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Some Notes on the Role of Mausolos in the Social War

The study of historical events and figures of the 4th century BC consistently encounters a fundamental difficulty: the lack of sources. We have scattered and debated sources even about important figures like Mausolos,[1] or crucial events like the Social War,[2] particularly when trying to determine the role Mausolos played in the Social War. Consequently, unresolved and controversial questions persist regarding his potential involvement as an instigator, namely as the figure who persuaded Rhodes and Chios to secede from the Second Athenian Naval Confederacy. This secession, together with that of Byzantium – and possibly Cos and other cities[3] – precipitated the outbreak of the Social War. Beyond the issue of instigation, the extent of Mausolos' influence within the conflict remains uncertain: while it is established that he provided direct support, the precise scale of his contribution and his overall

[1] Persian satrap of Caria between 377–353, for his life see: Hornblower (1982), also: Weiskopf (1989); Ruzicka (1992: 83–119); Ruzicka (2011: 132–170); Brosius (2021: 176–189); Nudell (2023: 109–130).

[2] The Social War (ca. 357–355 BC) was a conflict between Athens and some members of the Second Athenian Naval Confederacy (also referred to as the Second Athenian League). For the history of the war see: Sealey (1978: 438–441); Cargill (1981: 161–188); Buckler (2003: 351–384); Rhodes (2005: 226–243); Hornblower (2011: 271–274); Parker (2014: 275–279); Wijk (2019: 81–112); Nudell (2023: 109–130).

[3] Going through the important literature, Byzantion, Chios and Rhodes are the members always mentioned as revolting states: Bean-Cook (1957: 142); Sherwin-White (1978: 40–43); Buckler (2003: 377); Parker (2014: 275); Worthington (2014: 10) – the latter does not include Byzantion as a rebel. The case of Byzantion is debated, since it seems possible that Byzantion did leave the Confederacy before the Social War, see: e.g. Sealey (1976: 434; 439); Ruzicka (1998: 60–69); Worthington (2014: 10). Besides Byzantion, possibly Cos – Buckler (2003: 377); Sebők (2023: 67–77) – and some other states also could have been involved Buckler (2003: 377). Buckler provides a long list of the rebel states, but he does not give any details about the possible other revolting states.

significance are still matters of debate. Modern scholars have addressed this problem extensively, yet some interpretations, as will be demonstrated, have advanced claims that are at times overstated. The present study seeks to reassess these claims and to provide a more balanced evaluation.

Keywords: Second Confederacy, Social War, Mausolus

Mausolos, the one-man army

One of the more problematic claim is found in the work of J. Nudell. In discussing the causes of the Social War and the course of its events, he writes the following regarding the role of Mausolos: *„Athens attacked Chios twice in 356. Each time Mausolos came to its defence, and in the lull between attacks he raided Samos and other Athenian territories (Diod. 16, 7, 2–4) and won a battle over the Athenian fleet at Embata near Erythrae (Diod. 16, 21).”*[4] As we can read, this claim is based on two passages from Diodoros and Nudell further supports it with works by Hornblower, Sealey and Worthington (see below).[5] Unfortunately, Nudell offers no additional evidence beyond these citations. At first, his claim appears accurate: Diodoros indeed reports that Mausolos aided the Chians, yet Diodoros mentions only a single Athenian attack on Chios, not two (Diod. 16, 7, 3). Nudell also attributes the raiding of Samos and other territories entirely to Mausolos, whereas Diodoros does not even name him in this context. Instead, the historian explicitly states: *„The Chians, Rhodians, and Byzantines, together with their allies, manned one hundred ships and sacked Imbros and Lemnos, Athenian islands, and then descended upon Samos […]”*,[6]

[4] Nudell does not indicate any of the other allies of the Chians as a participant either in the defense of Chios or a member of the raiding – Nudell (2023: 127).

[5] Nudell (2023: 127 n. 84).

[6] „οἱ δὲ Χῖοι καὶ Ῥόδιοι καὶ Βυζάντιοι μετὰ τῶν συμμάχων ἑκατὸν ναῦς πληρώσαντες Ἴμβρον μὲν καὶ Λῆμνον οὔσας Ἀθηναίων ἐπόρθησαν, ἐπὶ δὲ Σάμον πολλῇ δυνάμει στρατεύσαντες τὴν μὲν χώραν ἐδῄωσαν[…]” – Diod 16, 21, 2. – Trans. by C. H. Oldfather – here Mausolos is not mentioned directly, he can only be assumed to be mentioned as part of the „allies” (τῶν συμμάχων) by Diodoros.

– a clear indication that the operation was a collective undertaking of the anti-Athenian coalition rather than a personal initiative of Mausolos.

Nudell's presentation, therefore, accords Mausolos a degree of prominence that exceeds both the testimony of the sources and the interpretation of other scholars. Indeed, an examination of the works he cites confirms this. Hornblower emphasizes the joint nature of the operations, noting that the allies together attacked Samos and other islands and fought at Embata.[7] Sealey also refers to all of the allies, not only Mausolos.[8] Worthington merely remarks that Mausolos assisted the allies, without ascribing to him an individual leadership role.[9] Taken together, these works reveal no evidence that Mausolos acted independently or held preeminent responsibility for these events. Even though Nudell's phrasing elevates him to the status of a principal actor in the conflict, while minimizing or omitting the role of the other participants, whereas Mausolos, according to our sources, was an important albeit most likely supporting type ally for the revolting states.

The hundred ships of Mausolos

The next claim to be addressed is presented by Wijk regarding the Social War: *„Moreover, the rebels were supported by the Persian Satrap Mausolos and a fleet of a hundred ships: Xen. Ages. 2, 26–7."*[10] This statement raises a central controversy in modern scholarship regarding the military capacity of Mausolos, particularly the scale of his naval power and the extent to which it was employed during the Social War. The only evidence for this matter is the same passage from Xenophon that Wijk cites. There, Xenophon records that *„Again, Mausolus, laying siege to both these places*

[7] Hornblower (2023: 212–213).
[8] Sealey (1993: 104).
[9] Worthington (2013: 65–66).
[10] Wijk (2019: 108).

with a fleet of a hundred vessels was induced, not indeed by fear, but by persuasion, to sail for home."[11] At first glance, the problem becomes apparent: this passage does not concern the Social War at all, but rather the Great Satrap Revolt, the events of which are dated to 366/365.[12] What can be established, therefore, is that in 366/365 – approximately nine years before the outbreak of the Social War – Mausolos commanded a fleet of at least one hundred ships. Whether this represented the entirety of his naval forces or merely a portion of them is left unspecified by Xenophon.[13]

What became of this fleet thereafter is entirely unknown. No further evidence exists concerning Mausolos' naval capacity either for the later stages of the Satrap Revolt or for the intervening years before the Social War. In the case of the Social War, Diodoros is our only source about the *detailed* events of the conflict, and he does not provide concrete information about the naval forces supplied by Mausolos. While he does mention a fleet of one hundred ships, he attributes this total to the allies collectively and does not detail its composition.[14]

Related to this, there is the question of whether Mausolos was capable of maintaining such a fleet continuously from the time of the Satrap Revolt to the Social War. The possibility cannot be excluded,[15] but any

[11] Μαύσωλός γε μὴν κατὰ θάλατταν ἑκατὸν ναυσὶ πολιορκῶν ἀμφότερα τὰ χωρία ταῦτα οὐκέτι δείσας ἀλλὰ πεισθεὶς ἀπέπλευσεν οἴκαδε. – Xen. *Ages*. 2, 26. – Trans. by E. C. Marchant. The two places referred to are Assos and Sestos, both located on the coastlines of Asia Minor in modern Turkey.

[12] For the sieges of Assos and Sestos see: Ruzicka (1992: 83–119); Ruzicka (2011: 132–170); Brosius (2021: 176–189); Nudell (2023: 109–130).

[13] Ruzicka believes that because of the large number, Mausolos was ordered to deploy all of his forces.

[14] „οἱ δὲ Χῖοι καὶ Ῥόδιοι καὶ Βυζάντιοι μετὰ τῶν συμμάχων ἑκατὸν ναῦς πληρώσαντες" – Diod. 16, 21, 2. „The Chians, Rhodians and Byzantians together with their allies manned one hundred ships"– Trans. by C. H. Oldfather.

[15] Hornblower argues that Mausolos could have maintained his fleet, may have even expanded it after the Great Satrap Revolt. He mainly focuses on the effects of a decree made by Artaxerxes III which decree instructed the satraps to disband their mercenary forces (Schol. Dem. IV. 19), and whether this decree affected the fleet of Mausolos or not. Hornblower only says that it is likely that Mausolos kept his fleet, and unfortu-

firm conclusion would be unwarranted. It is possible to imagine that Mausolos lost ships in the Satrap Revolt, and/or during the intervening years. Also, while we know that Mausolos did offer military support to the rebels, but the scale of that contribution – whether it comprised his supposed hundred ships or just a portion – remains indeterminate. Some scholars have suggested that he retained his fleet intact and committed it fully to the war against Athens,[16] however, Wijk's categorical assertion is unsustainable, since it would imply that the other allies contributed nothing to the combined fleet of one hundred ships described by Diodoros – an interpretation both improbable and unrealistic. By contrast, Hornblower refrains from such overstatement. He mentions the possibility that Mausolos maintained his fleet and deployed it in support of the rebels, yet he explicitly presents this only as a conjecture, not as a certainty.[17] Given the lack of evidence, Hornblower's account, though still hypothetical, offers a more cautious and therefore more plausible reconstruction than Wijk's.

'The phantom menace'

The final thing to be examined is the theory that Mausolos was the true instigator of the Social War – manipulating the rebels and orchestrating the conflict from behind the scenes. Although this cannot be regarded as a *communis opinio* among scholars,[18] a number of interpretations present

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nately he does not provide any reason for why it is likely. Contrary to this, Cawkwell does not think that Mausolos could have kept his fleet after the decree, but neither does he elaborate on why it would not be likely. – Hornblower (1982: 212) contra Cawkwell (1981: 41).

[16] See the previous note.

[17] The composition of the rebel navy is not stated in the ancient sources, but Mausolos' navy of 100 ships is not likely to have been affected by the orders given by Artaxerxes III to disband mercenary armies. – Hornblower (1982: 212).

[18] There are a number of scholars who either take a more neutral stance about the role of Mausolos in the Social War, with simply stating that Mausolos helped the rebels

the idea as a strong, almost certain, possibility. The starting point of this discussion is Hornblower's comprehensive and detailed monograph on Mausolos, published in 1982. After examining the available evidence – both ancient sources and modern scholarship accessible at the time – he concluded that Mausolos was most likely the principal instigator of the Social War, persuading the participating states to break openly with Athens.[19] Following Hornblower, several scholars have adopted similar positions. Ruzicka argues that the original impetus for the secession of the rebel states lay in the actions of Epameinondas in 364, though Athens did not respond until 357. In his view, however, the actual alliance formed between the seceded members was the result of Mausolos' machinations.[20] Badian likewise depicts Mausolos as one "*who had done much to instigate the Social War*."[21] Rhodes describes him as operating in the background of the events, pulling the strings behind the rebelling League members.[22] Nudell, largely following Ruzicka's interpretation, portrays Mausolos as one who „manipulated the concerns over Athenian actions in the Aegean islands in order to start the war and shatter Athenian influence in the region."[23] Taken together, these accounts consistently assign a decisive role to Mausolos, though the degree of agency attributed to him varies across interpretations.

How well can this theory be sustained in light of the available sources? Two primary sources are generally invoked, with heavy emphasis on one of them, as direct evidence by those scholars who por-

but not elaborating on the question further: Cawkwell (1981: 41); Parker (2014: 275); Wijk (2019: 108). Buckler (2003: 379) thinks that while Mausolos had a significant part in the conflict, he himself was not the sole reason but someone who benefited greatly from the opportunity. Worthington (2012: 66) states that Demosthenes (Dem 15, 3) falsely accused Mausolos of being the prime instigator of the Social War.

[19] Hornblower (1982: 208–211).

[20] Ruzicka (1992: 92–93).

[21] Badian (2001: 22).

[22] Rhodes (2005: 323).

[23] Nudell (2023: 127).

tray Mausolos as the master manipulator of the Social War. The especially prominent source is Demosthenes' speech *On the Freedom of the Rhodians*.[24] In this oration, delivered on behalf of exiled Rhodians who appealed to Athens for support in reclaiming their city, Demosthenes assigns the responsibility of the entire conflict to Mausolos, presenting him as the driving force behind the war. In order to strengthen his argument, Demosthenes provides certain details, among them the information that following the Social War both Cos and Rhodes came under Mausolos' control.[25]

The crucial question is whether Demosthenes' claims can be trusted, or whether this speech represents a propagandistic strategy, shifting blame for the war away from the Rhodians and onto Mausolos. Scholars who have examined the speech closely tend to favor the latter interpretation. Hornblower acknowledges that Demosthenes deliberately sought to absolve the Rhodians of their past misdeeds, for which Mausolos served as a convenient scapegoat.[26] Radicke similarly emphasizes that Demosthenes consciously attempts to redirect responsibility toward Mausolos, thereby presenting the events in a distorted light.[27] Trevett says that some of Demosthenes' statements may contain elements of truth, but stresses that the overarching aim was to displace responsibility for the Social War from the rebels onto Mausolos, in order to persuade the Athenians to intervene on behalf of Rhodes.[28] The intents of Demosthenes are evident in the always cited passage of the speech: *„The Chians, Byzantines, and Rhodians accused us of plotting against them, and as a result combined against us in this most recent war, but it will emerge that the man who engineered this and persuaded them was Mausolos, who claimed*

[24] I used the translation of Trevett (2007).
[25] Dem. 15, 27.
[26] Hornblower (1982: 208–211).
[27] Radicke (1995: 75).
[28] Trevett (2007: 262 n. 13).

to be the Rhodians' friend, but instead deprived them of their freedom" (Dem. 15, 3). The rhetorical purpose of this statement is clear: to deflect responsibility for the Social War – particularly from the Rhodians themselves – by placing the blame squarely on Mausolos. Thus we cannot blindly trust the words of Demosthenes therefore we cannot accept the claims depicting Mausolos as the mastermind behind the Social War.

The other principal source often invoked to reinforce the claims of Demosthenes is a passage from Diodoros (Diod. 16, 7, 3), the first of two sections in which he discusses the Social War (the second being Diod. 16, 21–22). In this initial passage, Diodoros records that when the Athenians arrived at Chios, they found that the Chians had received support from their allies–Byzantium, Rhodes, Cos, and Mausolos as well.[29] From this part we may safely conclude that Mausolos helped the rebels; Mausolos sent direct military support for the rebels; and the forces of Mausolos helped in the battle of Chios at the start of the conflict. Beyond this, however, Diodoros is silent: Mausolos disappears entirely from his narrative and is not mentioned in either Diod. 16, 21 or 16, 22. Thus, while it is certain that Mausolos contributed forces, the scale of this assistance – whether in terms of ships or soldiers – remains unknown.

A further piece of evidence occasionally cited in support of Mausolos' supposed central role is a fragmentary inscription about the Greek city of Erythrae, which honors Mausolos as *proxenos* of the city. This is often interpreted as evidence of Mausolos' growing ambition and influence over Greek cities and islands of the Aegean following the Great Satrap Revolt. Yet such an interpretation faces two problems. First, Erythrae had been under Persian control since 386,[30] which means that its inhabitants had long been subject to Persian influence; in this con-

[29] „οὗτοι δὲ πλεύσαντες ἐπὶ τὴν Χίον κατέλαβον παραγεγονότας συμμάχους τοῖς Χίοις παρὰ Βυζαντίων καὶ Ῥοδίων καὶ Κῴων, ἔτι δὲ Μαυσώλου τοῦ Καρῶν δυνάστου." – Diod. 16, 7, 3. – Trans. by C. H. Oldfather.

[30] R&O 56 commentary 266–267.

text, the honoring of a Persian satrap is hardly surprising and cannot be taken as conclusive proof of Mausolos' manipulation of Greek cities. Second, the dating of the inscription is highly uncertain: it may belong to the period of the Social War,[31] but it could possibly date to the time of the Satrap Revolt.[32] Even if the dating were secure, however, the significance of the inscription would remain limited, as it merely reflects the normal dynamics of a city long accustomed to acknowledging Persian authority by honoring a high-ranking official.

Overall, the theory of Mausolos as the master manipulator of the Social War rests primarily on Demosthenes, whose rhetorical agenda was to cast blame upon Mausolos; it is only weakly reinforced by Diodoros, who mentions him a single time regarding the conflict and only in the capacity of an ally; and it is further bolstered by tenuous interpretations of an inscription that, in reality, offers little direct evidence. In contrast there is an interpretation by Buckler,[33] which appears more convincing: Mausolos was not a hidden architect of the war, but rather a pragmatic opportunist who recognized and exploited the circumstances created by the conflict to advance his own power.

Conclusion

In sum, the examination of the evidence reveals that several claims concerning the role of Mausolos in the Social War exaggerate his significance. The danger of such exaggerations lies in the fact that they are sometimes presented as near certainties, despite the absence of adequate support in either the ancient sources or the modern literature.

As we saw it can be asserted with considerable confidence that

[31] R&O 56 commentary 266–267.
[32] Hornblower (1982: 107–110).
[33] Buckler (2003: 379).

Nudell significantly overstates Mausolos' involvement in the Social War by attributing to him all raiding activities that were most likely carried out collectively by the allied forces. This attribution can't be sustained by either the sources or the literatures cited by Nudell. Moreover, given the many uncertainties surrounding the period and the limited concrete information available, Van Wijk's claim that Mausolos commanded a fleet of 100 ships during the Social War, as inferred from Xenophon, necessitates a series of assumptions and unverified conditions in order to be considered plausible – none of which can be definitively demonstrated. Additionally, while the hypothesis that Mausolos acted as a master manipulator who single-handedly orchestrated the Social War is internally coherent and logically conceivable, it cannot be corroborated by the extant evidence. It appears more plausible that this interpretation represents a comprehensive theoretical framework constructed from a series of smaller, source-limited hypotheses, rather than from solid, indisputable evidence.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the overarching theory asserting Mausolos as the principal architect of the entire Social War is fundamentally unreliable and, based on current evidence, appears unsubstantiated.

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The Language of Birth
The Symbolic Use of Childbirth Imagery on Hellenistic Cyprus

This paper demonstrates that the images of childbirth – in different mediums – that survive from socio-religious contexts on Hellenistic Cyprus are not just valuable in the biomedical reconstruction of childbirth, but that they were used as powerful and dynamic symbols and can thus be used to access a web of ideas about the ways childbirth was approached and understood on Ancient Cyprus. To do so, it presents two case studies: the limestone figurines of Agios Photios, which connect childbirth to a diversity of concerns surrounding family, the survival of the community, and the protection of the mother and child; and the couvade ritual at Ariadne's Tomb in Amathous, which illustrates the potential for childbirth to act as a vehicle for transformation. Together, these case studies show that childbirth existed at a point of intersection of many ideas about family, community, death, rebirth, divinity, and more.

Keywords: Cyprus, childbirth, pregnancy, figurines, Agios Photios, Ariadne, couvade

"Childbirth is an intimate and complex transaction whose topic is physiological and whose language is cultural."

-- Brigitte Jordan, Birth in Four Cultures (1978), p. 3

As the anthropologist Brigitte Jordan succinctly summarises in the opening sentence to her landmark monograph *Birth in Four Cultures*, giving

birth is about much more than the biological act of parturition. It is the topic of an elaborate, culturally-determined language. Archaeologists have attempted to grasp this language from its – often scarce – material remains, including representations. Elisabeth Beausang called for a general re-evaluation of the study of birth in prehistory[1], and scholars of Cypriot archaeology like Diane Bolger and Elizabeth Goring have studied figurines connected to pregnancy and birth.[2] Unfortunately, these studies have so far restricted themselves to the prehistoric period – later examples of birth imagery on Cyprus have almost exclusively been studied from a biomedical perspective.[3] This does not do justice to the potential of these remarkable images, which have no less emotional and symbolic power than their prehistoric counterparts. This paper presents two examples of representations of childbirth from socio-religious contexts on Hellenistic Cyprus – one group of figurines and one performance – in order to demonstrate that they sit at a nexus of complex and intersecting ideas about family and community, death and rebirth, and the role of the divine in human life, a position that enabled their use as compelling and dynamic symbols.

Representing Childbirth at Agios Photios

The first case study comes from the sanctuary of Agios Photios near Golgoi. Edmund Duthoit recovered many statues and statue fragments from the site in 1862, but did not recognise the remains of the temple.[4] These were not uncovered until the large scale excavation directed by Luigi Palma di Cesnola in 1870, which revealed the foundations of a temple measuring c. 9 by 18 metres, likely constructed of plastered mud-

[1] Beausang (2000).
[2] Bolger (2003), (1996), (1992) for example; Goring (1991).
[3] For example Vandervondelen (2002), (1997).
[4] Counts (2012: 46–48); Masson (1971: 307–308); Cesnola (1877: 151).

brick walls covered by a wooden roof.[5] Within the temple, he discovered hundreds of limestone statues, ranging in size from a little over half a metre to almost three metres tall and depicting male and female votaries, musicians, warriors, and more; as well as a large collection of anatomical votives, reliefs, oil lamps, and other offerings.[6] The finds suggest a date for the temple between the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Hellenistic periods (circa 7th–1st centuries BC).[7]

One of the most remarkable finds was a votive deposit near the north entrance of the temple:

> Near the north entrance, between the first and second rows of large square blocks or pedestals, was another kind of votive offering consisting of little stone groups of women holding and sometimes suckling babes, and of cows and other animals similarly occupied with their young. Another group, badly defaced, consisted of four persons, one holding a newly born babe, while the mother, extended upon a sort of chair, her face still convulsed by pain, has her head supported by an attendant. Another group, in no better preservation, exhibited a like scene in the vaccine race. In the close proximity of these offerings was found the base or lower part of a cone in blue granite, which Mr. Georges Ceccaldi recognises as a fragment of the symbol of Venus.[8]

This figurine group, now exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York[9], represents a remarkably explicit and touching depiction of the moment of birth, in which the parturient slumps on a birthing

[5] Hermary–Mertens (2015: 15); Counts (2012: 49–50); Cesnola (1877: 138–140).
[6] Counts (2012: 49–50); Cesnola (1877: 141–159).
[7] Counts (2012: 50).
[8] Cesnola (1877: 158–159).
[9] MMA 74.51.2698. See also Myres (1914: no. 1226) and Cesnola (1885: pl. LXVI).

chair, supported by attendants, in a way that clearly demonstrates the strain and exhaustion of the event (fig. 1). Three similar limestone scenes are included in the collections of the Louvre (fig. 2), a fourth in those of the Musée Rolin in Autun, and a fifth in the British Museum.[10] Although they were all acquired at Golgoi in 1866 and can thus be presumed to come from the sanctuary site, their exact provenance is unknown.



