's own publication;
- Access to JSTOR and the Loeb Classical Library online, as well as the shared materials and resources from the annual meeting;
- And, most importantly, the collegiality and community of a regional network of teachers and scholars who understand the intellectual value of our work and its social significance.

CANE offers so much for a low-cost membership fee – I hope you'll renew and remain a part of this vital organization. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Lindsay Sears
President

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