Figure 1 Limestone childbirth group from Agios Photios.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2698. Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription, 1874–76.

[10] Louvre: AM3028, AM3068, AM3368. Musée Rolin, Autun: V.11. British Museum: 1866,0101.334. The relief AM 2929 (Louvre), also recovered at Golgoi is described by the Louvre as a childbirth scene, but it is so different from the other images that I would dispute this description and suggest instead that it depicts a healing scene, with a patient reclined on the bed, as are known also from Greek sanctuaries of Asklepios and Amphiaraos. Three similar limestone birthing scenes were found in Idalion (British Museum: 1869,0608.54, 1855,1101.26) and the Vouni palace (Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm: V406). In the Cypro-Archaic period, childbirth scenes were also executed in terracotta and dedicated, for example, in the sanctuary of Empros Temenon near Lapithos and elsewhere (Vandenabeele [1988: 31–32]; Karageorghis [1988: 78–79]).



Figure 2 Limestone childbirth scenes from Golgoi, probably from Agios Photios.
(a) AM3368. 2009 Musée du Louvre / Département des Antiquités orientales. https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010122313
(b) AM3068. 2009 Musée du Louvre / Département des Antiquités orientales. https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010122311
(c) AM3028. 2009 Musée du Louvre / Département des Antiquités orientales. https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010122312

These figurine groups are remarkable not only for their emotional power, but also for their subject matter: explicit images of the moment of birth are very rare across the Mediterranean.[11] These figurines are gener-

[11] Wise (2007: 157).

ally interpreted as votives dedicated by women requesting or expressing gratitude for divine aid during the hazardous experience of childbirth.[12] Although this interpretation seems to be correct, to leave it there is a pity. A closer examination of these figurines and their place within the sanctuary context demonstrates that these striking objects can still reveal much about the place childbirth occupied in the lives and society of the ancient Cypriots, where its significance clearly extended considerably beyond the immediate protection of a particular mother and her child.

Cesnola describes the figurine group from the Metropolitan Museum as found not in isolation, but in a deposit together with figurine groups of kourotrophoi, cows suckling their calves, and a group of a cow giving birth.[13] This demonstrates two important points. The first is that childbirth was apparently regarded as only one event in an extended relationship of caretaking, the next stage of which is represented by the seated women holding or even nursing infants.[14] This combination effectively illustrates the junction of biological and social at which childbirth sits. Of even more interest, however, are the images of cows referred to by Cesnola. Limestone reliefs of cows suckling calves are preserved within the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre (fig. 3)[15] but the intriguing 'like scene in the vaccine race' is unfortunately not mentioned again, and I have been unable to track down anything like it in the museum collections. Animal birth scenes are even rarer than depic-

[12] For example: Hermary–Mertens (2012: no. 279); Budin (2011: 227–228); Vandervondelen (2002: 151); (1997: 281).

[13] Cesnola (1877: 158–159).

[14] Although no depictions of pregnant women could be identified among the material from Agios Photios, this earlier stage is referred to by a figurine of the Egyptian birth demon Bes (Metropolitan Museum 74.51.2613). Images of pregnant women are attested elsewhere on Hellenistic Cyprus, including for example the terracotta Deae Gravidae of Kition (Maillard [2021: 76–78]; Yon–Caubet [1989: 31]) and Amathous (Hermary [1996: 20]).

[15] Metropolitan Museum of Art: 74.51.2663 and 74.51.2595, see also Myres (1914: nos. 1146, 1147) and Cesnola (1885: pl. XCVIII). Louvre: AM3407-3413; AM 2779.

tions of childbirth in humans, and the closest parallels might be the tomb reliefs of Old Kingdom Egypt, where a wide range of animals, including cows, goats, hippopotami, and even a civet cat are shown giving birth in natural surroundings, emphasising the fertility of the natural world.[16]

These bovine scenes effectively demonstrate that the concern with childbirth and fertility extended beyond the human to the animal world

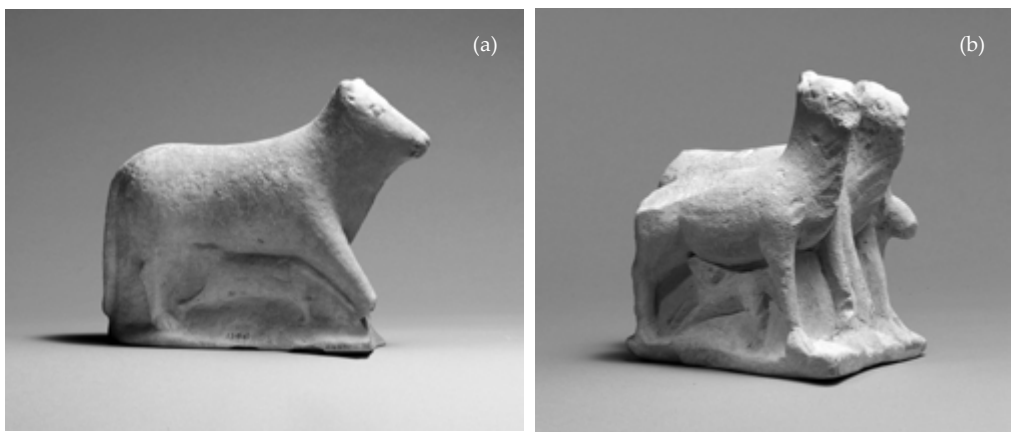

Figure 3 Limestone scenes of animals with their young from Agios Photios.
(a) Cow nursing a calf. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2663. The Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription 1874–76.
(b) Cows or sheep with their young, one of them nursing. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2595. The Cesnola Collection, purchased by subscription 1874–76.

– which is to be expected for a society thoroughly dependent on agriculture. Such agricultural concerns were likely also the reason for the dedication of the model of a sheepfold at Agios Photios.[17] It is worth noting, however, that – unlike the Egyptians – the dedicants of this temple limited themselves to domesticated animals.[18] They were not interested in a wild, untamed fertility of the natural world, but in reproduction

[16] Ezz (2014: 33–35).
[17] Metropolitan Museum: 74.51.2677.
[18] Various depictions of lions were recovered from the sanctuary, but none of these appear to have a connection to fertility or birth, and possibly should be associated with the prominence of Herakles in the sanctuary.

within the structured system of agriculture. We thus return to this intersection of the natural and the social that the images of the kourotrophoi already touched upon. Together, they suggest that these figurines did not just represent the wished-for or achieved safe birth of an individual child, but were tied up in the larger hopes for the vitality and survival of a community, guaranteed by the reproduction of the relationships between people and animals depicted in these images of birth, nurturing, and caretaking.

A different perspective on this intersection between the natural and the cultural or social emerges when we zoom out and place the figurines within the context of the sanctuary's votive assemblage as a whole. In addition to the statues and statuettes, Cesnola's excavations at the temple also revealed numerous limestone anatomical votives, especially eyes, ears, and breasts.[19] They indicate that the deities of Agios Photios were skilled in curing a variety of ailments, and the breasts in particular – as well as a single example of male genitals – suggest that this included ailments related to fertility, birth, and lactation.[20] Michaelides describes the birth scenes as an unusual subtype of the anatomical votive[21], giving a different twist to their interpretation: whereas the connection with the cow figurines suggested that birth was a part of the natural order of things, this association with anatomical votives instead presents it as a dangerous condition requiring medical or divine intervention to ensure a happy outcome. This juxtaposition also demonstrates that childbirth is a place where the personal and the communal come together: on the one hand, placed alongside the kourotrophoi and cow figurines, the childbirth scenes express a concern with the continuation of the community, but when seen next to the anatomical votives, which are generally ded-

[19] Hermary–Mertens (2015; nos. 393–408); Cesnola (1877: 157–158). See also Michaelides (2014: 31–32). Particularly intriguing is the unusual composite ex-voto MNB 324 (Louvre).
[20] Hermary–Mertens (2015: 17).
[21] Michaelides (2014: 30).

icated by individual persons for the cure of particular ailments, they appear to be associated with the protection of a single individual (or perhaps a mother-child pair). All these objects – childbirth scenes, kourotrophoi, cow figurines, and anatomical votives – have the same basic function of votive dedications. But they all come with entirely unique sets of associations, and juxtaposing them in different ways creates a rich variety of narratives – reinforcing the great (symbolic) significance of birth within Hellenistic Cypriot communities.

Finally, we might briefly consider the deity or deities to which these childbirth scenes were dedicated. Although Cesnola identified Ayios Photios as a temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the large quantity of male votaries and a handful of syllabic inscriptions suggest rather that the primary deity of the sanctuary was a male god with elements of Apollo, Zeus, and Herakles.[22] The dedication of birth votives to a male god need not have been odd: Apollo in particular was known to get involved in pregnancy troubles in his guise as a healing deity.[23] That said, it does appear that a female goddess moved into the temple some time after it was established, so that the site became dedicated to a god-goddess pair.[24] One inscription – now lost – mentions Demeter[25], whose associations with agriculture and natural fertility on the one hand, and with motherhood on the other would have made her a very suitable recipient for such offerings.[26] However, her worship is generally very minor on Cyprus, as the Cypriot Great Goddess – later identified with Aphrodite – takes on many of the roles of other

[22] Hermary–Mertens (2015, 17–18); Ulbrich (2008: 298–301); Masson (1983: 280).
[23] Forsén (1996: 151).
[24] Counts (2012: 50); Vandervondelen (2002: 152); (1997: 281–282). Masson (1983: 280), however, seriously questions the presence of a female goddess at Agios Photios based on epigraphic evidence.
[25] Hermary–Mertens (2015: 17).
[26] According to Forsén (1996: 142–143), Demeter and Kore were worshipped as birth goddesses in various locations across Greece.

goddesses on that island.[27] Vandervondelen simply identifies the female goddess of Agios Photios as the Great Goddess of Cyprus, who was assimilated with different traits of Demeter, Aphrodite, and Isis-Hathor, and this ambiguous identification may overall be the most appropriate one.

Cesnola remarks that a certain intentional order appears to be visible in the arrangement of the votives across the sanctuary, as though they are clustered in separate foci for the different deities.[28] His description further specifies that the childbirth votives were found near a baetyl, which he associated with Aphrodite.[29] If the Cypriot Great Goddess – who in later times came to be identified with Aphrodite – was indeed the recipient of these childbirth votives, this serves not only as a reminder of the unique character of the Cypriot deities – which was maintained even when they came to be called by Greek names[30] – but also of the fundamental importance of childbirth to the Cypriots, that it was overseen by their most prominent goddess.

Although these figurines are clearly votive dedications, they are also much more than that: I hope the above has shown that a more in-depth consideration of the figurines themselves and their places within the sanctuary assemblage reveals some of the diversity of ways one can think about and deal with the reality of childbirth in such a ritual context. It shows that childbirth was something that existed at intersections, between natural and social, between matter-of-course and extraordinary, between personal and communal. It is precisely because childbirth sits at the centre of this web of associations that its image can appear in so many ways and in so many contexts.

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[27] Vandervondelen (2002: 152); Bennett (1980: 291–292; 381–382).
[28] Vandervondelen (2002: 150); Cesnola (1877: 159).
[29] Cesnola (1877: 159).The most famous symbol of Aphrodite on Cyprus was of course the baetyl in her temple in Paphia, see Bennett (1980: 317).
[30] Sophocleous (1984: 132).

Re-Enacting Childbirth at the Tomb of Ariadne

This play on juxtapositions and transformations comes to the fore even more strongly in the second example, which takes us far from any straightforward votive imitation of real-life births. It concerns an intriguing ritual occurring annually at a place known as the tomb of Ariadne near Amathous, for which our only source is a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, based on the writings of the little-known Hellenistic historian Paeon the Amathousian:

> A very peculiar account of these matters is published by Paeon the Amathusian. He says that Theseus, driven out of his course by a storm to Cyprus, and having with him Ariadne, who was big with child and in sore sickness and distress from the tossing of the sea, set her on shore alone, but that he himself, while trying to succour the ship, was borne out to sea again. The women of the island, accordingly, took Ariadne into their care, and tried to comfort her in the discouragement caused by her loneliness, brought her forged letters purporting to have been written to her by Theseus, ministered to her aid during the pangs of travail, and gave her burial when she died before her child was born. Paeon says further that Theseus came back, and was greatly afflicted, and left a sum of money with the people of the island, enjoining them to sacrifice to Ariadne, and caused two little statuettes to be set up in her honour, one of silver, and one of bronze. He says also that at the sacrifice in her honour on the second day of the month Gorpiaeus, one of their young men lies down and imitates the cries and gestures of women in travail; and that they call the grove in which they show her tomb, the grove of Ariadne Aphrodite.[31]

[31] Plut. *Thes*. 20.3sq. Trans. Bernadette Perrin.

Such parturition mimes are not unknown from anthropological literature as a possible element of couvade, a diverse set of ritual behaviours that may be undertaken by men around the time of a child's birth. Anthropologists have accorded these rituals a variety of meanings, ranging from the protection of the parturient and child against malevolent spirits to the creation of a familial bond between father and child.[32]

The ritual described by Plutarch, however, differs from these couvade rites in a crucial manner: it is not connected to a simultaneous, 'biological' childbirth. When the youth lays down at the tomb, he is commemorating an event that happened in the deep past, rather than attempting to protect a parturient and/or a baby in the here and now. As a result, any anthropological readings connected with protection or paternity make little sense.[33] Scholars have offered different readings of the ritual. Kyriakos Hadjioannou, for example, suggests that it serves as a reminder of the importance of the male presence – and specifically of his enacting a couvade – during birth: because Theseus neglected to do so, Ariadne and the child died.[34] David Leitao offers a similar interpretation, arguing that both the unusual variation of the more common story and the ritual based on it may be a response to anxieties about the absence of the father during birth. First, he suggests that the change to the story that Ariadne became pregnant by Theseus – when her sons Staphylus and Oinopion are usually attributed to Dionysos – was inspired by a 5th-century manipulation of the myth in Athens, which allowed the sons, who grew up to be mythical colonisers, to be used as tools of Athenian imperial propaganda.[35] The details of childbirth thus become a powerful symbolic weapon even in the arena of politics. With regards to the

[32] Powis (2021: 411; 415–416); Varvounis (2014: 15–18); Rivière (1974: 425–426).
[33] See also Pirenne-Delforge (1994: 350).
[34] Hadjioannou (1978: 107).
[35] Plutarch does actually mention Theseus as the father to Staphylus and Oenopion. (Plut. Thes. 20.2). See also Webster (1966: 25–26).

ritual, Leitao suggests that it served as a kind of atonement for Theseus' absence and a reminder of the importance of the father's support during birth.[36] In his analysis, Leitao forcibly demonstrates that the symbolic significance of childbirth stretched beyond the parturient-child dyad to include the father, and even the community as a whole.

Returning to the theme of juxtapositions and intersections, however, is Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge's observation that childbirth served as a powerful symbol of transformation, which allowed passage from one state of being to another.[37] In both the version of the myth told by Plutarch and in the ritual occurring at the tomb, the event of childbirth serves as the connection between a trio of oppositions: life and death; mortal and divine; and male and female.

The connection between life and death in childbirth is perhaps more startling to us than it would have been to a Hellenistic Cypriot familiar with the probably high rates of infant and maternal mortality. Childbirth is a liminal moment, during which both mother and child balance on a knife's edge and may fall either way: to the joy of new life or, as the unfortunate Ariadne, to death. This intertwining of birth and death can be found in many places across the ancient world. Simone Zimmermann Kuoni, for example, in her analysis of ancient midwifery practices, notes that midwives across time and place have also served as psychopomps or caretakers of the deceased, not only facilitating the passage of souls through the life cycle, but actively creating this cycle.[38] Archaeologically, the same idea may be recognised in the custom of burying infants in jars, which can be conceptualised as a return to the womb.[39] This connection between birth and death was also widely ex-

[36] Leitao (2007: 269–270).
[37] Pirenne-Delforge (1994: 350).
[38] Zimmermann Kuoni (2019: 85–87).
[39] Jar burials of infants were identified in Enkomi, Salamis, and Kition for the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Their number is, however, limited, and Fourrier et al.

pressed in literature where birth was employed as a metaphor for crisis – most famously of course in Euripides' *Medea*, but also in other texts ranging from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* or the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* to even the Bible.[40] Giving birth meant facing the possibility of death, stepping temporarily *over* the dividing line between the world of the living and the world of the dead, and hoping that one could make it back across – together with the baby.

For Ariadne, this transition from life to death is paralleled by another, almost opposite movement: that from human to divine, as she is immortalised and venerated as Ariadne-Aphrodite. It is fundamentally her death in childbirth that enables this transition, which is emphasised not only by the fact that her worship is focused on a structure known as Ariadne's tomb, but also by the transitory role of childbirth in general. For example, Claude Calame argues that it was the moment of birth – rather than the occasion of the first intercourse – that transformed a parthenos into a full-grown woman.[41] Parallels for this human-divine transformation effected through childbirth can be found elsewhere in literature: Diodorus Siculus explains how, when Herakles was taken up to Olympus, Hera also had to put on a parturition mime in order to facilitate the hero's rebirth as a god.[42] There is, of course, a glaring difference: in this story, it is the child who is quite literally 'reborn', whereas

(2021, 296–300) describe the practice as normal but not common. The liminal status of the perinatal deceased is further emphasised by their burial within the city limits rather than in the extramural necropoleis. In Archaic Salamis, infants were buried in jars in the dromoi of the tombs of *Celarka* – again in a liminal space, see Karageorghis (1970).

For general notes on the practice of jar burials at different times and places, and the association with the womb, see Power–Tristant (2016: 1478–1479); McGeorge (2013, especially 11–12); Bacvarov (2004, 152–153) – though his association with the Mother Goddess is not necessary.

[40] For example: *Gilgamesh* XI, III: 117sqq; *Lamentation* 218–229; Jeremiah 50:43. See Bergmann (2008; 56–58 and *passim*). Consider also, of course *Iliad* 11, 269–272.

[41] Calame (1996: 204–205).

[42] Diod. Sic. 4.39.2.

Ariadne (like Calame's parthenoi) is transformed not by being born but by giving birth. As on the limestone figurines, it is the new mother who takes centre stage – seemingly a particular Cypriot habit.

The final opposition, between male and female, is probably the most startling to the modern observer. Why is it a boy who re-enacts Ariadne's troubles during the festival? Does he, as suggested by Leitao, take up the mantle of Theseus to atone for the latter's absence in Ariadne's hour of need,[43] or did he actually become Ariadne, utilising the potential of childbirth as a transformative event to (temporarily) cross the boundary between male and female? The latter seems more appropriate to the antiquity that both Pirenne-Delforge and Vandervondelen attribute to the ritual,[44] and again recognises the deeply-rooted indigenous character of the Great Goddess of Cyprus. The only other surviving fragment by Paeon the Amathousian is an explanation of the term Aphroditos quoted in Hesychios: "Paeon who wrote these things near Amathous says that on Cyprus the goddess was given the appearance of a man"[45]. A bearded Aphrodite is also mentioned by Macrobius,[46] and some rare figurines have been taken to be representations of this male/female deity – although their identification is much disputed.[47] Even if these sources of course post-date the ritual by many centuries, they suggest that the transgressing of gender boundaries was a part of the cult of Amathousian Aphrodite, one that can possibly be traced back to her origins in the Cypriot Great Goddess.[48] Childbirth – or specifically its

[43] Leitao (2007: 270).
[44] Vandervondelen (2002: 149); Pirenne-Delforge (1994: 350).
[45] Hsch., s.v. Ἀφρόδιτος. Own translation. See also Bennett (1980: 321–322).
[46] Macrob. *Sat.* III.8.1–3. See also the other references included in Sophocleous (1985: 79–80).
[47] Sophocleous (1985: 87). *Contra:* Karageorghis–Mertens–Rose (2000: no. 219).
[48] Bennett (1980: 322). It might also be worth noting here, that according to Pirenne-Delforge (1994: 351), Adonis also played a prominent role in the cult of Aphrodite at Amathous.

reenactment – and its exclusive biological association with women was one of the tools through which this transformation was effected.

The ritual described by Paeon provides us with a highly intriguing use of the childbirth image, in the medium of performance, for which no other example exists on ancient Cyprus. Although we cannot tease out its full significance from this single, brief reference, it does very clearly demonstrate two fundamental points about childbirth and its socio-religious significance. The first is that childbirth, despite its biological prerequisites, is not exclusively a woman's domain – the importance of the father's presence was emphatically driven home by this dramatic annual performance of Theseus' failure. The second is that childbirth could function as a moment of fundamental transition, transformation, and boundary-crossing, not just for the child, but also for the parturient.

Conclusion: The Language of Childbirth on Hellenistic Cyprus

This paper has tried to identify some of the elements of the culturally-determined, socio-religious 'language' of birth on Hellenistic Cyprus, by demonstrating that images of childbirth possessed a great symbolic and emotive power. These images were not simply imitations of one of life's major events, but they were also – in a somewhat clichéd phrase – 'good to think with'. Their significance extended beyond the single event of childbirth, to include the extended relationship of caretaking between mother and child, the reproduction of the community as a whole, and even the continuation of an agricultural relationship with animals. This flexibility made it possible for the childbirth figurines at Agios Photios to be used in the expression of a diversity of concerns, involving the natural and the social, the personal and the communal. This drawing together of opposing topics is also evident in the couvade ritual at Ariadne's tomb in Amathous, where the reenactment of child-

birth acted as the mediator enabling transitions between life and death, mortal and divine, male and female.

The symbolism of birth imagery was thus not limited to actual childbirth events, and its significance was transferable. This flexibility was enabled by the place birth had at the nexus of different strands of thought about a wide range of topics ranging from family, community, survival, relationships with the divine, the social and the animal world around us, the opposition between male and female, and much more. It is of course no surprise that the ancient Cypriot were concerned with these topics, but the possibility of accessing that web of thought through the image of birth has so far not been recognised – and demonstrates effectively that Brigitte Jordan was absolutely correct when she wrote that the language of childbirth is cultural.

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The *nescii fati* of the *Aeneid* and their Causal Attributions

This paper examines the causal attributions employed by characters in Vergil's Aeneid *to explain their subjective misfortunes. It will be shown that these subjective explanations often disregard fate or reveal a flawed understanding of the fata, which typically leads to negative consequences for the characters involved. The article then analyzes the strategies Vergil uses to expose the shortcomings of his characters' subjective explanations and how he characterizes them by endowing some of them with a distinctive style of attribution.*

Keywords: Vergil, Aeneid, fate, fatum, Causal Attribution, misfortune

1. Explaining one's Misfortune

A fall in front of one's doorstep inevitably raises several questions: Was it icy? Did the neighbor fail to clear the walkway? Or did I simply trip—by chance or due to inattention? Four primary motives for this everyday search for the causes of perceived events and phenomena can be identified:[1] First, we aim to understand sequences of actions; second, we seek to predict them whenever possible; and third, we mean to actively influence them. At times, we also seek to evaluate actions—that is, to assign responsibility and draw the corresponding consequences, such as praise, criticism, or even punishment. The pressure to arrive at an

[1] Following Hüttemann (2018: 5).

explanation is particularly high in the face of negative experiences and misfortune. In such cases, we search for ways to take action by adjusting our behavior or holding others accountable to prevent similar negative experiences. This article first examines how characters in ancient epics explain their misfortune and the significance of these explanations in Vergil's *Aeneid*. The paper then explores how characters who fail to understand the *fatum* correctly attribute their misfortune. The following questions are addressed: Are these attributions chosen ad hoc according to the narrative requirements of each scene, or are they consistently used to characterize the individual? Do the characters undergo a learning process toward a better understanding of fate?

Attributions of misfortune in antiquity—in everyday life[2] and in their literary portrayal—can broadly be categorized into three types: 1. divine influences; 2. impersonal forces: various concepts of fate or chance;[3] 3. human actions.[4] In this regard, scenes where characters speculate on the possible reasons for their own or others' misfortunes are particularly revealing—such as when Deiphobus meets Aeneas in the underworld (6, 531–534):

> sed te qui vivum casus, age fare vicissim,
> attulerint. pelagine venis erroribus actus

[2] See generally Harrison (2015) for the consideration of supernatural forces in everyday life; cf. Chaniotis (2023: 43–47) for accounts of miraculous healings by Asclepius, where personal transgressions were interpreted as causes of divine wrath.

[3] Attributions to chance are explicitly found only after Homer, although, according to Scodel (2018: 5), implicit cases of chance can already be identified in his works. For an introduction to the various concepts of fate and their chronological development, see Eidinow (2011).

[4] Eidinow (2011) categorizes explanations for experiences of misfortune into 'supernatural violence' and the 'ministry of misfortune,' which encompasses concepts of fate ranging from the spinning of the *Parcae* to general and individual *fortunae*. Interestingly, she omits human causation.

an monitu divum? aut quae te fortuna fatigat,
ut tristis sine sole domos, loca turbida, adires?

But come, tell in turn what chance has brought you here, alive.
Have you come here driven by your ocean-wanderings, or at
Heaven's command? Or what doom compels you to visit these
sad, sunless dwellings, this land of disorder?[5]

Deiphobus considers several possible causes, including chance (*casus*), purely human misadventures (*errores*), which are contrasted with a divine command (*monitu divum*), or *fortuna*.[6] The explanation of misfortune being due to divine intervention or human actions had been common since the Homeric epics. The key innovation in Vergil's work lies in the prominence of fate. While the attribution of misfortune to a force of fate had not played a significant role in Homer and Apollonius, it appears frequently in the *Aeneid*.[7] There is another distinguishing feature: unlike Homer, who grants fate considerably less explanatory power, Vergil introduces the *fata* at various points as the highest power, to which even the gods are subordinate.[8] In the 15 instances where misfortune is explained through reference to fate,[9] the following Latin terms are used:

[5] Translations Fairclough–Goold (1999; 2000).

[6] The term *fortuna* remains deliberately ambiguous: it is often employed to explain fortunate or unfortunate turns of events, though without the metaphysical qualification of *fata* as a universal principle—see Eigler (2007: 47). At times, it appears explicitly personified (e.g., in 11, 43 as envious fortune), at others, it does not. Combinations with other notions of fate are shown below, with the combination of gods + *fortuna* also appearing (e.g., 12, 676sqq.). In the cited example, *fortuna* is best understood as the listed potential causes + x.

[7] Overall, they still account for only about 20% of attributions in the context of misfortune, compared to approximately 10% each in Homer and Apollonius.

[8] The scholarly debate on whether and to what extent Jupiter can be identified with the *fatum* is too extensive to be presented here. For an overview with further references, see Casali (2023: 392–398).

[9] The passages were identified through a close-reading approach, defining misfortune

1. *fatum* / *fata*[10] (6x); 2. *Fortuna* / *fortuna*[11] (4x); 3. *fata* + *fortuna*[12] (2x); 4. *sors*[13] (1x); 5. *fata* + *deus* + *fortuna*[14] (1x); 6. *fata* + *sors*[15] (1x). Although the *fata* are guaranteed to us as the ultimate authority, neither the attributions referring to *fata* / *fatum* can be unconditionally classified as accurate, nor are the combinations with *fortuna* and *sors* (2.–4., 6.) necessarily misjudgments on the part of the speakers. Thus, Dido, introduced as *fati nescia* (1, 299), laments the misfortunes of Aeneas (*heu, quibus ille* / *iactatus fatis*, 4, 13–14), and Jupiter, when he declares his impartiality in the battle in Book 10, speaks of the individual *fortuna* of each fighter (10, 104–113). Therefore, individual interpretations of each character and their attributions are necessary in order to understand the relationship between the concept of fate in these attributions and Jupiter's *fata*. As a matter of principle, the narrator's statement following the death of Pallas, which foreshadows the end of the work, applies (10, 501–505):

> nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae
> et servare modum rebus sublata secundis!
> Turno tempus erit magno cum optaverit emptum
> intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque
> oderit.
>
> O mind of man, knowing not fate or coming doom or
> how to keep bounds when uplifted with favouring

in a broad sense as an emotionally negative state triggered by an event, such as in cases of injury, death, fear, or longing.

[10] 2, 738–740 (Aeneas); 4, 13–14 (Dido); 6, 511–512 (Deiphobus); 7, 594 (Latinus); 11, 96–98 (Aeneas); 12, 149–150 (Iuno).

[11] 2, 79–80 (Sinon); 4, 433–434 (Dido); 11, 42–44 (Aeneas); 11, 108–109 (Aeneas).

[12] 1, 238–241 (Venus); 5, 709–710 (Nautes).

[13] 11, 164–166 (Euander).

[14] 12, 676–677 (Turnus).

[15] 2, 554–557 (Aeneas).

> fortune! To Turnus shall come the hour when for a great
> price he will long to have bought an unscathed Pallas,
> and when he will abhor those spoils and that day.

Before examining the attributions with which individual *nescii fati* explain their misfortune, the question of whether a human can break free from the misery described in the quote needs addressing. Much has been written about the difficult learning process that even Aeneas must undergo.[16] The causal attributions listed above suggest three possible relations between the speaking characters and the 'great' *fata* of the proem. First, the character may use *fata* more generally, meaning 'death' or 'doom'.[17] This usage is closer to the Homeric μοῖρα than to the concept of fate in the *Aeneid* and is therefore an interesting intertextual reference.[18] The relevant passages are likely to appear oversimplified to readers who have been prepared for the 'great' *fata* since the opening verses of the work, and can thus be understood as part of Vergil's *aemulatio* towards Homer. Second, in their attributions, characters tend to hold mistaken views regarding the *fata* or blend them with other concepts so that these attributions are also marked as misguided.[19] The third and final possibility must be placed in quotation marks, as it is unclear whether it is ever fully achieved by anyone other than Jupiter: the 'correct understanding' of the *fata*. As shown below, if attained, this understanding comes late and often tragically. A rare exception is the admonition of the old advisor Nautes after the burning of the ships in Book 5: *nate dea, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur* (5, 709). The fact that the insight

[16] See below n. 21–23.
[17] Cf. Pötscher (1977: 22–95) for a detailed account of the semantics of the concept of *fatum*, although I cannot agree with some of his interpretations derived from it, see below n. 36.
[18] For this aspect of Homer's μοῖρα, see Adkins (1960: 17); also cf. Scodel (2017: 68), Eidinow (2011: 30–41).
[19] Cf. the attributions of Turnus and Venus discussed below.

necessary for this simple Stoically colored[20] attribution is not commonplace is made clear earlier, with the narrator's note that Nautes, as the only one instructed by Tritonia Pallas, is particularly qualified in matters of divine will and *fatum* (5, 704–707).

2. The *nescii fati* and their Causal Attributions

The previous considerations suggest that the potential for humans to comprehend fate is even more restricted than previously acknowledged in scholarly discourse. Aeneas' learning curve during his journey has been widely discussed since the influential Richard Heinze, who read the hero as a Stoic *proficiens*. Michael Erler identified Epicurean elements in Aeneas, thus offering a convincing explanation for the work's conclusion, which is problematic from a Stoic perspective. Most recently, contributions to the Stoic interpretation have been published by Graham Zanker.[21] However, the limits of the process of understanding have been pointed out—Aeneas requires numerous divine signs and human advisors, but he still does not progress consistently. Book 6 of the *Aeneid* has been described as a 'Höllenfahrt ohne Folgen',[22] and it has been argued that Aeneas immediately forgets the knowledge he acquires upon leaving the underworld.[23] Since the early 20th century Dido's and Turnus' contrasting relationship in their engagement with fate has been highlighted. Both are said to fail in their goals because these obstruct the

[20] The analogy of fate with a dog tied to a cart is known from early Stoicism. The dog can either submit to its fate and run along or be dragged along. See Zanker (2016: 584) for more on this.

[21] Heinze ([8]1995: 291–297); Erler (2020); Zanker (2016; 2019; 2023).

[22] Holzberg (2006: 167).

[23] I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ibolya Tar for an interesting conversation about this aspect at the Sapiens Ubique Civis Conference 2024. See Baier (2014: 67); in contrast to older contributions that are difficult to uphold, which suggest that Aeneas, after the prophecy in Book 6, is certain of his mission and has no further doubts: Duckworth (1956: 357), Büchner (1976: 283).

fulfillment of the *fata*. However, Dido does so as *fati nescia*, without understanding fate, while Turnus acts with knowledge of the *fata*.[24] Books 4 and 12 of the *Aeneid* have been read as tragedies of Dido and Turnus, respectively, based on these ideas.[25] It is appealing to see Turnus, much like Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, as a tragic hero who, fully aware of the inevitability of his downfall, continues on his chosen path. Based on the forces and individuals Turnus holds responsible for the arrival of the Aeneads and his eventual demise, it remains to be examined whether this relationship with the *fata* can be sustained.

To properly assess Turnus' attributions, we must consider Pallas, who is closely connected with Turnus, and not only through the ending of the work. When he sees his Arcadians fleeing from the Latins, he calls them to battle with the following words (10, 375–376):

> numina nulla premunt, mortali urgemur ab hoste
> mortales; totidem nobis animaeque manusque.
>
> No gods press upon us; by mortal foes are we mortals
> driven; we have as many lives, as many hands as they.

For Pallas, mortals are fighting a mortal enemy. The divine realm is ignored, and Pallas gives no thought to fate. Indeed, Jupiter declares his impartiality in 10, 104–113, but what about the *fata*? These, according to the supreme god's statement, would find their way (*fata viam invenient*, 10, 113). Pallas' naive disregard for supernatural forces ensures that the *fata* he failed to consider find a way that leads, through his own death, to the death of Turnus, thereby removing the last obstacle to the transfer

[24] For example, Matthaei (1917: 20), Schenk (1984: 43). However, Pascal (1990: 267) and Baier (2014: 61), among others, deny him knowledge of the *fata*.
[25] For Dido: Wlosok (1990); for Turnus: Rieks (2005).

of the Penates to Latium. Turnus' response to Drances' accusations that he is responsible for the conflict with the Trojans (11, 442–444), can be related to this scene:

> solum Aeneas vocat? et vocet oro;
> nec Drances potius, sive est haec ira deorum,
> morte luat, sive est virtus et gloria, tollat.
>
> Aeneas alone challenges me, you say. I pray that he does
> challenge me, and that it is not Drances rather than I
> who appeases the gods by his death, if they are angry, or
> wins glory for his courage, if that is the prize here.

Turnus here proves very pragmatic. For him, there are two possibilities: Either the gods are angry and demand the downfall of the Latins—in which case victory is impossible anyway, or it is a matter of *virtus* and *gloria* on a purely human level—in which case there is a chance of victory in single combat. In any case, it is worth attempting the fight. Once again, the reference to Homer is noteworthy: In the *Aeneid*, *ira deorum* 'is not a developed explanatory motif' and clearly points to Homer.[26] Here, too, it appears that a typical Homeric attribution does not go far enough and ignores an essential aspect of the events. By neglecting fate in his assessment of the possible forces involved, Turnus exemplifies the *nescia mens hominum fati* (10, 501). The possibility considered by Turnus—namely, that perhaps only *virtus* and *gloria* are at play, without divine influence—echoes the misjudgment of Pallas. Once again, the lack of insight into the *fata* ensures they choose a particular path: Turnus engages in the fight against Aeneas because he sees at least a chance of

[26] Cf. Horsfall (2003: ad V. 443).

victory.[27] Turnus, alongside Aeneas, is one of the few characters in the *Aeneid* who attempts to explain misfortune frequently enough for us to approach the two opening questions of this paper through his attributions: Does Vergil employ a particular, consistent attributional style[28] to characterize his figures?; and aside from Aeneas, do other *proficientes* learn to better understand the *fata*? The six passages in which Turnus explains misfortune show congruity: In four cases, he attributes the cause to Jupiter or the gods in general (9, 128–130; 10, 668–669; 12, 646–647; 12, 894–895), consistent with the *ira deorum* considered in his response to Drances (11, 444). This perspective does not change even at the end of the work when he retorts to the advancing Aeneas: *non me tua fervida terrent / dicta, ferox; di me terrent et Iuppiter hostis* (12, 894–895). Here, too, there is a reference to Homer, whose Hector rightly complains of being deceived by Athena and of the absence of support from the other gods when he faces Achilles alone (*Il*. 22, 297–305).[29] In Vergil, however, this attribution is mistaken:[30] Jupiter, as the administrator of fate, has no enemies; the *fata* demand Turnus' death because he opposes their goal. The view that Turnus knowingly defies the *fata* cannot be maintained. Turnus remains, until the end, *nescius fati*.[31]

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[27] I thus follow the possibilities for the exercise of free will in the *Aeneid*, as noted, for example, by Binder (2019: 169sq.).

[28] In social psychology, the term attributional style refers to the 'tendency to offer similar sorts of explanations for different events' Buchanan–Seligman (1995: 1).

[29] See Tarrant (2012: ad V. 894–895).

[30] Surprisingly, these verses have often been read as a tragically late but accurate realization on the part of Turnus: see Duckworth (1956: 361), Wilson (1979: 371), von Albrecht (2006: 180).

[31] As mentioned in n. 24, there have been various scholarly opinions on this issue; the difficulty lies in the not always clearly distinguished nuances between the different concepts of fate and knowledge: Turnus, like all of Latium, receives knowledge of the oracle's prophecy from Latinus (7, 81–106). However, these prophecies cannot simply be equated with the complex *fata* and their variable *viae*. Moreover, if one considers the difficult learning process of Aeneas in comparison, it can hardly be assumed that a single piece of information, not even directly addressed to Turnus, could suffice for an accurate understanding of fate.

Turnus, like Dido, draws much of his tragedy from the fact that his actions are influenced by the goddess Juno. The nuances of this interplay between individual will and divine influence will not be investigated here.[32] Of particular interest for our purposes is the manner in which the attributions of the goddesses Venus and Juno, who actively attempt to intervene in the course of the plot, relate to the *fata*. There are five attributions of misfortune by Venus, with the goddess attributing responsibility to other gods three times (1, 250–252; 1, 667–669; 2, 601–603). The accusations are primarily directed against Juno and the passive Jupiter. In one instance, Venus considers the Latins' attack on a purely human level (8, 385–386). Only once, in her concerned inquiry to Jupiter in the first book of the *Aeneid*, does she link the *fata* to the misfortune of her own people (1, 238–241):

> hoc equidem occasum Troiae tristisque ruinas
> solabar fatis contraria fata rependens;
> nunc eadem fortuna viros tot casibus actos
> insequitur.
>
> That promise, indeed, was my comfort for Troy's fall and sad
> overthrow, when I weighed fate against the fates opposed.
> Now, though tried by so many disasters, the same fortune dogs them.

Markus Schauer argued that, in addition to the 'great' *fatum*, there is an individual *fatum* for each person, comparable to a letter of safe conduct, which can be prematurely withdrawn by divine or human action, which

[32] In general, since Dodds (1970), a dual motivation or overdetermination of human actions has been assumed. For the issue in Vergil, see Duckworth (1956: 358), Feeney (1991: 175sq.).

is why, for example, Dido dies *nec fato merita* (4, 696).[33] This concept of fate, which closely resembles the fluctuating *fortuna* mentioned in 1, 241, could be used to understand Venus' statement as reflecting the contrasting turns in the individual fates of the Aeneads. However, I believe her use of the concept of *fatum* represents a misunderstanding on the part of the goddess, through which she, too, is introduced as *nescia fati*. The fact that Venus' relationship to the plans of fate differs from Jupiter's is evident in the fact that she has to ask him for information. Moreover, her attribution suggests the idea of fragmented, puzzle-like pieces of the *fata* that can be weighed against each other. The notion that the *fata* leading to the fall of Troy might differ from those aimed at the settlement of the Trojan refugees in Latium fundamentally contradicts Vergil's teleological adaptation of the Aeneas myth. The happy ending for the Aeneads would then merely be a form of compensation for the 'old' *fata* and the fall of Troy. An intriguing comparison can again be made with the *Iliad*, where Thetis, the mother of the central hero, appeals to the highest god and, according to the rules of reciprocity, demands something in return for her son's offense: the temporary superiority of the Trojan opponents.[34] Again, Vergil provides his readers with the necessary background knowledge to question the attributions made by his characters, relying on their literary awareness. However, this questioning is left to the reader: at no point is the nature of the *fata* discussed so explicitly that a character or the narrator would explicitly reject a character's attribution.

The general portrayal of Juno as an emotional goddess driven by *ira* and *odium* is consistent with the finding that she rarely offers explanations, which require a certain degree of rationality, for the events that take place against her will. Instead, she is characterized by emotional

[33] Schauer (2007: 114).
[34] *Il*. 1, 503–510. See Graziosi–Haubold (2005: 100) for further discussion. For Homer's 'reciprocal ethics' in general, cf. Gill (2011).

outbursts, such as in 7, 286–322, where she lists her actions and complains about their ineffectiveness. In her opening remarks, Juno speaks of the *fata*, using the term *contraria fata* in a manner similar to Venus, but not referring to the fluctuating fate of the same group of people. Instead, she refers to the opposing *fata* of the Aeneads and the Latins (*heu stirpem invisam et fatis contraria nostris / fata Phrygum*, 7, 293–294).[35] This passage aligns with Venus' mistaken attribution. Here, too, the Homeric concept of reciprocity is evoked: Juno asserts her claims based on her position and is outraged that these are not being fulfilled. She recognizes the actions she can take (*at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus, / at licet amborum populos exscindere regum*, 7, 315–316) but fails to see that her actions will ultimately lead to the death of her favored Turnus. As with Pallas and Turnus himself, Juno shows a misjudgment that leads to an undesirable outcome as a result of the conflict with the *fata*. Finally, Juno must admit to Turnus' sister Juturna that her influence has been exhausted (12, 147–150):

> qua visa est Fortuna pati Parcaeque sinebant
> cedere res Latio, Turnum et tua moenia texi;
> nunc iuvenem imparibus video concurrere fatis,
> Parcarumque dies et vis inimica propinquat.
>
> Where Fortune seemed to permit, and the Fates suffered Latium's state to prosper, I shielded Turnus and your city. Now I see the prince confront unequal destiny; the day of doom, and the enemy's stroke, draws nigh.

[35] Here too, the *contraria fata* reveal a peculiar conception of fate: Heinze (⁸1995: 293, n. 3) correctly interpreted Juno's *fata nostra* as her own will. In this case, for her, the *fata Phrygum* would simply be the will of Jupiter, rendering the entire teleological structure of the *Aeneid* meaningless.

The combination of the concepts of *Fortuna*, the *Parcae*, and *fata* is generally unproblematic for evaluating the attribution. However, Juno explicitly admits that only now does she perceive the form the *fata* will take for Turnus (*nunc* [...] *video*, 12, 149), even though it was clear to her in her angry speech in Book 7 that Aeneas' ultimate success was inevitable. In legal terms, this inconsistency might be described as negligence. Her realization comes late and is further mitigated by the fact that she immediately urges Juturna to do whatever she can for her brother (12, 157–159). Although Juno sees no hope, she is compelled to act. Her final abandonment of her anger (*adnuit his Iuno et mentem laetata retorsit*, 12, 841) is not the result of insight but occurs when she is assured of the preservation of the Latin name, and thus the quid pro quo pattern has been satisfied (12, 830–840).

3. Conclusion

In his *Aeneid*, Vergil places significantly more emphasis on illustrating the challenges faced by humans and gods in attaining a proper understanding of fate than on explaining the true nature of the *fata*. Statements made by characters regarding fate should not always be interpreted as objective definitions of the concept; rather, they should be considered subjective assessments that often fall short of the 'truth'.[36] The causal attributions analyzed here serve to characterize the figures, some of whom develop distinct attributional styles. For most characters, either no learning process can be observed (Turnus) or progress is difficult,

[36] Some interpretations support this result, for example, the emphasis on the subjective narrative perspective of Aeneas in *Aen.* 2 by Erler (2012: 133–136), who points out that Servius had already argued with references to knowledge gaps of characters. In contrast, scholars such as Pötscher (1977: 63) referring to our Venus attribution in 1,238–241, or Feeney (1992: 145), use subjective character statements to support their claim of a strong influence of Jupiter on the shaping of the *fata*.

relying on the support of advisors or Jupiter himself and only occurring after significant setbacks (e.g., Aeneas, Juno).[37] In their causal explanations, the many *nescii fati* often resort to forces perceived as more obvious: humans, gods, *fortuna*, etc. In the rarer instances where attributions are made to the *fata*, the underlying concepts can often be traced to older epic traditions (e.g., the Homeric μοῖρα) or interpretations that fail to align with Jupiter's *fata*. The proem and Jupiter's prophecy in the first book provide the reader with basic knowledge of the *Aeneid*'s concept of fate. Drawing on this knowledge and their literary background, readers can recognize certain subjective attributions as mistaken.

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[37] A concept familiar from Herodotus and Greek tragedy: Cf. for Herodotus Shapiro (1994), for the Aeschylean *pathei mathos* (*Ag.* 177) Sommerstein (2010: 178–188). On the relationship between suffering and the fulfillment of fate in the *Aeneid*, cf. Heil (2001: 257).

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Riot Control Continuity Between the Roman Republic and the Early Roman Empire

This article deals with the similarities in riot control between the Roman Republic and the early Roman Empire. It considers the different ways of maintaining order that can be found in the sources for both periods. Specifically, it focuses on the levels of intervention (armed and unarmed) identifiable in each period and how they escalated. Another point is the attempt to maintain order by non-violent means, specifically through authority (official and imperial). An important point is the question of what role the permanent policing force played in maintaining order in the city of Rome (since the rule of Augustus), especially in the context of the transition between the Republic and the Principate. The article also notes the characteristics associated with the maintenance of order during both periods, as well as the circumstances under which the authorities decided to intervene and the methods they used. Finally, the article compares both periods and concludes what changed. It begins with general observations describing the levels of intervention, then moves on to specific examples.

Keywords: riot control, Roman Republic, Roman Empire, Augustus, policing forces

Events at the turn of the century during the reign of the emperor Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD) marked a period of notable changes in the maintenance of order in the city of Rome, where military or paramilitary corps were established to provide various levels of protection. These new units known as *cohortes praetoriae*, *cohortes urbanae* or *cohortes vig-*

iliae prevented the outbreak of riots, intervened against those that had already started and protected the emperor and his family.[1]

Does the presence of the military corps also mean a clear divide between the Republic and the Empire in terms of maintaining order? Does it mean that with Augustus a thick line was drawn under the existing republican procedures? Or, did they continue, albeit with new tools that made it more convenient and efficient to perform some familiar procedures?

There is little mention of the suppression of riots in Rome during the Republic. It is not clear from the surviving accounts of such events whether there were established responses to disorder, or the responses were more or less improvised. Both are possible. There are certain repeating patterns in the accounts of the Republic according to which the suppression of riots unfolded. We could divide these levels as follows: The first level could be classified as the option of not reacting at all to emerging disturbances. There may have been different reasons for this. For example, the authorities may not have been aware of the problems at all, especially if they took place in more remote parts of the city. Alternatively, the authorities were aware of the disturbances but did not show any interest in suppressing them. The impulse to resolve the conflict could have been a complaint by respected and influential residents of the city, or the fact that the riots had intensified and, according to the authorities, had begun to threaten not only a narrow, non-preferred group of residents, but the city, or the authorities and the republic itself. In such a situation the second level, which was still very mild, comes into play. An official was dispatched to the scene of the disturbance. At first it was usually a minor official, such as an aedile or a quaestor. Assuming this first attempt failed, the lower officials were replaced by

[1] Terry–Hartigan (1982: 296; 300); Ricci (2011: 486); Bush (2007: 315–341); Campbell (1984: 110–116); Africa (1971: 8–9); Favro (1992: 79–82).

higher ones, as a praetor or a consul. Only at this point, if the situation was not resolved by the presence of the magistrates, would brute force come into play. This, like the magistrates, could be divided into two levels. In the first case less forceful units were used. These were probably a combination of state slaves and slaves and clients of the higher officials, who, if the disturbance had gone this far, would probably have been the ones to carry out the intervention. At this stage of conflict resolution, the army was not yet involved. The army would only come into play when this first armed force failed.[2] This could, of course, have happened if there was an already organised and armed group on the other side, but it was an extreme and serious intervention that could potentially have counterproductive consequences.

I have proposed five levels of policing that will make it easier to describe some of the events below. These, in turn, lead to the conclusion that the Roman authorities were responding to a particular situation. Their intervention would have depended on how the disturbances were developing, which would mean that they had to assess the situation first and only then decide which of the mentioned levels to choose. Especially in the case of the fourth and fifth levels, i.e. armed intervention, this would pose a problem, primarily one of effectiveness. However, such a conclusion cannot be affirmed with certainty, even though it may be apparent from some of the examples.

Assuming that they were really responding to a specific problem, an armed force would be assembled when the plunderers had already formed. Intervention would therefore be slow. By the time the policing force had armed and organized, the other side could have carried out a strike or become even more organized to resist the repressive forces. In the case of the army the situation was made more difficult by the sacred

[2] Echols (1958: 378); Nippel (1984: 25); Nippel (1995: 78); Lintott (1968: 91).

border around the city, the *Pomerium*.[3] Moreover, in the Republican period, apart from the period of crisis in the first century BC, the troops were not near Rome. This would have meant a further delay between the identification of the situation and adequate intervention. Thus, the impracticality may have been not only in time but also in adequacy. So, there is also the question of whether this was an improvised response to the unfolding situation, where they made decisions, one might say intuitively, as they thought right and adequate for the problem at hand, or whether they had somehow established procedures that they practiced.

The historian Livy offers us one complicated example from 460 BC.[4] In a passage he describes a situation where Rome is at war with the Volscians and Aequi and is troubled by social problems. De facto, as soon as the war was over the strife in the city over the settlement of rights between patricians and plebeians began. As this conflict begins to escalate and the sides already seem to be coming to a resolution, new (old) conflict with the Aequi and the Volscians appears, and at that point the domestic disputes must go aside. But neither the tribunes of the people nor the people were happy with their real problems being pushed aside, which is why it was common for the tribunes of the people to sabotage military recruitment. To such a mood another problem is added when the exiles and slaves numbering about 2500 organized by the leadership of Appius Herdonius of Sabine occupy the Capitoline fortress. There is danger from outside and at the same time the heart of the city is occupied. The people have begun to activate, to shout the alarm, and to call to arms. However, the reaction of the consuls was not swift. They were uncertain. They were unable to decide which option was worse for them and from which any greater danger might arise, whether to arm the people and take the Capitol, or not to arm the people and risk

[3] Nippel (1984: 20); Aldrete (2013: 426).
[4] Liv. 3, 15.

disaster from this side. They did not want to arm a people who had rebellious tendencies right in the middle of the city. Their decision was also delayed by the fact that they were not entirely sure what the threat actually was. They needed to find out exactly who the enemy was, what kind of people they were, and roughly how many of them there were. As one of the measures, guards were stationed at appropriate places around the city, eventually the consuls also agreed to arm them, but only partially. The arming was meant to be done to such an extent that the defences would be sufficient for all eventualities.

It is important to mention that Livy's reconstruction of Early Rome is complicated, because it's a distant history with few sources. Besides this fact Livy used history as an argument for contemporary problems and for established topics.[5] In this case the problem was not only the indecision of the authorities, but also the indecision of the people, because they were unwilling to submit to authority, even though they faced a double danger. Only a religious appeal, specifically the loyalty to place and *pietas*,[6] could force them to act. To me, the way Livy describes the process of solving the problem is more important than how accurate the description of the event is. He probably depicts a method that he knows and may have thought had been used before. Livy describes the phenomenon outlined above of levelled modes of riot control where authorities responded to a particular problem. The consuls needed to assess the whole situation, determine the form of the danger, and from this derive an appropriate response. In this case, their decision was paralyzed by distrust of the people. In terms of arming, they resorted to a half-hearted solution where the people were armed only to the extent that the consuls deemed sufficient to deal with the incoming threat while not becoming a threat themselves.

[5] More about Livy's history in Miles (1995); Neel (2015).
[6] Miles (1995: 127).

The example of the Bacchanalia in 186 BC[7] illustrates these graduated methods much more obviously. The cause of the intervention were the followers of foreign cults who gathered in the forum and other places. We do not know what exactly the reason for the intervention itself was. So, we do not even know if the first level of ignoring the problem applies to this example. All we know is that minor magistrates were sent in. Presumably they were successful, because we have no mention of the involvement of senior magistrates nor of the presence of the armed forces. Another example is from the Second Punic War (218–201 BC)[8] where, as in the previous case, followers of foreign cults were involved. This time we can conclude that the authorities ignored the situation at first because they only started to act when prominent citizens complained about the activities of these people. The procedure was tabular. First the lower magistrates were sent in, and this time they failed. The praetor was sent next and at this point the description of the situation ends. Apparently, he was successful as no further problems or involvement of the repressive forces is mentioned.

There is one more aspect of the relationship between the Republic and the Empire that needs to be mentioned, which is already evident in the suggestion of the various levels. The opposition between authority and brute force.[9] According to the levels that I have proposed, based on the examples from the sources it is logically evident that authority should take priority and that intervention by force, i.e. by means of the „police" forces was only the second option. This may have to do not only with the reason that intervention by authority is, at first sight, easier, but also with the fact that there was a certain fear and wariness in Rome of such a way of maintaining, or re-establishing order. On the

[7] Liv. 39, 14, 9–10.
[8] Liv. 25, 1, 7–11.
[9] Also Nippel (1984: 24).

one hand, there was the fear of a military coup, that the person in charge of conflict resolution would take advantage of this armed force and try to seize power for himself alone and such intervention in the republic reflected a serious disruption of the norms of republican governance, as I mentioned above. Next, the fear of a too harsh reaction played a role. Even though military intervention had to take place, there was a tendency to ensure that it was not unnecessarily too bloody.[10]

One indication of such a tendency might be the events that show us the separation of the various punishments. For example, in the above-mentioned Bacchanalia of 186 BC[11] we have the death penalty and imprisonment distinguished from each other. Livy gives a similar example for the Second Punic War, in which he distinguishes four different forms of punishment according to severity.[12] Another indication is the separation not only of punishments according to severity, but also of the participants in the riot itself. It is in the mentioned Bacchanalia of 186 BC that we can observe this situation, when the *curule ediles* were given the task of capturing all the priests of a foreign cult.[13] We have a similar case in 43 BC, when Rome was gripped by widespread unrest after Caesar's death. One of the instigators was a man called Amatius, who claimed to be a relative of Caesar, which made it easier for him to gain sympathisers and organise riots. M. Antony tried to solve the problem by capturing Amatius and having him executed without trial.[14] This attempt was unsuccessful. Although he attempted to contain the riots in a more moderate way, separating the initiator from the whole group in the hope that without this impulse the rest would disperse on their own, the form of immediate execution without trial proved too vi-

[10] More in Kelly (2007: 150–176).
[11] Liv. 39, 18, 3-4.
[12] Execution; imprisonment; imprisonment in Latin settlements; slavery; Liv. 26, 16, 6.
[13] Liv. 39, 14, 9–10.
[14] App. *BCiv*. 3, 2-3.

olent and counterproductive. Ultimately, the whole situation had to be resolved by the army under P. Cornelius Dolabella anyway.[15]

In general, the events following Caesar's death[16] offer a broad variety of attempts to re-establish order and calm the situation. There are also attempts to suppress the turmoil through their presence[17] i.e., authority. Another attempt was to bribe at least some of the angry mob.[18] And the above-mentioned method through military intervention also occurred repeatedly.[19]

An interesting example from the Republic is the situation in Rome after the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC. Riots broke out in the city, caused by Dollabella, who populistically proposed laws concerning debts. As a result, a larger organised group fortified the Forum. M. Antonius tried to resolve the situation with the help of the army. However, this attempt was unsuccessful. It was only after Caesar's arrival that things calmed down. Caesar did not react violently. According to the sources, the riots were suppressed only by his presence, and in the end, he did not even punish anyone.[20] Which also gives us a clue as to which is the right way to keep order. M. Antony failed in his attempt to quell the riots by force. Caesar, on the other hand, succeeded only through his authority. This case is complicated by the fact that two groups were rioting at the same time. First, there were the previously mentioned people outraged over Dollabella's law, and then there were the soldiers, which posed a much more serious problem. According to Appian, they had gathered in the Campus Martius, and no one dared to confront them. The conflict with the soldiers was also resolved by Caesar's presence and specific prom-

[15] Cic. *Att*. 14, 15, 1; *Fam*. 12, 1, 1.
[16] 15. 3. 44. BC.
[17] App. *BCiv*. 2, 126; 2, 147; Dio. Cass. 44, 22, 1–2.
[18] App. *BCiv*. 2, 120–121.
[19] App. *BCiv*. 2, 118; 125; 126; Dio. Cass. 44, 22, 2.
[20] Cass. Dio. 42, 33, 1–3; App. *BCiv*. 2, 92.

ises. The soldiers were upset that after the battle of Pharsalus and in connection with the campaign in Africa they had received only vague promises. These Caesar modified and made more specific. However, in describing this event Dio and Appian agree that Caesar could greatly defuse unrest just by showing up.[21]

A similarly interesting example can be found in the earlier history of the Roman Republic. Specifically, Livy[22] describes a situation in 495 BC when Rome was threatened by war with the Volsci. At the same time social problems emerged, the main cause of which was debt. They became the serfs of their creditors for not paying their debts. Many of them complained about risking their lives in wars only to be in a worse state at home than in war. One impoverished veteran managed to stir up the crowd with his moving, unjust story. The riots eventually spread to other parts of the city. People complained of their injustice and refused to be conscripted into military service. The conflict got to a stage where the senators were not considered untouchable and some of them were threatened by this angry mob. In response, the consuls appeared and stood before the crowd. So, there is an example of the consuls trying to solve the problem by their presence, that is by standing in front of the crowd and talking to them. They have put their authority into it. The list of possibilities of repression continues with the proposal of C. Appius. In his opinion, the disobedient crowd should be frightened away. He expected that it would be enough to have only two rioters arrested by the lictors and the rest would disperse. An idea thus emerges which is explicitly expressed in Herodian, who attributes it to Maximinus Thrax.[23] The violent crowd is courageous until it sees that state action will be taken against it. In this case, the situation gradually es-

[21] App. *BCiv*. 2, 92; Cass. Dio. 42, 30.
[22] Liv. 2, 23.
[23] Herod. 7, 8, 6.

calates. The mob becomes comfortable with the passivity of the senators and the obvious vulnerability that occurs once the thin layer of authority is peeled away. Moreover, the suggestion of intimidation here is somewhat unsurprisingly assigned to Appius, who, along with his relatives, regularly comes across to Livy as an enemy of the people and their strict, stern oppressor. Among the proposals, intervention by the armed forces was not mentioned. Any action approaching this referred only to lictors and intimidation.

Among the authors dealing with the issue of security in Rome, the absence of a regular police force is most often mentioned, which was to be solved by Augustus' reform,[24] when urban cohorts, praetorian cohorts and cohorts of vigils were established. These military corps were located either in the city itself or in its vicinity, which allowed for adequate and rapid intervention even in the event of serious threats.[25] It is suggested that these visible and certainly serious steps marked a dramatic change in the way riots were suppressed. However, can we really say that the procedure and the way in which the riots were suppressed were different from that of the Republic? According to the sources, it seems that the republican levels of policing persisted. We have examples that show similar riots and their suppression. These examples relate to the city of Rome itself, to other cities in Italy, and to the provinces.

An interesting example is the theatre riots during Tiberius' reign.[26] We have three examples of this in the historian Tacitus.[27] He offers us an illustrative and varied demonstration of how one might intervene in such problems. The first example of a riot in the theatre is suppressed

[24] About reform and policing forces: Africa (1971: 8–9); Favro (1992: 79–82); Campbell (1984: 110–116); Spiedel (1994); Mommsen (1879); Ricci (2011: 486); Terry–Hartigan (1982: 296–300); Knapp (2011: 36); Aldrete (2004: 103); Tatum (2020: 400); Lintott (1968: 89); Nippel (1984: 20); Aldrete (2013: 426).
[25] More about locations: Bush (2007); Reynolds (1923); Ricci (2011).
[26] He ruled during the years 14–37 AD.
[27] Also, Cass. Dio. 57, 14, 9–10.

by military force.[28] The other two problems are solved by senatorial authority. We don't know exactly how they did it, all we know is that they didn't have to use violence to restore order.[29] Tacitus directly mentions that senatorial authority had to be used in one of the interventions.[30] The third example, moreover, offers us the first level outlined, in which there was no response to the emerging unrest until the praetors began to raise complaints about the situation.[31] At the same time, we can observe here, in the non-violent examples, an attempt at moderate punishment through the penalization of specific offenders.[32] Evidence of actors being sent into exile is found not only in Tacitus, but also in Dio Cassius[33] and Suetonius.[34]

A complement to the theatrical riots is the example of Nero's reign (54-68 AD).[35] This begins with the fact that the security situation in the city of Rome had improved, leading Nero to remove the cohort that was keeping guard at the theatre. Thereafter, the violence in the theatre intensified again, so the soldiers were brought back.[36] However, Nero did not react immediately to the growing problems, the soldiers did not intervene at first, and the riots continued to develop without any response from the authorities. It was only under the fear that the situation might escalate into more serious and dangerous conflicts that the actors were expelled from Italy and the soldiers again kept watch during theatre performances. Tacitus describes this decision as a last resort. There was nothing to do but re-deploy the soldiers to the theatres.[37] We can

[28] Tac. *Ann.* 1, 77.
[29] Tac. *Ann*. 4, 14; 6, 13.
[30] Tac. *Ann*. 4, 14.
[31] Tac. *Ann*. 6, 13.
[32] Tac. *Ann*. 4, 14.
[33] Cass. Dio. 57, 21, 3.
[34] Suet. *Tib*. 37.
[35] Tac. *Ann*. 13, 24.
[36] Tac. *Ann*. 13, 25.
[37] *Ibid.*

thus observe a continuing caution in the use of armed force in the suppression of riots. On the contrary, the preference for resolution through authority continues.

An example from 58 AD during the reign of Nero concerns the riots in the city of Puteoli. The background to these riots is described as violent. Culprits threw stones and threatened arson. A very serious situation was presented which required intervention to prevent further fighting and violence. The Scriboni brothers were called in to do this, and the praetorians were put at their disposal for the task. According to the source, the riots were suppressed relatively peacefully. The looters became fearful of the approaching army and ceased their rioting. The Scriboni had only the main participants executed, the rest of the rioters were spared.[38] The year 69 AD and the riots in Campania offer a similar example. This time Lucilius Bassus was charged with suppressing them using light cavalry. Again, the situation was calmed by the mere presence of the army. In the end, many settlements were not even punished.[39]

The riots between Nuceria and Pompeii over the gladiatorial games in 59 AD also date from the reign of Nero. Tacitus again describes the clash between the two communities as violent.[40] There was to be a terrible slaughter. The judicial investigation went from the emperor to the senate and to the consuls. Pompeii was forbidden to hold such events for ten years, illegally formed societies were disbanded, and Livineius and the other culprits were punished with banishment. If we take into account that Tacitus is describing the fight between the communities that resulted in numerous injuries and deaths, the punishment was very mild. Only one side was punished, the Pompeians (at least that is the implication) were found guilty. There were no death sentences or other

[38] Tac. *Ann*. 13, 48.
[39] Tac. *Hist.* 4, 3.
[40] Tac. *Ann*. 14, 17.

corporal punishment. The guilty parties were sent into exile, and the guilty city was banned from similar activities for ten years.

For the situation in the city of Rome, Nero's reign offers us, in addition to the theatrical riots, the example of the death of the city's prefect Pedanius Secundus, who was murdered by his slave in 61 AD.[41] From this example, we might see the controversy of cruel punishment, that an excessively violent response to crime can be counterproductive. There was a murder of a city prefect, a high-ranking official. So, it is appropriate to execute the murderer, who was his own slave. At the same time, the idea of exemplary punishment was obvious, i.e. not only executing the murderer but all the other slaves who were part of the prefect's household. This was, of course, to discourage any potential future assassins from having any intention of killing their masters, especially those of prominent and important citizens. It should be noted that, according to Tacitus, this was supposed to be an old custom that had not been invented at this time.[42] Thus, it was something well-established that had been applied for years to protect the dignity of murdered men and to control slaves through fear. However, on the part of the people, the move was considered unnecessarily cruel. Even the Senate was not united on this point, and they argued among themselves whether they should ease this severe regulation. In the end, the prevailing opinion was that all slaves should be executed. The people expressed their disapproval quite emphatically and aroused the fears of the authorities of more violent riots. Indeed, they were to surround the Senate and threaten them with stones and torches. The execution itself was complicated by the blocking of the angry crowd. The emperor reacted by rebuking the people by decree, and then guards were posted all along the road by

[41] Tac. *Ann*. 14, 42.
[42] *Ibid.*

which the prisoners were led to execution.[43] One of the senators, Cingonius Varro, even suggested that the freedmen of the dead man should also be punished by being sent into exile outside Italy. However, this proposal was rejected by the emperor, saying that there was no need to make the old practice worse by cruelty.[44]

So, this example does not tell the story that the people's empathy for the convicts was able to make the authorities moderate their decision, rather it depicts the dislike and reaction that such a harsh sentence can provoke in the people. No fight, no massacre is mentioned in connection with this event. The soldiers were apparently acting purely as a precautionary force; in case any clash should occur. Of course, the presence of the military corps can be seen as a depiction of oppression, especially in a situation where they were guarding an execution that the people considered unjust. So, in that case we can see both, the soldiers deployed as the threat of military force and as manifestation of the emperor's authority.[45] However, at the same time we can see the moderate side of the riot police. The soldiers were present as, apparently successful, deterrents. They committed no massacre, or at least no such thing is mentioned by Tacitus. So, the military presence here did not necessarily mean more violence. When the people start threatening, i.e., throwing stones, arson attacks, and blocking the way to the execution ground, the emperor did not send soldiers to attack them and push them away. He admonished the disobedient people by decree and sent soldiers to ensure the execution took place. Moreover, he did not allow this law to be further tightened. This paragraph could hardly be seen as a pure representation of cruelty and despotism. It is decided based on an old, well-established law.

[43] Tac. *Ann*. 14, 45.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] This is similar to the role that the lictors had. However, the difference is that the urban soldiers, in addition to representing the imperial authority, had a much greater power to suppress riots.

Moreover, there had been a debate in the Senate about whether it should be modified, because this procedure was simply cruel and innocent people would die because of it. Even though in the end the majority decided not to change it, it was not tightened up, and the outraged crowd was not suppressed with violence, but with decree and prevention.

Among the provinces we can mention the rebel legions during the reign of Tiberius. The situation was again calmed by the presence of an authoritative person, namely the legate Blaesus.[46] Another example of rebellious soldiers during Tiberius' reign was the Pannonian legions.[47] This time Tiberius sent his son Drusus the Younger and the praetorian prefect Sejanus. Again, they tried to resolve the situation through authority. Drusus came before the legionaries and read Tiberius' letter.[48] Drusus and Sejanus did not have a specific order; their decision was to be guided by the circumstances that arose and by the course of events. Finally, they only punished the main participants.[49] It is necessary to mention that this example is different, because it's not a case of civilian disorder but the rebellion of the soldiers. I just wanted to use this example to show the *modus operandi* is still the same. A similar example is offered by Hadrian's reign (117-138 AD), when the emperor managed to calm the riots in Alexandria by letter.[50]

Another piece of information that fits into Hadrian's dignity is the gladiatorial games, during which the audience began to loudly demand something. However, the emperor did not oblige and instructed the announcer to silence the crowd. All the announcer had to do was raise his hand for the people to quiet down.[51] This is similar to the case when

[46] Tac. *Ann*. 1, 19–21.
[47] Tac. *Ann*. 1, 24.
[48] Tac. *Ann.* 1, 25.
[49] Tac. *Ann*. 1, 30.
[50] Cass. Dio. 69, 8, 1.
[51] Cass. Dio. 69, 6.

Hadrian managed to calm the riots in Alexandria with a letter. In the final analysis it is not so important here whether it actually happened. What is important is this idea of an ideal emperor, who is moderate and can rule an empire primarily by his authority, by his dignity rather than by force. This is also reflected in the maintenance of order. Such an emperor did not need to suppress a mob with violence. A simple gesture, an argument, or perhaps a simple presence is all he needed. Both the calming of the situation, whether at the gladiatorial games or in Alexandria, were achieved through authority. In Alexandria it was through a letter and during the gladiatorial games through a herald. Moreover, he did not have to pronounce any threat, he only had to raise his hand. This is a very flattering portrayal of imperial dignity, and it is no coincidence that these attributes and events are associated with Hadrian, who is traditionally portrayed as a good example of an emperor. One cannot expect with the same certainty that such riot control methods would also be attributed to, for example, Caligula, Nero or Domitian.[52]

A similar example of a moderate emperor is Marcus Aurelius dealing with the traitors connected to Avidius Cassius' conspiracy. In this case it is an example of clemency in punishing conspirators.[53] Marcus Aurelius' actions again offer an almost archetypal contrast between him and the negatively rated emperors who also had to deal with conspiracies, or at least suspicions of them. While in their bad example the conspiracy resulted in a series of executions, confiscation of property, other persecutions or paranoia,[54] Marcus Aurelius was remarkably non-violent. He ought to have interceded to ensure that Cassius' followers were not executed. He did not kill, imprison or put under surveillance the senators, who were supposed to be associated with Cassius. There were

[52] Kelly (2007: 163).
[53] Cass. Dio. 72, 28–30.
[54] For example, Claudius or Nero.

some executions, but not many, and they were of people who had been proven to have actually committed crimes. Cassius Dio thus offers us two ideal responses to the riots from two excellently rated emperors. These show us clearly the emphasis on avoiding excessive violence as long as possible. And once there is no other option, let it be limited to those who are demonstrably guilty.

I will again recall the way order is maintained, as offered by Herodianus in describing the reign of Maximinus Thrax. In it he states that the bravery of the people is limited to shouting, however, as soon as they see the soldiers, they begin to flee.[55] This adds to the idea that the presence of soldiers does not necessarily mean the constant suppression of unrest by force. Many times, their physical presence, or awareness of their presence, could have been enough. The expectation that a riotous crowd would calm down once it saw soldiers may have aided the idea of ideally non-violent policing. They could only create psychological pressure.

Regular police units allowed faster and easier riot control. Well-armed and trained soldiers were on hand. However, a military presence did not mean that soldiers were used at every opportunity, and when military intervention did occur, it was mentioned that it was the last possible option, and the emphasis was placed on the gentlest course possible. Augustus' reform has solved the problem with effectiveness and the norms of republican government. Nevertheless, the fear of military coup and the fear maintaining order through violence has prevailed. We can still find republican levels of policing. The authorities preferred to get the crowd to obey by their presence or by letter in the republic and in the principate. In both periods the authorities hoped that the problem would go away on its own and acted on the complaints of prominent citizens. They hoped that the policing force would intimidate the looters so that violence would not be necessary. For both the republican and

[55] Herod. 7, 8, 6.

principate periods there are regular examples where the authority was preferred to the use of repressive forces. We can connect the examples of the official and imperial authority, e.g. the cases of Caesar and Hadrian, which are very similar. There are also similarities between the city of Rome and the provinces or the rest of the Italy in supressing the riots. Outside Rome, the emperor or the authorities tried to suppress the riots peacefully without violence and even though the military intervention occurred, there was again the tendency to ensure the punishment wasn't unnecessarily bloody and cruel.

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Hispania and its Economy with Special Regard to the Kalendarium Vegetianum

The Iberian Peninsula was considered an extremely important territory for the Roman Empire in every aspect; it was a significant strategic area in terms of both natural resources and defence. By the 2nd century BC, the provinces of Hispania Citerior and Hispania Ulterior were organised in a part of the Iberian Peninsula, where they were stationed primarily for military purposes. Subsequently, the economic potential of the area was exploited. During the Augustan period, the administrative system was transformed by several reforms. The new system took into account the experiences of the past two centuries, and when establishing new territorial units, an important aspect was how to transform from a military, economic, and/or social system into a new administrative one. This paper seeks to answer the question of how the establishment of the renewed administration was related to the previous political situation, and I will examine the impact of all this on the economic exploitation of the area. In the latter case, I pay special attention to the impact of Hispania's two main economic sectors, mining and trade, on the monetary economy of the region and the empire. When analysing the empire's revenues, it is inevitable to examine the types of taxes and their amounts, as well as the analysis of local and long-distance economic relations, such as the examination of trading associations and monetary institutions.

Keywords: Hispania, Roman administration, mining, trade, taxation

To understand the economy of the Roman Empire and Hispania's economic systems, it is also worth examining its political systems. Until 27 BC, the Roman Republic was based on political elements such as the magistracy system and various leadership positions. This includ-

ed consul, praetor, quaestor etc. Although positions could be obtained through elections, due to the free structure of the political system, it is encoded in the system that certain social groups and people acquire excessive power over others through manipulation.[1] This was no different from the empire's approach. As political power was fundamentally determined by wealth and family background, individuals who were not exceptionally skilled in politics seized power. With the rise of Augustus, the political system changed, leading to greater economic stability.[2] Although the empire as a new institution did not mean that people with the right skills exercised power, it could minimise political rivalry and reduce social tension. This initially resulted in fewer rebellions and periods of civil war, which allowed a stable economic mechanism to be developed in the first two centuries.[3]

The economy of the Roman Empire was not directed from above; trade was determined by free competition, which encouraged individual provinces to exploit their natural resources and develop product-specific export policies.[4] However, this free competition sometimes became too one-sided, leading to imperial interventions.[5] A good example is the decree of Emperor Domitian, who suppressed the general dissatisfaction of Italian wine producers due to excessive Gallic wine imports by prescribing the size of vineyard estates that could be established in the province of Gaul.[6] More than 545 dated shipwrecks found on the Mediterranean coasts of present-day Italy, France, and Spain

[1] Maddison (2005: 11–13).
[2] Maddison (2005: 13–15).
[3] Strab. *Geo*. 17, 3 „Augustus autem, qui urbem a bello devictam in pacem redegit, et prosperitatem omni modo auxit, ita ut pecunia ex universis provinciis ad imperium effluxerit."
[4] There are several theories about the form of the Roman Empire's economy to his day, ranging from primitive economies to market economy schemes. See more: Polányi (1976); Finley (1973); Temin (2012); Andreau (2015).
[5] Temin (2012: 63–72).
[6] Opdebeeck (2005: 44).

were used to model maritime trade. Shipwrecks greatly help determine the extent of trade, what import-export products were found in a given area, and the era to which they can be dated.[7] When dating the wrecks, researchers determined that most ships sank between 200 BC and 200 AD, which could mean that maritime trade was the most intensive at this time.[8]

In 197 BC, Scipio created two provinces on the Iberian Peninsula: Hispania Ulterior in the south, with its centre in Corduba, and Hispania Citerior in the north, with its centre in Cartagena. In 183, Lusitania was conquered by the Romans.[9] Hispania became an economically significant province in the Roman Empire. Initially, Rome was interested in the Punic Wars, but after the victorious wars, it remained in the area for strategic reasons. Over time, the area's economic potential was discovered, primarily in mining, and the economy expanded to other significant sectors. James Vicens summarized the Roman conquest of Hispania in three phases: the military bases established for the early military expansion, which remained permanently in the region after the Punic Wars and the Lusitanian and Celto-Iberian Wars; Phase 2, the era of colonization, which he defined from Caesar to the early imperial period.[10] This was the period of the transformation of military bases into municipia, the establishment of a political and administrative system on the Italian model, and the integration of the territory into the empire, one of the most important events of which was recorded by Pliny. Pliny also wrote that the inhabitants of Hispania were provided with the ius Latii by Vespasian around 73.[11] Phase three, the third and final segment of the transformation of the whole peninsula into an actual and perma-

[7] Hopkins (1980: 105).
[8] Hopkins (1980: 106).
[9] Liv. *Auc.* 28, 1.1–9
[10] Vicens (2016: 58–64).
[11] Plin. *Nh* 3, 30; Illés (2016: 9–11).

nent province, can be dated to the imperial period, and the process took place during the reign of Vespasian.[12]

Rome's interest was in the extraction of essential raw materials – especially metals – which created the conditions for the founding of the city of Italica, which had a population of approximately 3,000 in the second century BC. The city was suitable for military control of the northern Lusitanian population and also played an administrative role, thus supervising the mines of Aznalcóllar.[13]

During Romanisation, Baetica also became an important trading centre, from which imported goods such as oil, wine, and garum were transported to all parts of the empire.[14] The lively trade between Rome and Hispania could be proven by an inscription found in Baetica by a fishmonger, which reads:

Neptuno Aug(usto) / sacrum / L(ucius) Iunius
Puteolanus / VIvir Augustalis / in municipio Suelitano / d(edit)
d(edicavit) primus
et perpetuus / omnibus honoribus quos / libertini gerere potuerunt
/ honoratus
epulo dato d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) d(onum) d(edit)[15]

Experts assume that Iunius Puteolanus was a freed slave who migrated from Puteoli to Baetica, taking advantage of his right to free movement. This assumption cannot be proven, but it is undoubtedly true that amphorae marked with his name were found in a praetorian camp in Rome, where garum associated with Hispania was kept. Therefore, it is

[12] Maddison (2007: 21–22).
[13] Andreotti (2018: 165).
[14] Peacock (1974: 232).
[15] CIL II 1944.

no coincidence that a text addressing Neptune has survived.[16] Puteolanus is also linked to the city by his trade relationship with Umbricius Scaurus, who had a business in Puteoli.[17] The sources also mention two Umbricius Scaurus, a father and son.[18] Since few sources are available, it is difficult to determine with whom Scaurus Puteolanus may have done business. This relationship is important because the Scaurus family had one of the most significant garum trades in Puteoli.[19] The younger Scaurus had not only economic but also political power, as he held the position of duovir in the city, which was the most important position of the city leaders.[20] It is an interesting coincidence that a freed slave who emigrated from the city of a successful family involved in the garum trade migrated to one of the largest fish sauce-producing regions of the empire and settled there. The sources connect him to this family. Unfortunately, this cannot be proven due to a lack of sources. However, it is an interesting assumption that Puteolanus and Scaurus knew each other before their move to Hispania.

Thanks to mining, a significant amount of precious metal flowed into Italy, which laid the foundation for the stability of the empire's monetary situation.[21] The Italian population played an important role in the mines, an excellent example of which is the Italian settlements like Sierra Morena at the end of the second century BC and the beginning of the first. The precious metal mines of Hispania greatly impacted the empire's economic situation, as evidenced by the fact that the precious

[16] Haley (1990: 73).
[17] Jones (2006: 226).
[18] Scaurus mentioned in a prestigious inscription of Pompeii: CIL 10.1024. A Vmbricio A F Men / Scavro / Ii Vir I D / Hvic Decvriones Locvm Monvm / Et Hs In Fvnere Et Statvam Eqvstr / In Foro Ponendam Censvervnt. / Scavrvs Pater Filio.
[19] Jones (2006: 226–228).
[20] Beard (2008: 188).
[21] Maddison (2007: 22).

metals extracted greatly influenced the economic presence of money.[22] We cannot know for sure how the mines were legally connected to the public administration system, and researchers have developed two theories for this; according to one, the publicans were given the right to mine as subcontractors, while according to the other theory, the mining rights may have been given to local companies. However, it is certain that the forced conscription imposed in the wake of the Marcomannic Wars of the second century caused the mines in Hispania and Dacia to close due to a labour shortage, resulting in a severe economic recession throughout the empire.[23] The labour shortage, as in the mines of Dacia, was solved in Hispania by using slaves.[24]

The extent of revenues from mines can only be guessed at in the absence of sources, making it difficult to determine the exact types of revenue. If we examine the economic life of the Roman provinces at the micro-level, economic actors such as businessmen, merchants, argentarii, or bankers are present. My main goal was to uncover evidence of their existence in Hispania. However, first, let me present the monetary situation of Hispania during the period under discussion with the help of the available sources. Since 171 AD, it has paid a crop tax, which amounted to 5% of the grain harvest, in addition to other contributions.[25] The price of grain in Hispania – as in the other provinces – fluctuated, and the praetor was interested in this because the higher the price of grain, the more money came into the treasury through taxation. I have found relatively little about banking and business activities; apart from the Kalendarium Vegetianum, there is no other evidence apart from two epigraphic sources. However, this region was one of the wealthiest areas in the empire. It is difficult to imagine that there were no participants in

[22] Andreotti (2018: 167).
[23] Duncan-Jones (2018: 41–72, 52).
[24] Parkin, Pomeroy (2007: 281–282).
[25] Hoyo (2007: 127–130).

the banking and business sectors. Two Tarraco inscriptions indicate that an argentarius/trapezita worked in the first century AD, but the subject and form of the activity are unknown. Sources that refer to money changers have been found in Saguntum, too.[26] According to Suetonius, Galba, the governor of Tarraconensis, cut off the hand of a dishonest nummularius and nailed it to the counter.[27]

We know that there was a wealthy Hispanian social class, but we know little about it.[28] The surviving obelisks, diadems, and jewellery undoubtedly testify to wealth, but no specific person can be linked to these artefacts. However, there are occasional records of objects, real estate, and other monetary donations given to the municipality. Some studies provide an interesting picture of the economic situation of Baetica within Hispania. In Hispania, there was a significant increase in per capita income between AD 25 and 170.[29] This economic growth can be directly linked to flourishing trade. By the end of this period, the living standards of the middle class, which constituted a significant minority of the population, increased significantly.[30]

Hispania was initially a grain-producing region, but over time, this escalated, and olive trees and vineyards were kept in several places.

[26] CIL II 4034.
[27] Suet. *Gal*. 9,1 "Per octo annos uarie et inaequabiliter prouinciam rexit, primo acer et uehemens et in coercendis quidem delictis uel immodicus. nam et nummulario non ex fide uersanti pecunias manus amputauit mensaeque eius adfixit. (...)"
[28] Tac. *Ann*. 6,19 Post quos Sex. Marius Hispaniarum ditissimus defertur incestasse filiam et saxo Tarpeio deicitur. ac ne dubium haberetur magnitudinem pecuniae malo vertisse, aerarias aurariasque eius, quamquam publicarentur, sibimet Tiberius seposuit. inritatusque suppliciis cunctos qui carcere attinebantur accusati societatis cum Seiano necari iubet. iacuit immensa strages, omnis sexus, omnis aetas, inlustres ignobiles, dispersi aut aggerati. neque propinquis aut amicis adsistere, inlacrimare, ne visere quidem diutius dabatur (…).
[29] Churchin (1983: 227–230).
[30] Churchin (1983: 230–232).

Over time, it has become one of the most important olive oil and wine exporters.[31]

In the case of transport and trade, as in other places, it can be observed that the state did not provide the people, ships, etc. necessary for transport and commercial activities, but subcontractors were entrusted with conducting trade between the provinces and Rome.[32] This is not an exceptional example; a similar commercial relationship can be observed in the Sulpician Archive at Puteoli. On the tablets marked TPSULP 65, 94, and 95, the parties recorded the transport of grain to Alexandria and its storage in a contract; the principal was Eunus, a slave of the Emperor Claudius.[33] Various sub-companies and companies also traded between Hispania and Rome, all in exchange for predetermined amounts. This results in a relatively large income for the entrepreneur, not to mention the opportunity to build local influence and network capital. Along with the benefits, there was also a significant risk, as evidenced by the more than 500 shipwrecks excavated so far.[34]

The Kalendarium Vegetianum

In the case of private enterprises, it is worth paying special attention to the Kalendarium Vegetianum, which significantly changed the economic situation up to that time. To understand the principle of operation of the Kalendarium Vegetianum and its underlying causes, it is worth discussing the establishment of the institution and its mechanism. Kalendaria are institutions that deal with financial matters closely related to wealth derived from agriculture. On the one hand, it is an institution issuing credits and loans, which presumably collected interest at the be-

[31] Keay (1988: 70–72).
[32] Terpstra (2011: 200–202).
[33] Jones (2006); Gombos (2019: 52).
[34] Silver (2007: 197–198).

ginning of each month on a specific day. In this case, we can assume that it did not comply with the 12% maximum interest decree. Although individual institutions also had charitable expenditures, they primarily served to invest capital and increase wealth.[35] In the case of the Kalendarium, the capital was the income from olive oil production.[36] Similar calendars are known from many areas and periods of the empire.[37] In the latter's case, a specification can also be observed: the person leading the institution, his position of power, and thus the prerequisites for his job were also given. In addition to state institutions, we can discover private investors behind calendars. The Kalendarium Vegetianum was a financial institution which registered credits and agricultural properties belonging to Senator Valerius Vegetius of Baetica and his family, which he presumably acquired by inheritance.[38] His wealth in Hispania consisted of estates and other real estate. The Kalendarium also dealt with the rental of real estate of absent members of the Senate, and the capital of the institution was derived from the economic activities of Valerius Vegetius. These activities were probably agreements made through loan contracts, and the recipients of the loans could be either tenants or clients of the family. The business must have been closely linked to land ownership relations, parallel to the annona, especially in Baetica, one of Hispania's most important oil-growing regions.[39] Nothing proves this better than the amphorae containing oil found in Córdoba, on which the inscription L(uci) M(ummi) VE(egeti) is found, referring to the sen-

[35] Fragmenta Vaticana. De excusetione, 187.
[36] Saez, Lomas (1981: 57).
[37] CJ.4.31.3: Imperator Alexander Severus „In ea, quae rei publicae te debere fateris, compensari ea, quae ab eadem tibi debentur, is cuius de ea re notio est iubebit, si neque ex kalendario neque ex vectigalibus neque ex frumenti vel olei publici pecunia neque tributorum neque alimentorum neque eius, quae statutis sumptibus servit, neque fideicommissi civitatis debitor sis."
[38] Pons (2011: 9).
[39] Pons (2011: 2).

ator. On the other hand, the amphorae bear the inscription C(uratores) OL(erarii), which was used to mark products intended for the annona.[40] This clearly shows that the Kalendarium Vegetianum was a private investment project. However, it was an institution that benefited both producers and the state. On the one hand, the Kalendarium's representative often supervised annona's administrative work in addition to the interest collections at the beginning of the month – that is, whether the predetermined quantity was actually harvested. However, in the case of a deficit, the interest received by the Kalendarium was used to finance the tax deficit, possible transport costs, etc.[41] The Kalendarium was transferred from the senator's private property, as was the case with other Kalendariuma, to the imperial private part separated from the fiscus by Augustus, the Patrimonium Caesaris, in 160 AD.[42] Based on the currently available sources, no record or evidence speaks of the confiscation or expropriation of Baetica for the benefit of the emperor from this period, so in the case of the Kalendarium, a bequest is most likely.[43] After all the senator's property was transferred to the fiscus, the management of the Kalendarium Vegetianum came under the jurisdiction of the procurator, so it was his responsibility to settle the interest on the loans granted by the empire to the tenants, collect the rents, and control the services expected from them. It can be assumed that a rental system was in place for the properties belonging to the fiscus, grouped under the name Kalendarium Vegetianum, during the period from Marcus Aurelius to the reign of Septimius Severus.[44] An interesting phenomenon can be observed regarding the fate of the Kalendarium during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but especially during the reign of Septimius Severus.

[40] Pons (2011: 12).
[41] Millet (2009: 141–145).
[42] Millet (2009: 143); CIL 11.3003.
[43] Soler (2020: 145).
[44] Haley (2003: 129).

As a member of the Punic Septimii family, which was rich in local connections, Septimius Severus was educated in Greco-Roman culture, law, and economic theory. At the beginning of his career, he was known as a rather average politician who never held a serious leadership position in the military. He first commanded Legio IV Scythica in Syria but did not govern any province where legionary troops were stationed until 191, when he was given Pannonia Superior.[45] After striving for power, he continued to rely on the army as an emperor, and his political actions were characterised by terror, confiscations, imprisonments, and executions. Owing to his political activities, the empire avoided an economic crisis. His system differed from previous ones, but this is not surprising because during his reign, the empire was again hit by civil war after 124 years. Accordingly, he shaped his methods of governance. He strengthened his relationship with the army, which resulted in alienation from the Senate, preservation of traditional Roman jurisdiction, protection of provincial interests, and reform of the military.[46] With all this, he accumulated enough strength and financial resources to build a "family business". When Septimius Severus defeated Clodius Albinus in 197, he increased his own and his family's wealth.[47] He did this, among other things, through the institution of the Kalendarium Vegetianum. One proof of this is the seals discovered on amphorae in Gaul and Hispania. According to some assumptions, the AAA (i.e. the three Augusti) must have been Septimius Severus and his sons.[48] In addition to the amphorae markings that may prove that Septimius Severus and his sons obtained valuable Hispanic lands through various auctions, we can observe a previously unseen form of their connection to commercial life, behind

[45] Smith (1972: 484–485).
[46] Smith (1972: 484–486).
[47] Soler (2020: 143).
[48] To see the full tituli picti: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Stamp-over-Dressel-20-amphora-that-belonged-to-Septimius-Severus-and-his-sons_fig3_273256834 .

which lies a more complex administrative process.[49] Septimius Severus' predecessor, Marcus Aurelius, implemented a centralization reform that resulted in the quasi-formation of a financial department with the establishment of the ratio privata office. Septimius Severus took advantage of this by placing the profits obtained from economic activity, which had previously been reserved for private individuals, in this institution of the Kalendarium Vegetianum, i.e., the right to transport or deliver goods on behalf of the state, and passing all this on to his sons. This was favourable for the empire, as an honest and direct commercial relationship was established between the two areas without the need for an intermediate institution. At the same time, this paralysed economic activity by preventing merchants from benefiting from the social and economic privileges granted to those working for the state. Presumably, the emperor and his immediate family enjoyed all these social and economic benefits.[50] Septimius and his sons also performed the functions of mercator, diffusers, and negotiators, who had previously worked to collect annona. It is interesting to question whether Septimius Severus and his sons, as private individuals, received what the state had previously paid for these positions, as this would explain how Septimius Severus made his sons wealthy.[51] This activity allowed the development of actual trade by transporting goods for the state. The measure certainly reformed the previous institution, breaking the foundations of the Roman economic system regarding the relationship between individuals and the state's interests. The profit obtained by the emperor served the state's interests since it represented an effective saving, given that the wealth of the ratio privata was also used to maintain the state's coffers. Simultaneously, this significantly restricted the market, which was based on relatively free principles

[49] Blázquez (1996: 83–87).
[50] Rodriguez (1996: 211–213).
[51] Historia Augusta, *Vita Severi* 12.

until then, as it prevented them from continuing to benefit from the social and economic privileges granted for the management of the annona. However, it is not known whether this was true for all empire products for which annona was paid. We do not know whether this measure was a direct consequence of the confiscations against Albinus' followers or whether it resulted from a premeditated government decision.[52]

Summary

It is clear that, as in most provinces, the exploitative intent of the state can be detected in Hispania. The systematically built urban infrastructure, proper use of natural resources, outsourcing of the transportation of products, establishment of the necessary taxes, dues, or revenues, and the method of their collection are all the results of state interest and state strategy to use the income of Hispania. The wealth of the province in natural resources is well proven by extensive mining, the production of agricultural commodities, and their large-scale transportation to Rome, as evidenced by contemporary records, tax forms, legislation, and maritime archaeological research. We can find examples of microeconomic activities, such as the sources about the fish sauce trader L. Iunius Puteolanus, from which we can assume that people interested in other areas of the empire settled in the peninsula due to better living conditions and the lively commercial life, so that they could later get involved in production and trade themselves. A good example of private financial activities that can also be linked to microeconomics is Kalendarium Vegetianum. This was an economic institution that registered agricultural land and recorded the loans issued on it so that debtors could use it for agricultural investments or for commercial purposes. All this first belonged to the senator Valerius Vegetius, and later the institution was so successful that Marcus Aurelius

[52] Martínez (1996: 213).

and Septimius Severus also acquired it by transforming the bureaucracy. Overall, therefore, in the case of Hispania, the development of economic life can be observed at both the state and private levels, with the intent of maximising the exploitation of the opportunities offered by the Peninsula.

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Persius and Rhetoric: an Episode of Scholastic *Recitatio*[1]

Rhetorical education, as is well known, represents a fundamental stage in the scholastic training of young people in the imperial age. The Latin poet Aulus Persius Flaccus (34–62 AD) certainly also devoted himself to such studies, as can be seen from his Saturae *(Pers. 3, 44–47) and the* Vita Persi *6, which, although presenting itself as the result of numerous interpolations and stratifications, represents the only ancient testimony so far known that can offer a complete overview of the biographical events of Persius. Starting from this brief premise, the purpose of my paper will be to attempt to advance a new proposed reading of a controversial passage from the* Vita Persi *placed in the section devoted to Persius' friendships and acquaintances (*Vita Persi *13), in order to investigate not only the debated relationship between Persius and recitatory practice, but also the relationship he entertained with his contemporary Marcus Anneus Lucanus (39–65 AD) during his years of scholastic training under the philosopher Lucius Anneus Cornutus (1st century AD).*

Keywords: Persius, Lucan, rhetoric, *Vita Persi*.

Rhetorical education, as is well known,[2] represented a fundamental stage in the scholastic training of young people during the Imperial Age. The Latin poet Aulus Persius Flaccus (34–62 AD) undoubtedly engaged

[1] I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Patrizio Domenicucci and Prof. Francesco Berardi for their valuable scientific advice and insightful suggestions, which greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

[2] For a discussion of the importance of rhetorical education in ancient Rome, see, for example, the studies by Stramaglia (2010: 111–151) and Lentano (2015).

in such studies as well, as evidenced by his *Saturae*[3] and the *Vita Persi*.[4] Although the latter appears to be the result of numerous interpolations and layers of tradition,[5] it remains the only known ancient source that offers a comprehensive account of Persius' life.

Starting from this brief premise, the aim of my research will be to propose a new interpretation of a controversial passage from the *Vita Persi*, located in the section dedicated to Persius' friendships and acquaintances.[6] The goal is to explore not only the debated relationship between Persius and the practice of recitation,[7] but also the nature of his connection with his contemporary, Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39–65 AD).

Concluding the account of the first meeting between Persius and Lucan, which took place at the school of Annaeus Cornutus, at the time *tragicus sectae Stoicae*,[8] the biographer recounts an anecdote involving the two poets, transmitted by the oldest manuscripts of the *Vita Persi* as follows:

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[3] Pers. 3, 44–47: *saepe oculos, memini, tangebam parvus olivo / grandia si nollem morituri verba Catonis / discere non sano multum laudanda magistro, / quae pater adductis sudans audiret amicis.* According to a bold hypothesis proposed by Herrmann (1955: 318–319), the composition that the young Persius would have been forced to memorize and recite before his father and his assembled friends may be identified with an epigram composed by Seneca during his exile in Corsica (PLM Baehrens IV, 9, 4–8). For a deeper exploration of these verses from Persius' third satire, see Tandoi (1965: 315–339) and Pirovano (2013: 41–60).

[4] Prob. *Vita Persi* 6: *studuit Flaccus usque ad annum XII aetatis suae Volaterris, inde Romae apud grammaticum Remmium Palaemonem et apud rhetorem Verginium Flavum.* The passages from the *Vita Persi* cited in this paper follow the edition by Takács (2011: 13–16; 170–171), which is preferred over the more recent edition by Stachon (2021: 68–73) out of respect for the manuscript tradition.

[5] For example, Paratore (1968: 1–55) and Brugnoli (1972: 13–24) held this view, in contrast to Rostagni (1944: 167–176), who attributed the authorship of the *Vita Persi* to Probus.

[6] Prob. *vita Persi* 9–16: *amicos habuit a prima adulescentia Caesium Bassum poetam et Calpurnium Staturam, qui vivo eo iuvenis decessit.* […] *summe dilectus a Paeto Thrasea est, ita ut peregrinaretur quoque cum eo aliquando, cognatam eius Arriam uxorem habente.*

[7] Cf. *e. g.* Ehlers (1990: 171–181) and Villegas Guillén (2002: 183–191).

[8] Prob. *vita Persi* 11–12: […] *cognovit per Cornutum etiam Annaeum Lucanum, aeque tum auditorem Cornuti. [nam Cornutus illo tempore tragicus fuit sectae Stoicae, qui libros philosophiae reliquit].*

– K: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scriptura Flacci ut vix retineret se <recita> ntem clamore, quin illa vera esset poetica diceret (f. 32v).
– L: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata ipse luto facere (f. 1v).
– R: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem (Rgl 'aliter recitante') clamore (f. 127r).
– T: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata ipsum lutum facere (f. 94r).
– G: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa ipsa vera esse poemata suo ludo faceret (f. 93v).
– M: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scribta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata solutum facere (f. 95r).
– P: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripturam flacci ut vix retineret se recitantem clamore quin illa esse vera poemata diceret (f. 1r).
– V2: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta Flacci ut vix retineret se recitantem clamore, quin illa esse vera poetica diceret (f. 80v).
– N: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore quae ille esse vera poemata suo ludo faceret (f. 1v).
– V3: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta Flacci ut vix retineret se a clamore recitantem (f. 74r).

From the variety of the above-mentioned *lectiones*, it becomes clear that the manuscript tradition does not agree on the transmission of the second part of the passage under examination (i.e., after the verb *retineret*). Nevertheless, it is still possible to infer that the biographer was recount-

ing an anecdote involving a school recitation of some *scripta* by the Volterran poet, towards which the Corduban poet is said to have expressed profound admiration (*mirabatur*).[9]

Behind the apparent linearity of the content in this short passage from the *Vita Persi* lie two serious exegetical and textual problems, stemming from the highly corrupted state of the manuscript tradition.

One initial problem lies in identifying the person who recited these *scripta* of Persius. The earliest manuscripts of the *Vita Persi* mentioned above[10] consistently transmit the reading *se recitantem*[11] and identify the author of this *recitatio* as Lucan. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that the biographical accounts concerning the Corduban poet highlight his particular inclination – dating back to his school years – toward the practice of public recitation.[12] Despite this conceptual reasoning about the possible meaning of this corrupt passage from the *Vita Persi*, it remains difficult to accept the text as transmitted by the manuscripts. It seems somewhat implausible, as O. Jahn argued,[13] that Lucan struggled to restrain himself from exclaiming his admiration for Persius' *scripta* while they were being recited aloud. Such behavior on the part of the Corduban poet can only be plausibly explained by imagining that it was

[9] As Takács (2011: 96) observes, the verb *miror*, which appears twice more in the *Vita Persi* (Prob. *vita Persi* 15: *usus est apud Corntum […] quos unice miratus est et aemulatus […]* and 28: *editum librum continuus mirari homines et diripere coeperunt*), is consistently used by the biographer to express intellectual admiration for someone. Building on this passage from the *Vita Persi*, Biggs (2020: 33–50) traces mutual influences and intertextual references between the poetry of Persius and that of Lucan.

[10] Cf. *supra*, 1–2.

[11] This *lectio* was also accepted by Consoli (1904: 202); Jahn (1851: 38); Jahn (1868: 35); Clausen (1956: 38); Bo (1969: 4) and Lee-Barr (1987: 54).

[12] Suet. *vita Lucani* p. 399, 4–5 Badalì: *Dein †civile bellum, quod cum Pompeio a Caesare gestum est, recitavit†* and Vacca *vita Lucani* p. 403, 29–30 Badalì: *Declamavit et Graece et Latine cum magna admiratione audientium.*

[13] Cf. Jahn (1843: XXXII; 235). Jahn's thesis was recently accepted by Takács (2011: 97) and Stachon (2021: 283).

Persius himself – certainly well-versed in the practice of declamation –[14] who recited his own literary compositions, while Lucan, as a member of the audience, attempted to suppress his enthusiasm so as not to interrupt his schoolmate's *recitatio*. To Jahn's arguments, one must also add that if the biographer had intended to identify Lucan as the reciter of Persius' *scripta*, he would scarcely have used the stylistically redundant and otherwise unattested construction *se recitantem*, a phrase not found anywhere in Latin literature. Instead, he would have simply employed the participle *recitans*, in agreement with the subject (*Lucanus*). In light of the above, and considering that it was likely Persius who recited his *scripta* before Lucan, it seems appropriate to adopt the *lectio* '*illo recitante*',[15] or at most, '*recitante eo*',[16] as found in the more recent manuscripts.

The final part of the passage under investigation proves to be even more problematic and difficult to interpret. A primary issue lies in accepting the *lectio* '*clamore*', transmitted by the oldest branch of the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*, following the construction *se recitantem*. This point is supported by the fact that, during Persius' time, there was a deeply negative view both of those who recited their works with gestures and vocal tones akin to those of performers, and of audiences who

[14] Cf. Ehlers (1990: 171–181). Based on the presumed contempt that Persius, unlike Lucan, would have shown in his *Saturae* towards declamatory practice, Paratore (1968: 61) almost harbored the suspicion that the biographer had attributed to the author of the *Satires* the tastes and habits of Lucan.

[15] Among the numerous manuscripts attesting to this *lectio*, which was accepted in the past by various editors (cf. e.g. Bonardi (1499: II); Pithou (1585: 147); Jahn (1843: 245) and Heinrich (1844: 46)), see, for example, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 539 (XV cent.) (f. 24^{r}); the Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. Lat. 137 (XV cent.) (f. 17^{r}); Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana S. XXV, 1 (XV cent.) (f. 148^{r}) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. lat. 1146 (XV cent.) (f. 110^{r}).

[16] This *lectio*, accepted by numerous scholars (cf. e.g. Bücheler (1886: 55); Némethy (1903: 14); Takács (2011: 14; 10; 174) and Stachon (2021: 70)), is attested, albeit with lemmatic inversion (*eo recitante*), only in the manuscript of Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2876 (XV cent.) (f. 88^{r}).

responded with applause and acclamatory shouts.[17] Given this context, it is difficult to believe that the biographer intended to suggest that Persius – described later in the *Vita* as a child of refined and elegant manners –[18] had been accustomed to reciting his youthful compositions in a coarse or theatrical manner before his schoolmate Lucan.[19] In light of this, most scholars have opted to emend *clamore*, proposing four alternative readings of the lemma: some have conjectured *de more*,[20] others have proposed integrating the preposition *cum* before *clamore*,[21] still others have preferred to use the preposition *a* before the latter term,[22] and finally, there are those who interpret it as the corresponding verb *clamare*.[23] If the first two proposed interventions just mentioned find no support in the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*, the cases of the readings *clamare*[24] and *a clamore* are different. The latter is widely attested from the 12th century onward[25] and, therefore, I believe it deserves to be accepted here.

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[17] Cf. Berardi (2018: 87–101). This was also the opinion of Pers. 1, 13–21: *scribimus inclusive, numeros ille, hic pede liber,* […] / *intrant et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima versu* and 30–40 […] *ecce inter pocula quaerunt* / […] *nascentur violae?* […].

[18] Prob. *vita Persi* 17: *fuit morum lenissimorum, verecundiae virginalis, famae pulchrae, pietatis erga matrem et sororem et amitam exemplo sufficientis. fuit frugi, pudicus.*

[19] Despite the interpretative difficulties just outlined, posed by the *se recitantem clamore* reading transmitted in ancient manuscripts, this latter *lectio* was nevertheless accepted in the past by Jahn (1851: 38); Jahn (1868: 35) and Gildersleeve (1875: 66).

[20] Cf. Bücheler (1886: 55); Némethy (1903: 14); Albini (1907: XL); Owen (1949: XIV) and Rolfe (1959: 496).

[21] Reifferscheid (1860: 73).

[22] Among many exemples, see, for instance, Kissel (2007: 42); Takács (2011: 170); Stachon (2021: 70) and Holzberg (2022: 92).

[23] Cf. Leo (1910: 65) and Rostagni (1944: 171).

[24] This *lectio* is attested in the manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 664 (XV cent.) (f. 126^{v}) and in its *descriptus*, Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 664 (XV cent.) (f. 161^{v}).

[25] Among the manuscripts that preserve this *lectio*, the following four are worth mentioning: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1401 (XII cent.) (f. 74r); Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 37.20 (XIII cent.) (f. 1^{v}); Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. lat. 137 (XV cent.) (f. 17^{r}-17^{v}); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1614 (XV cent.) (f. 37^{v}) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 800 (X, 179) (XV cent.) (f. 1^{r}).

The issue concerning the final part of the passage under investigation still remains to be addressed. In this portion, the biographer seemingly intended to report Lucan's words of admiration for Persius' *scripta*, which he could scarcely withhold (*ut vix retineret*) so as not to interrupt Persius' recitation. According to the interpretation accepted by most scholars,[26] Lucan would have described Persius' *scripta* as *vera poemata*, in contrast to his own, which he regarded as mere *ludi*[27] or even *lutum*[28]. In transmitting this final section, as evidenced by the manuscript review above, the ancient tradition of the *Vita Persi* is not homogeneous: some manuscripts employ the completive conjunction *quin* with the subjunctive (*diceret*) dependent on *retineret* (**KPV$_2$**); others present an indirect statement using the infinitive (*facere* **LTM**) and/or the subjunctive (*faceret* **GN**); while still others omit it entirely (**RV$_3$**). In examining the first of the three readings just mentioned, it should immediately be noted that it merely reports Lucan describing Persius' *scripta* as *vera poemata* (**P**) or

[26] Among the most recent works, cf. Takács (2011: 170); Stachon (2021: 70) and Holzberg (2022: 92).

[27] Cf. *e. g*. Reifferscheid (1860: 73) (*ludos*); Herrmann (1962: XII) (*ludum*) and Kissel (2007: 42) (*suo ludo*). The *lectiones* accepted by these scholars are based on the attestation of the lemma *ludus* in the following manuscripts: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Gud. lat. 79 (XI cent.) (f. 93^{v}); München, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, Clm 14498 (XI-XII cent.) (f. 1^{v}); Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale 303 (XIV cent.) (f. 83 bis^{v}) and München, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, Clm 526 (XV cent.) (f. 6^{r}). It should be noted that the noun *ludus* and its corresponding verb (*ludo*), as well as with the meaning of 'trifle'/'nonsense' (cf. *e.g*. Cic. *fin*. 1, 27 and *Verr*. 6, 181) are attested, in reference to literary works, to indicate compositions of light, non-committal topics (see e.g. Verg. *ecl.* 6, 1-2 and *Schol.* Hor. *sat*. 1, 37).

[28] Cf. Takács 2011, 14. This *lectio* is attested in the Leiden manuscripts, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 78 (IX-X cent.) (f. 1v); Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O. 4. 10 (X cent.) (f. 94^{r}) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2876 (XV cent.) (f. 88^{r}). Starting from '*lutum*', the *lectio* '*solutum* / *soluto*' was likely derived, as evidenced in the following manuscripts: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1614 (XV cent.) (f. 37v); München, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, Clm 23577 (ZZ. 577) (XI cent.) (f. 95^{r}); München, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, Clm 19490 (olim Tegerseensis 1490) (XII cent.) (f. 22^{v}) and München, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, Clm 526 (XV cent.) (f. 6^{r}). In this last manuscript the *lectio* '*soluto*' can be seen in the right margin of the *folium* as a variant of *ludo*.

poetica (**KV$_2$**), without any comparison to his own work. This last *lectio* can hardly be accepted, as it would require either emending *clamore* through substantial intervention in the corrupted text,[29] or conjecturing a transposition of this last lemma within the completive clause to refer it to *diceret*, or – should one opt for *clamore* – to refer this construction to *retineret*, thereby hypothesizing the biographer's unlikely recourse to the stylistic-rhetorical device of ἀπὸ κοινοῦ.[30]

Contemporary scholars have opted to align themselves with the branch of the manuscript tradition that interprets the final section of the present passage from the *Vita Persi* as indirect speech, albeit making significant interventions in the text, which has been transmitted in a corrupt form by the manuscripts.[31] However, a renewed examination of the aforementioned *lectiones* found in the ancient manuscripts reveals that none of those containing the indirect speech offer explicit evidence of Lucan comparing his own *scripta* with those of Persius. On the contrary, in the manuscripts that preserve syntactically plausible *lectiones* (**GN**), there is an allusion to the idea that the Corduban poet regarded the *scripta* composed by Persius *suo ludo* as *vera poemata*.[32] Further undermining the hypothesis of indirect speech at the conclusion of this passage of the *Vita Persi* is the fact that, as L. Takács rightly observes, *oratio obliqua* is notoriously rare as a discursive mode within the biographical genre.[33]

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[29] This is what those who proposed amending '*clamore*' to '*de more*' did (cf. *supra*, 4 n. 20).
[30] Cf. Pithou (1585: 147); Casaubon (1605: 26); Autumnus (1607: 11) and Ernesti (1748: 531).
[31] Note, for example, the reading proposals *quae illius essent vera esse poemata, sua ludos diceret* and *quae ille faceret, ipsa esse vera poemata, sua ludos* advanced respectively by Clausen (1956: 38) (later accepted by Stachon (2021: 70)) and by the recent Holzberg (2022: 92).
[32] This *lectio*, which can be interpreted as a *dativus commodi* (cf. Takács (2011: 100)), was accepted by Kissel (2007: 42), who proposed reading the indirect speech as follows: *illa esse vera poemata, quae ipse suo ludo faceret*.
[33] Cf. Takács (2011: 96).

Based on what has been said so far and considering the extreme lack of consistency in the manuscript tradition, there is no reason to rule out the possibility that the final section of this passage from the *Vita Persi* – containing Lucan's alleged last words – was an interpolation[34] added by a scribe who, either naively[35] or deliberately, sought to further embellish the anecdote crafted by the biographer to underscore Lucan's admiration for Persius. In this context, a plausible model that may have inspired the interpolator is a passage from Suetonius' *Vita* of Lucan, where the biographer, employing direct speech, has the Corduban poet claim that his early literary efforts were far inferior to Virgil's minor work *Culex*,[36] which the Mantuan poet himself had labeled a *ludus*.[37] To this Suetonian testimony, one might also add that of Statius, who, in his well-known poem commemorating Lucan's birthday (*silv*. 2.7), uses the verb *ludes* to refer to the youthful writings of the Corduban poet.[38]

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[34] Among those who shared this opinion were, among many others, Bonardi (1499: II); Oudendorp (1751; 1003); Jahn (1843: 235) and Heinrich (1844: 46–47). The presence of interpolations in the *Vita Persi* is demonstrated by Prob. *vita Persi* 29–32: *decessit autem vitio stomachi* [...] *ne hoc in se Nero dictum arbitraretur]*).

[35] It cannot be entirely ruled out that an original confusion between *clamor* and *clamare* may have given rise to the indirect speech found in a branch of the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*. Although rare in the history of the manuscript tradition, instances of interchange between *a* and *o* are attested by Pianezzola (1974: 252) in the Leiden manuscript, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Cod. VLQ. 86 (9th century).

[36] Suet. *vita Lucani* p. 399, 4-5 BADALÌ: *Dein †civile bellum, quod cum Pompeio a Caesare gestum est, recitavit† ut praefatione quadam aetatem et initia sua cum Vergilio comparans ausus sit dicere: 'quantum mihi restat ad Culicem'*. It should be noted that in this final passage of Suetonius' *Vita Lucani*, the verb *recitare* (*recitavit*) appears, just as it does in the passage from the *Vita Persi* currently under examination (*recitante/em*).

[37] Ps. Verg. *Culex* 1–3: *Lusimus, Octavi, gracile modulating Thalia / atque ut araneoli tenuem formauimus orsum; / lusimus: haec propter culicis sint carmina docta*. For the meaning of the verb *ludere* in the aforementioned lines of the *Culex*, see Barrett (1976: 569).

[38] Stat. *Silv*. 2, 7, 55–59: ludes Hectora Thessalosque currus / […] et noster tibi proferetur Orpheus. Regarding this composition by Statius, considered 'the first biography of Lucan' (Newlands (2011: 435–451)), cf. Buchheit (1960: 231–249); Malamud (1995: 1 – 30); Pierini (2007: 136–159); Andrisani (2020: 628–636) and Gowers (2021: 45–75).

If this reading hypothesis is correct, considering that two *antiquiores* manuscripts omit the portion of text following '*clamore*' (**RV**$_2$), one might consider interpreting the present passage of the *Vita Persi* – based on the testimony of most of the *recentiores* manuscripts – [39]in the following way: *sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci, ut vix retineret se, illo recitante a clamore*.[40]

In conclusion, one might think that the anecdote conveyed in this controversial passage of the *Vita Persi*[41] was conceived by the biographer not only to showcase the literary talents of the young Persius, but also to underscore the importance of rhetorical training in his education. Moreover, it seems intended to emphasize the likely influence exerted by the works of the Volterran poet[42] – probably composed before his acquaintance with Lucan at the school of Annaeus Cornutus –[43] on those of the Corduban poet, who at the time was developing his own literary interests.[44]

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[39] Among the various *recentiores* containing this *lectio*, the following manuscripts may be highlighted by way of example: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 539 (XV cent.) (f. 24^{r}); Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. lat. 137 (XV cent.) (ff. 17^{r}–17^{v}); Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana S. XXV, 1 (XV cent.) (f. 148^{r}) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 800 (X, 179) (XV cent.) (f. 1^{r}).

[40] In this context, *clamor* can only bear its positive connotation of 'cry of acclamation' (cf. e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 12.7.1) or 'applause' (cf. e.g., Plin. *Epist.* 4.5.1).

[41] Cf. Takács (2011: 95) e Stachon (2021: 283).

[42] The hypothesis advanced by Takács (2011: 96; 148), which identifies these *scripta* with the now-lost works allegedly composed by Persius during his youth (*pueritia*), cannot be deemed entirely implausible (Prob. *vita Persi* 26 […] *scripserat in pueritia Flaccus etiam praetextam vescio et opericon librum unum et paucos in socrum Thraseae in Arriam matrem versus, quae se ante virum occiderat* […]).

[43] The view that the scene was set during the years of school education under Annaeus Cornutus has been supported by Rostagni (1944: 171) and Stachon (2021: 282–284). A different opinion was held by Paratore (1968: 61, 86–88) and Takács (2011: 98), who hypothesized that the performance in question took place, respectively, at the schools of Virginius Flavus and Servilius Nonianus.

[44] For example, it is worth noting that Lucan – just like Persius (cf. *supra*, 6 n. 42) – attempted to engage with the tragic genre by composing a tragedy, *Medea*, which remained unfinished (Vacca *vita Lucani* p. 405, 63–65 badalì: *Exstant eius conplures alii, ut Iliacon, Saturnalia, Catachtonion, Silvarum X, tragoedia Medea inperfecta* […]).

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The Problems with Claudius' Missing Ascension in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*

Following a profoundly degrading death, the Roman emperor Claudius arrives in heaven in Seneca's Apocolocyntosis*, expecting deification like his predecessors Augustus and Tiberius. Yet after a brief consultation, the gods reject him and instead banish him to the underworld. But how did Claudius ascend to heaven in the first place? The text is completely silent on this essential part of his journey. This paper discusses and contextualises the four theories hitherto proposed, especially in light of the lacuna between chapters 7 and 8, as well as the question of whether Claudius was aware of his ascension, and further develops these ideas with original considerations.*[1]

Keywords: Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, Menippean satire, Claudius, Hercules, ascension.

In Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, it must have caused quite a stir in heaven when the divine inhabitants were suddenly approached by a strange figure, limping and resembling more a monster than a man. It was none other than the recently deceased Emperor Claudius. Hercules is sent out to uncover the stranger's identity, a task he accomplishes only with

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Dennis Pausch (University of Marburg) for his valuable input in our discussions of the fascinating problems of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. I would also like to thank Dr. Timothy Brady (Royal Holloway, University of London), Emma de Koning (University of Erfurt) and Dr. Joshua Werrett (University of Oxford) for a stimulating discussion on the *Apocolocyntosis* at the *Sapiens Ubique Civis* conference in August 2024.

difficulty, which may explain his failure to question how Claudius came to be in heaven in the first place. This paper aims to explore this question, which is conspicuously unaddressed in the Menippean satire. To understand the problems surrounding this missing ascension, a closer look at the text is necessary:

Although chapters 3 and 4 provide an extended account of Claudius' prolonged dying, death is granted to him only after Mercury takes pity on him and obtains permission from the Parcae for him to die. His last words were: *Vae me, puto, concacavi me* (4, 3),[2] to which the narrator adds the remark: *quod an fecerit, nescio: omnia certe concacavit* (ibid.).[3] Immediately afterwards, the scene changes, and the narrator gives a general overview: *Quae in terris postea sint acta supervacuum est referre. Scitis enim optime, nec periculum est ne excidant memoriae quae gaudium publicum impresserit: nemo felicitatis suae obliviscitur. In caelo quae acta sint audite: fides*[4] *penes auctorem erit* (5, 1).[5] Subsequently, we are informed that Jupiter learns of a strange figure standing at heaven's door, speaking only unintelligible words – none other than Claudius himself. This indicates that, up to that point, the text provides no account of how the newly deceased emperor ascended to heaven. He also does not seem to know where he is, because when Hercules approaches him, addressing him with a Homeric verse to ascertain his identity, Claudius is delighted that the humans are philologists in the place he has now come to (*illic philologos homines*, 5, 4), even though Hercules greets him armed with

[2] 'Woe is me, I think I've shat myself!' All translations are my own.
[3] 'Whether he did that, I don't know. What I do know is that he shat all over everything.'
[4] This *fides* was first mentioned in 1, 2 as *Appiae viae curator* ('warden of the Via Appia') and the narrator's primary source of the events following Claudius' death.
[5] 'What then happened on earth is superfluous to tell, for you know it best, and there is no danger that the public joy that was impressed upon us fades from memory: No one forgets their happiness. But listen to what has happened in heaven: My warrantor vouches for it.'

a club (7, 2, vers. 2; 3). In this context, it is important to note that the modern perception of heaven stands in stark contrast to that of antiquity, where heaven is rarely described, while the underworld is more commonly portrayed as the dwelling place of the dead.[6]

The *Apocolocyntosis* offers no indication of how heaven should be imagined, suggesting that Claudius is unable to distinguish between heaven and earth at that moment. It seems he was unaware of his journey to heaven, otherwise, he would likely mention it in the surviving text. Nor is it clear from his behaviour towards Hercules and Febris that Claudius knows where he is or who is facing him; for when Febris appears shortly afterwards and insults Claudius as a Gaul of the worst kind (6, 1), he throws a tantrum and orders, as if addressing one of his praetorians, to have Febris executed (6, 2). However, he not only ascended to heaven unaccompanied, but would also commit a grave offence against the gods by attempting to kill one of them – an act rendered absurd by their immortality. Only afterwards does Claudius seem to realise where he is, as Hercules turns to him very aggressively to reprimand him (7, 1). In doing so, Hercules at least indirectly reveals his identity, as he mentions his club (7, 2, vers. 2; 3), a common attribute of the god, and alludes to one of his Twelve Labours, the theft of the giant Geryon's herd of cattle (7, 2, vers. 6–8). Subsequently, Claudius adopts a markedly more amiable tone and refers to Hercules as his warrantor (7, 4). At this point, however, the surviving text breaks off, and it remains unclear how much has been lost. The narrative resumes when a deity of unknown identity delivers a speech opposing Claudius' apotheosis (8). In the meantime, Claudius appears to have persuaded Hercules to support his cause, although there is no mention of deification prior to the lacuna, making it unclear who first introduced the idea. At the meeting of the gods, Hercules attempts to rally support from various deities (9, 5). But

[6] Cf. Lichtenberger (2021: 46–48), Berdozzo (2011: 113–114).

before that, they must have entered heaven, probably by force, because the unknown deity refers to this as *impetum* (8, 1), and Hercules must have proposed that Claudius should be deified. Theoretically, it would also be conceivable that the narrator refrained from describing Claudius' ascension because the emperor now reports it himself, although this contradicts his earlier lack of awareness.

The surviving text provides relatively little information about how Claudius reached heaven; it is only known that he left Rome on the Via Appia limping, as Augustus and Tiberius had already done when they were deified (1, 2), and that he approached heaven's door still limping (5, 2). The narrator does not explicitly name the place of death, but Claudius' palace on the Palatine Hill appears to be the most plausible location. This is supported by the historians, who suggest that he died there,[7] and by Febris, who later alludes to the site (6, 1). However, if Claudius had intended to reach the entrance to the underworld, he would have needed to proceed in the opposite direction, northwest toward the Field of Mars, where he and Mercury later descend into the underworld (13, 1), rather than heading southeast on the Via Appia. The question therefore arises as to where Claudius tried to go, i.e. whether he knew that he would encounter an opportunity to ascend to heaven on the Via Appia and be deified there, even if he does not seem to remember that in heaven.

On this subject, Cassius Dio includes two amusing anecdotes at the very point where Seneca's authorship and the title *Apocolocyntosis* are mentioned for the only time in antiquity, offering insight into how Claudius' contemporaries envisioned his ascension:

> ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τοὺς ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ θανατουμένους ἀγκίστροις τισὶ μεγάλοις οἱ δήμιοι ἕς τε τὴν ἀγορὰν ἀνεῖλκον κἀντεῦθεν ἐς

[7] Cf. Levick (1990: 77).

> τὸν ποταμὸν ἔσυρον, ἔφη (sc. ὁ τοῦ Σενέκα ἀδελφὸς Γαλλίων) τὸν Κλαύδιον ἀγκίστρῳ ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνενεχθῆναι. καὶ ὁ Νέρων δὲ οὐκ ἀπάξιον μνήμης ἔπος κατέλιπε· τοὺς γὰρ μύκητας θεῶν βρῶμα ἔλεγεν εἶναι, ὅτι καὶ ἐκεῖνος διὰ τοῦ μύκητος θεὸς ἐγεγόνει (61, 35, 4).[8]

While Gallio denounces Claudius as a criminal, Nero is reported to have mocked his predecessor by endorsing the claim, already made earlier by Cassius Dio (61, 34, 2–3), that Claudius had been poisoned by Agrippina. Nero allegedly elaborated on this idea by describing the grotesque method of Claudius' ascension to heaven: propelled by flatulence induced by poisonous mushrooms, he was catapulted into heaven like a projectile.

Remarkably, the question of how Claudius reached heaven has been largely neglected in modern scholarship; only four attempts to explain this phenomenon exist, all of which differ significantly: First, Otto Weinreich attempted to downplay the absent ascension scene by claiming that Seneca, in pursuit of brevity, intentionally omitted a detailed account and limited himself to the simple image of Claudius limping towards heaven.[9] However, Severin Koster has rightly pointed out that, if Seneca had truly aimed to reduce the length of this satire, he could have dispensed with various verse passages, such as the tragedy monologue of Hercules in chapter 7, but he would hardly have omitted something as central as the ascension.[10] This tragic monologue, for example, primarily serves to mock Hercules, suggesting that the description of Clau-

[8] 'Because the public executioners dragged those condemned to death by the court to the forum with certain large hooks and then threw them into the river, Gallio, Seneca's brother, said that Claudius would be dragged to heaven with a hook. Nero, on the other hand, also delivered a memorable remark: He said that mushrooms were the food of the gods because a mushroom made Claudius a god as well.'

[9] Cf. Weinreich (1923: 57).

[10] Cf. Koster (1979: 70–71).

dius' ascension was also used to ridicule him. In this way, Seneca can subvert the dignity expected of an emperor, by depicting this ascension in vivid and humiliating detail. Moreover, Claudius' return to earth, accompanied by Mercury, is described simply as a descent (*descendunt*, 12, 1), which suggests that his descent followed the same route as his ascension. Otherwise, the text would imply a deviation from the previous path, yet none appears.

In response to Weinreich's arguments, Richard Heinze has suggested that Seneca himself did not quite know how to organise Claudius' ascension, since otherwise, it would have been the gods who had summoned an emperor to heaven for an apotheosis. This is not the case in this instance, as they are surprised when Claudius appears on their doorstep and they ultimately refuse to deify him. For this reason, Seneca created the following juxtaposition: *Quae in terris postea sint acta... In caelo quae acta sint…* at the beginning of the scene in heaven (5, 1), as he could thus conceal what had happened between earth and heaven, and omit the ascension.[11] However, Weinreich's analysis, as referenced by Heinze, cites two other texts that resemble this passage in the *Apocolocyntosis* as they depict scenarios of ascension: Aristophanes' *Peace*, in which the Attic winegrower Tyrgaios flies into heaven on a giant dung beetle to end the Peloponnesian War, and Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, in which Menippus, the creator of the Menippean satire, flies into heaven with an eagle's wing on one arm and a vulture's wing on the other to gain insight into the nature of the gods.[12] Although *Icaromenippus* was composed several decades after Seneca's death, it likely draws on motifs from Menippean tradition that would have been familiar to Seneca as well. This suggests that the *Apocolocyntosis* could have portrayed Claudius ascending to heaven in a similarly absurd manner: He could have been borne by an animal that mirrors his physical or moral

[11] Cf. Heinze (1926: 58).
[12] Cf. Weinreich (1923: 57–59).

shortcomings, such as a limping, winged horse parodying Pegasus, or a giant tortoise symbolizing his sluggishness and incapacity as a ruler. This depiction would align with the satirical tradition, but it still raises the question of why Claudius would regard Hercules as human if he was aware of having ascended on an animal. Another aspect of the literary tradition also becomes apparent here: Both Aristophanes (*Pax* 151) and Lucian (*Icar*. 22) indicate that it took Trygaios and Menippus three days to reach heaven, which raises the possibility that such a duration was considered typical for celestial journeys. This may also help explain why Claudius reappears at his *pompa funebris* during his brief return to earth: The exact date of this event is unknown, but it is generally assumed to have taken place on 18 October, following a five-day period of lying in state, comparable to the funerals of Augustus and Tiberius.[13] If Claudius ascended to heaven for three days immediately following his death, from 13 to 15 October,[14] and, having presumably spent little time there,[15] returned to earth from 16 to 18 October, he could have witnessed his own funeral.

Severin Koster has hypothesised that part of the text was lost not only during Claudius' brief stay in heaven, but also in an earlier pas-

[13] Cf. Levick (1990: 78).

[14] Although Claudius' limp might suggest a longer journey compared with Trygaios and Menippus, who are fully able-bodied, the text merely notes that he limped at the outset of his journey, from the palace to the Via Appia (1, 2), and again upon reaching heaven (5, 2). This implies that his limping probably did not significantly prolong his journey. Since Trygaios and Menippus relied on specific devices for their ascension to heaven, it seems unlikely that Claudius completed the entire journey on foot.

[15] The text does not provide any information about the duration of Claudius' sojourn in heaven. The scene immediately preceding the lacuna can be assumed to have lasted only a few minutes, as Hercules awaits Claudius' arrival and they exchange only a few words. The assembly of the gods likely lasts less than an hour, as it consists of only a few speeches and a vote on deification. Although the lacuna's content remains unknown, it likely covered only a brief period, probably encompassing Claudius' attempt to persuade Hercules to grant him entry to heaven, his petition for deification, and the opening of the gods' assembly. The speech by the unidentified deity is preserved almost in its entirety, as it still addresses Claudius' *impetum* (8, 1), his unauthorised entry into heaven.

sage, between his death and his arrival in heaven.[16] He argued that this double loss was due to the codex being a quaternio, and if one page of it, possibly the one containing Claudius' ascension, was torn out, the other part of the sheet likely became detached and was lost, including the second half of the dialogue between Hercules and Claudius. The removal of the page may have been prompted by a Christian reader who found the description of Claudius' ascension offensive, as it paralleled Jesus' ascension but was attributed to a pagan fool, leading them to tear the page from the codex. Consequently, the depiction of the storming of heaven was also lost, whereas the arrival of Claudius in heaven was preserved because it was written on another leaf of the codex.[17] The second lacuna is particularly conspicuous because it interrupts Claudius' speech and omits the opening of a speech by the unknown deity. However, the first lacuna was much easier to conceal because the previous page probably ended with a sentence and perhaps even concluded a paragraph, allowing the next surviving sentence to follow with relative coherence.

But this consideration raises the question of where exactly the lacuna is located, and Koster did not provide specific details, for the sentences describing the events on earth and in heaven (*Quae in terris... In caelo quae*…, 5, 1) present interpretive difficulties: Although it is plausible that the description of Claudius' death is immediately followed by his ascension to heaven, it is difficult to imagine that the author then shifts back to earth to note the joy expressed there at the emperor's death (*Scitis enim optime*…, ibid.) before focussing on heaven again. It is also doubtful whether the narrator, having just announced that he will report on events in heaven (*In caelo quae*…), turns to Claudius' journey to heaven. It seems unlikely that Claudius departs the earthly realm immediately, only to spend three days exclusively in a space identified as

[16] Cf. Koster (1979: 73).
[17] Cf. Koster (1979: 74–77).

heaven. Tyrgaios (165) and Menippus (11), for instance, describe flying over earthly locations during their ascensions, indicating that they are in flight but have not yet entered heaven. Additionally, Claudius' ascension must have been described in considerable detail: According to Koster's theory, the passage was extensive enough to fill both the front and back of the missing page.[18] This seems plausible, as little narrative content appears to be missing, making it improbable that any other topic was described in detail. The further reference to the narrator's *fides* (*fides penes auctorem erit*, 5, 1), which had already been invoked when Claudius walked across the Via Appia (1, 2), may indicate the beginning of the ascension narrative. It is plausible that the original text, directly before the lacuna, contained a phrase like: 'But listen to what occurred on the way to heaven: My warrantor vouches for it'. However, this became incoherent because the page was lost and the narrative now continues with a report to Jupiter that Claudius is already approaching heaven. Thus, a copyist could have made a small intervention in the text, changing 'on the way to heaven' to 'in heaven', a plausible modification, since it would require only a minor alteration from *in itinere ad caelum* to *in caelo*. This would also explain why the following sentence, *nuntiatur Iovi venisse quendam (…) quaesivisse se cuius nationis esset* (5, 2),[19] is incomplete in several respects: It is syntactically problematic that this passage begins with the passive *nuntiatur*, yet the reflexive *se* refers back to the unnamed messenger, creating a grammatical inconsistency that casts doubt on the textual tradition.[20] Moreover, the passage lacks clarity, as the identity of the messenger reporting Claudius' arrival to Jupiter remains unspecified. Various conjectures have been proposed,

[18] Cf. Koster (1979: 75).
[19] 'Jupiter was informed that someone was approaching (...) and that the messenger had asked what nation they were from.'
[20] Cf. Lund (1994: 77–78).

but none has gained scholarly acceptance.[21] However, if there is a lacuna directly before it, the beginning of this sentence may have been lost, leading to these ambiguities. The main challenge of this interpretation that the contrast between events on earth and in heaven depends on textual emendation, while the juxtaposition of the earth and the journey to heaven is narratively awkward.

Building on earlier scholarship,[22] Andreas Heil referred to the first exchange between Hercules and Claudius, in which the god addresses the emperor with the following Homeric quotation: τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν, ποίη πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; (5, 4),[23] to which Claudius replies: Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι πέλασσεν (ibid.).[24] This wind may be interpreted as the force that carried Claudius to heaven, specifically the flatulence that escaped loudly from his bowels, while he was dying, as described vividly by the narrator: *Et ille quidem animam ebulliit (…) maiorem sonitum emisisset illa parte* (4, 2–3).[25] His soul was discharged with such force after Claudius' death that he was propelled toward heaven and subsequently approached heaven's door. Interestingly, Claudius states that he came Ἰλιόθεν, from Troy, which serves a pun on the Latin *de ilio*.[26] This joke also echoes Nero's mocking remark, reported by Cassius Dio, that Claudius became a god through a mushroom. It would probably be the best and most scathing joke in the entire *Apocolocyntosis*, because in

[21] Cf. Weinreich (1923: 58), Lund (1994: 77–78).

[22] Athanassakis (1974: 15), Roth (1987: 807), Dobesch (2002: 63–65).

[23] 'Who are you, whence among men do you come, where is your city and who are your kin?' This precise wording does not appear in Homer; instead, a similar line is found: τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; (*Od*. 1, 170; 10, 325; 14, 187; 15, 264; 19, 105; 24, 298). Seneca may have misquoted the verse from memory, or the discrepancy may stem from textual transmission errors. Alternatively, Seneca may have deliberately attributed the misquoted words to characterise Hercules as unfamiliar with Homer, whose work he likely knew only vaguely and misrecalled.

[24] 'From Ilios the wind bore me to the Cicones.' Also Hom. *Od*. 9, 39.

[25] 'And he expelled his spirit (...) he let out a rather loud noise from that part of his body.'

[26] 'From the bowels', cf. Heil (2006: 197–199).

this way both Claudius and the idea of deified emperors are derided to an unprecedented degree, while also alluding to the rumour that Claudius was poisoned. However, precisely this fact suggests that Seneca did not intend this ridicule, as we would expect it to be reiterated in several other places, such as at the meeting of the gods, where the deification of Claudius is debated and, for example, the unknown deity denies that Claudius possesses divine qualities (8). The emperor's limp is regularly mocked (1, 2; 5, 2), so we might expect the same to occur with this unique ascension. Furthermore, this raises the question of why Claudius, as we have already seen, initially walked with a limp on the Via Appia before being propelled to heaven, i.e. why he only then experienced this ascension and not during or directly after his death. Finally, a return to earth through flatulence can be ruled out for Claudius and Mercury.

What conclusions, then, can be drawn regarding Claudius' ascension to heaven? Three of the four possibilities can be dismissed with relative certainty: Seneca's deliberate omission of the ascension in order to maintain the satire's conciseness (Weinreich), his inability to shape it (Heinze), or Claudius' rocket-like flight to heaven (Heil). Koster's idea that the ascension was lost but seamlessly integrated into the surviving text, rendering the lacuna nearly imperceptible, is plausible in some respects. However, it raises challenges, particularly in identifying its location. The ascension must be designed to keep Claudius unaware of his destination. If propelled skyward by severe flatulence, he should understand that he is approaching the gods. One might argue that Claudius is so intellectually limited that he fails to grasp this; yet, he subsequently demonstrates greater wit than Hercules by responding to the latter's Homeric quotation with a clever verse that Hercules fails to understand. Moreover, the ascension must also allow for a return journey by a similar route, since Seneca provides no additional information regarding the means of their return.

It is particularly unfortunate that the text breaks off just as Claudius delivers what appears to be his only extended speech in the satire. His concluding words, *Sed quoniam volo* *** (7, 5),[27] hint at an imminent revelation of his intentions. Elsewhere in the *Apocolocyntosis*, the characters speak extensively about Claudius, but he is rarely allowed to speak for himself. Knowledge of the content of the lacuna would greatly enhance our understanding of the satire, particularly regarding whether Claudius himself proposed his deification, which he does not mention in the surviving text. However, it remains unclear how exactly the ascension would have fit into this part of the satire. Claudius cannot recount the ascension himself, as he is unaware of his location. Similarly, it is unlikely that any god would claim to have elevated him to heaven. After all, the deceased emperor has only one advocate: Hercules, who initially intends to attack Claudius with his club but later helps persuade the other gods of his apotheosis. Thus, even Hercules cannot be said to have raised Claudius to heaven. It is conceivable that a comedy of errors occurs, where a god intends to elevate another figure to heaven, as seen with Caesar's ascent on a cloud in the *Metamorphoses*, but mistakenly takes Claudius instead, thus setting the plot in motion. Such mix-ups are common in satirical literature, as seen in the *Menaechmi* by Plautus, in which the two twins are constantly confused with each other. A possible candidate for this confusion could be Marcus Iunius Silanus, the consul in the year 46. Tacitus and Cassius Dio report that he was the first victim of Agrippina following the death of Claudius, as she feared that he, as a great-grandson of Augustus, might become emperor instead of her son, the youthful Nero (Tac. *Ann*. 13, 1, 1–2; D.C. 61, 6, 5). Accordingly, he was poisoned with the same poison that Agrippina had previously administered to Claudius (D.C. 61, 6, 4). It is therefore conceivable that one of the gods orchestrated Silanus' ascension in recognition of his achievements and noble lineage,

[27] 'But because I want ***'.

but Claudius ultimately usurped this role. Caligula's mocking remark about Silanus as a golden sheep (*pecus aurea*, Tac. *Ann*. 13, 1, 1), combined with the Menippean tradition of heavenly ascensions, suggests that the gods sent a literal golden sheep as the vehicle for Silanus' ascension. While walking along the Via Appia for reasons unknown, Claudius may have encountered and mounted the golden sheep, perhaps believing it would expedite his travel, unaware that it would ascend to heaven. In this way, not only the deceased emperor but also Silanus becomes an object of ridicule, as the epithet 'golden sheep' mocks his perceived inactivity.[28] Furthermore, the sheep could serve as the vehicle for Claudius and Mercury's return to earth. Even if this interpretation is accepted, one might still expect an additional reference to Silanus in the *Apocolocyntosis*, for instance, during the Senate meeting in heaven, since presumably one of the gods must have dispatched the golden sheep. Such a reference, however, is conspicuously absent.[29] Thus, the exact nature of Claudius' ascension to heaven and the number of lacunae, whether one or two, remain unclear, as too much essential information is missing or ambiguous, making a definitive solution impossible.

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[28] Cf. Koestermann (1967: 233).

[29] His brother Lucius Iunius Silanus is mentioned twice in connection with an alleged incestuous relationship with his sister (8, 2; 10, 4) while Appius Iunius Silanus, who was executed on the orders of Claudius, appears once (11, 5).

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Body, Soul and Sensation: Element of Epicureanism in Lucan. Analysing Luc. *BC* 3, 38–40.

The present paper proposes an unorthodox interpretation of Lucan's Bellum Civile*, with a particular focus on the Epicurean elements within the text. Adopting a multifocal approach to selected verses from the third book of* Bellum Civile *allows for an Epicurean reading through meticulous analysis and comparison with their models. The body and soul, understood as the inner and outer components of the human being, are analysed as constitutive of the sentient human and decisive in their impact on the concept of fearing death. The text of Lucan is given greater depth through the utilisation of Epicurean quotations. The key concepts of "body", "soul", and "sensation" are crucial for comprehending Lucan's lines and interpreting them through the lens of Epicurean philosophy, with the purpose of overcoming the fear of death.*

Keywords: Lucan, Epicureanism, Death, Body, Soul, Sensation, Lucretius

Introduction

To comprehend the philosophical thought in Lucan's work, it is essential to consider the influence of Epicureanism and Stoicism in contemporary society.

During the Hellenistic era, philosophy underwent a shift in focus from theoretical to ethical questions. Two schools of thought, Epicureanism and Stoicism, emerged as the most prominent. Epicurus founded the former upon his arrival in Athens in 306 BC, while Zeno established

the latter around 300 BC. The Stoic school was located in proximity to the Agora, a context that involved it in political debates,[1] while the Epicurean school, known as the "Kepos", functioned as a gathering place where friends lived together, practiced philosophy, and sought to avoid political commitments. The fundamental purpose of Stoicism was to live in conformity with nature, that in ancient thought was perceived as according to reason. In contrast, Epicureanism emphasised the pursuit of pleasure, which has often led to the misconception that Epicurus' philosophy was an ode to hedonism. In truth, Epicurus' concept of pleasure is not merely hedonistic in nature, but rather, it is the pursuit of a life unencumbered by disturbances and excesses. According to Epicurus' *Tetrapharmakos*, the true path to attaining pleasure lies in the absence of fear – whether it be of the gods, of death, or of pain – and in the recognition of the possibility of attaining happiness.

In Rome, Epicureanism was the subject of criticism due to its stance on politics and religion, and to its disengagement from the political sphere. Consequently, Epicureanism was rejected in favour of Stoicism.[2] However, the philosophy found primary support in Herculaneum. Philodemus of Gadara, a prominent adherent of Epicurus and a significant disseminator of his philosophy within the Italic peninsula,

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[1] KlP 5 (1979: 377) *s.v.* Stoa, " Die älteren Stoiker hatten nicht die finanziellen Mittel … so war di St. die einzige Schule, deren Unterricht in einem öffentlichen Gebäude stattfand".

[2] Cic. *De fin.* 2, 76 (*At vero illa quae Peripatetici, quae Stoici dicunt, semper tibi in ore sunt in iudiciis, in senatu. Officium, aequitatem, dignitatem, fidem, recta, honesta, digna imperio, digna populo Romano, omnia pericula pro re publica, mori pro patria,—haec cum loqueris, nos barones stupemus, tu videlicet tecum ipse rides.*) highlights that Engagement in public life requires virtues that Epicureanism refuses to acknowledge, yet which are central to Stoic and Aristotelian thought.

Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 1, 3 (*Sunt enim philosophi et fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent rerum humanarum procurationem deos. Quorum si vera sententia est, quae potest esse pietas, quae sanctitas, quae religio?*) expresses the concern that the Epicurean view of the gods, which denies their involvement in human affairs, could undermine essential Roman principles (*pietas*, *sanctitas*, *religio*).

emerged as a notable figure in this context. In Campania, the Neo-Epicureans exhibited a pronounced sense of identity and purpose. They addressed an aristocratic class that exhibited a strong sense of affiliation with Hellenistic culture and utilised the Greek language.[3] Lucretius, thereafter, delivered Epicurean doctrines in his poem *De Rerum Natura*, translating into Latin the principles of this philosophy, which until then had only been available in Greek. While Stoicism undoubtedly had a wider following among the general Roman public, there was nonetheless a quiet adoption of Epicurean ideas. Michael Erler emphasises that the Romans' pursuit of preserving and substantiating moral values through philosophy contributed to the dissemination of Epicureanism throughout Roman society, a process facilitated by the adaptability of Epicureanism and its focus on pragmatic ethical principles.[4] However, Lucretius served as a paradigm for various authors, especially in the wake of the political crisis that marked the conclusion of the Republican era.[5] In looking ahead to the Neronian era, characterised by the rule of a despotic emperor, it is conceivable that Epicurean ideology could have permeated the intellectual circles that the emperor subjugated. Within this context of repression, the literary work of Lucan is particularly relevant.

In examining Lucan, scholars have long observed an inclination towards Stoicism.[6] However, as early as the beginning of the 20th century, René Pichon suggested that Lucan's work exhibited an eclectic form of Stoicism.[7] Since the mid-20th century, scholars have increasingly recognised the presence of eclectic Stoicism in Lucan's writings. Ambiguities concerning themes such as fatalism, providence, and cosmic

[3] Mellinghoff-Bourgerie (1990: 17–18).
[4] Erler (2019: 124–125).
[5] Mas Torres (2018: 27–28).
[6] Sikes (1923: 195) writes, "Though Lucan was not pheraps an othodox philosopher – the general tone of the Pharasalia is patently Stoic".
[7] Pichon (1912: 216).

structure has led to a critique of Stoicism, resulting in a discernible distancing from its more orthodox doctrines. A notable aspect of Lucan's work is the presence of contradictory elements regarding the role of the divine and the function of providence.[8] Consequently, a smaller group of scholars recognises epicurean elements in Lucan's work and attempts to understand their meaning.[9] In this context, Thomas Baier identifies an Epicurean theology that is tied to the effort to give a rational explanation for myths.[10] Moreover, various commentators recognise Epicurean passages in Lucan's epic, though without explicitly affirming Epicurean positions. This paper draws inspiration from the examination of these commentaries.

In his commentary on verses 39–40 from Book 3 of *Bellum Civile*, Vincent Hunink astutely observes the presence of an Epicurean sentiment, drawing parallels with the works of other authors.[11] However, no studies have yet elucidated the precise significance of these lines, nor their distinctions or affinities through the models and their underlying implications.

The present study will discuss death based on the interrelation between the body, the soul, and the sensation. These elements will be analysed through the words of Lucan and Epicurus, compared to Lucretius and Plato. This analysis aims to suggest that the fundamental difference between the passages lies in their divergent conceptualisations of the relationship between the soul and the sensation.

Death as the end of sensation

[8] For further insight: Due (1970); Schotes (1969); Lapige (1979); Narducci (1979); Leigh (1997).
[9] See Erler (2012), Baier (2010).
[10] Baier (2010).
[11] Hunink (1992: 49).

The third book of *Bellum Civile* opens with Pompey's departure to the East, a journey disturbed by a vivid dream in which his late wife Julia appears.[12] This vision is marked by a sense of disappointment with Pompey's new marriage. She threatens him with the impossibility of dissolving their bond, which she claims will not be averted even after Pompey's death. The apparition that guides the hero is a topos in epic tradition; however, in this instance, it assumes a hostile role, foretelling misfortune. Moreover, subverting tradition, the hero rejects the warning and responds by rationalizing it.[13]

Pompey's reflection on the event is summed up in just three verses.

Luc. *BC* 3, 38–40[14]
Et 'quid ait 'uani terremur imagine uisus?
Aut nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum
aut mors ipsa nihil.'

"Why," said he, "am I terrified by the sight of a meaningless spectre?
Either no feeling remains to the soul after death, or death itself matters not at all."

The question posited in verse 38 disrupts the mystical moment created by the vision, thereby restoring the discourse to a rational plane. The question is rhetorical, as the answer is suggested by the *vani* contained within. Verses 39–40 exhibit a self-answer that can be read as the author's own commentary. The lines are clearly influenced by Epicurean philosophy, both in terms of thematic resonance and as an almost literal

[12] Julia is the daughter of Ceasar, the concept of the family bond here has the power to connect the two characters and to define the civil war. Julia's death is considered in the poem as one of the reasons of the war.
[13] Esposito–Lanzarone–D'Urso (2022: 521).
[14] All quotations from Lucan (text and translation) follow Duff (1928).

echo of Epicurus' teachings, as outlined in his *Letter to Menoeceus*.

> Epic. *Ep. ad Men.* 124[15]
>
> Συνέθιζε δὲ ἐν τῷ νομίζειν μηδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἶναι τὸν θάνατον ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν ἐν αἰσθήσει· στέρησις δέ ἐστιν αἰσθήσεως ὁ θάνατος.
>
> Accustom yourself to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil lie in sensation, whereas death is the absence of sensation.According to Epicurus, death should be considered null for human beings since good and evil are related to sensation, and this ceases with death.

Lucan's *mors ipsa nihil* echoes μηδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἶναι τὸν θάνατον of Epicurus; similarly, *nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum* corresponds in Epicurus to στέρησις δέ ἐστιν αἰσθήσεως ὁ θάνατος. Lucan's use of *aut ... aut*[16] is interesting, as if the author were splitting Epicurus' thoughts. Indeed, the two possibilities that Pompey associates with death, i.e. the deprivation of the soul of sensation or being nothingness, are consequential in the Greek text. In fact, we have the conjunction ἐπεὶ: death is nothingness since after death, a man has no sensation. Death as a deprivation of ἀγαθὸν and κακὸν has no reason to be feared.

To clarify the similarity between the statements of these two authors on the subject of death, it is necessary to consider further aspects. A fundamental concept in understanding the preceding passages is the

[15] All quotations from Epicurus (text and translation) follow Long – Sedley (1987).
[16] Hunink (1992: 50) observes that the presentation of alternative solutions is a recurring theme in Lucan's approach to scientific issues and further suggests that this approach aligns with Lucretius' philosophical standpoint. Moreover, Hessler (2014: 83–84) highlights that the antithesis is a recurring device in Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus*.

idea of a corporeal soul, a concept that is proper to the material and atomistic philosophy of Epicurus, and, specifically, what happens at the body–soul bond by dying. Looking at some passages from the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan's depictions of the horrors of battle and death serve to illustrate this point.

Dissolution of the dying soul

The following lines are part of a substantial section of the third book in which Lucan describes the massacres of the Massilians. During the battle, the Massilians face death in several ways, both incredible and horrific.

Luc. *BC* 3, 469–473

At saxum quotiens ingenti uerberis actu
excutitur, qualis rupes quam uertice montis
abscidit inpulsu uentorum adiuta uetustas,
frangit cuncta ruens nec tantum corpora pressa
exanimat, totos cum sanguine dissipat artus.

Like a crag which length of time, aided by the blast of the winds, tears from a mountaintop, broke all things in its course, not merely crushing out the lives of its victims, but annihilating limbs and blood together.

The metaphor compares the enemies' attack on the target to a rock descending from the elevated summit of a mountain, thereby rendering the victims unable to respond and resulting in the obliteration of their vulnerable bodies and the dissemination of their remains. The initial

observation is that the trithemimeral caesura of Lucan's verse separates the term *exanimat* from the rest of the sentence. The verb in the opening position is given greater charge and is isolated, almost like a lemma in a dictionary. The second part of the verse expands the term, constituting a visual and plastic explanation of it, making it possible for the reader to imagine the scene as if it were performed on stage. The boulder kills the crushed bodies yet literally takes away their souls.

The culmination of the metaphor's power is manifested in the final verse, in which the incipit *exanimat* elucidates the previously implicit content. *Exanimat* summarises the concept of death (TLL 1175.10 explain *exanimo*: *anima, spiritu exuere, vita privare*). This is not merely another way of expressing the concept of death; it conveys the concrete phenomenon of the separation of the soul from the body. The phrase *nec tantum corpora pressa exanimat* encloses the contrast between body and soul, between the outer and inner worlds, and between two distinct representations of existence.

In the following lines, the narrative continues, depicting the ongoing conflict and the persistent loss of life.

> Luc. *BC* 3, 578–579
>
> Hi luctantem animam lenta cum morte trahentes
> Fractarum subita ratium periere ruina
>
> Others, while still drawing breath that struggled against tardy death,
> perished by the sudden downfall of their wrecked craft.

A group of soldiers perish in the destruction of their ships, and their souls are dragged away reluctantly. The concept of *luctor* can be defined as signifying both struggle and opposition, thereby giving concrete form

to the words *luctantem animam*. The soul is dragged along in the process of dying, thus acquiring a corporeal existence. The soul can be interpreted as a metaphor for the soldier who attempts to resist death but is ultimately dragged along by it, gradually slipping away with death itself. Moreover, the graduality of the process is emphasised by the term *semianimes*, referred to the same soldiers at verse 576. This interpretation of the soul's slippery nature aligns with a concept posited by Epicurus, emphasising the material aspect of the soul's existence. In his *Letter to Herodotus*, Epicurus states that the soul is composed of minute particles, atoms. In chapter 65, he further elaborates on this concept, explaining the soul as a corporeal entity that can disengage from the body.

Epic. *Ep. ad Herod.* 65

τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἄθροισμα διαμένον καὶ ὅλον καὶ κατὰ μέρος οὐκ ἔχει τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐκείνου ἀπηλλαγμένου, ὅσον ποτέ ἐστι τὸ συντεῖνον τῶν ἀτόμων πλῆθος εἰς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς φύσιν. Καὶ μὴν καὶ λυομένου τοῦ ὅλου ἀθροίσματος ἡ ψυχὴ διασπείρεται καὶ οὐκέτι ἔχει τὰς αὐτὰς δυνάμεις οὐδὲ κινεῖται, ὥστε οὐδ' αἴσθησιν κέκτηται.

But the rest of the aggregate, when either all or part of it remains, does not have sensation following the separation of however many atoms it takes to make up the nature of the soul. Moreover, when the whole aggregate disintegrates the soul is dispersed and no longer has the same powers, or its motions.

Epicurus' writings articulate the notion of the soul's composition and its relationship to the body. It is argued that the loss of a significant proportion of the atoms constituting the soul results in the body's subsequent deprivation of the faculties associated with the soul, including

sensation.[17] Conversely, the complete destruction of the body is said to cause the dispersion of the soul. Accordingly, the Epicurean passages referenced herein delineate the soul as consisting of atoms existing and flowing within the body yet dissolving at the moment of death. The concept is poetically expressed by Lucan: in the context of a violently destroyed body, the terms *exanimat* and *luctantem anima* appear amid a vocabulary that emphasises corporeal rupture and scattering, linking the soul's departure to the body's destruction. Although Lucan does not refer to atoms explicitly, this language allows us to interpret the soul as bound up with the body's dissolution, which may suggest an Epicurean sense of death as the disaggregation of body and soul.

Sensation is a result of the interaction between body and soul

To comprehend the interconnection of the passages proposed in this paper and to recognise how Lucan's verses can convey an epicurean subtext, it is necessary to consider the role of the floating soul in the body and how the interaction between body and soul is a constitutive element for the sensation. Finally, it is crucial to emphasise the impact of death on these elements.

Epic. *Ep. ad Her.* 64

Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὅτι ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς αἰσθήσεως τὴν πλείστην αἰτίαν δεῖ κατέχειν· οὐ μὴν εἰλήφει ἂν ταύτην, εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ τοῦ λοιποῦ ἀθροίσματος ἐστεγάζετό πως. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἄθροισμα

[17] Long – Sedley (1987: 70–71) about the soul in Epicurus explains, "For him the soul's primary functions are consciousness in all its aspects – especially sensation, thought and emotion – and the transmission of impulses to the body. Of these, thought and emotion are localized in the 'mind'…The other functions belong to the 'spirit', which extends throughout the body and interacts closely with the mind".

παρασκευάσαν ἐκείνη τὴν αἰτίαν ταύτην μετείληφε καὶ αὐτὸ τοιούτου συμπτώματος παρ' ἐκείνης

> We must grasp too that the soul has the major share of responsibility for sensation. On the other hand, it would not be in possession of this if it were not contained in some way by the rest of the aggregate. And the rest of the aggregate, having granted this responsibility to the soul, itself too receives from the soul a share of this kind of accidental attribute – though not of all those which the soul possesses.

In this passage, Epicurus argues that the soul possesses the faculty to perceive sensation, with the body participating in this process. Furthermore, the body provides the stimulus for sensation, which the soul then perceives. Accordingly, Epicurean philosophy posits that the soul consists of minute atoms disseminated throughout the body, which react to the stimuli the senses provide. While the Epicurean theory on this subject has largely been lost, Hossenfelder explains that atoms would be subject to orbital movements that preserve the cohesion of the body when subjected to pleasant stimuli; whereas, when subjected to pain, atoms would be driven to unstable movements that are detrimental to the cohesion of the body.[18] This perspective on the relationship between body and soul places the body as the conduit through which the soul experiences pleasure and pain, as the movement of the body's atoms is interconnected with the movement of the soul's atoms, thereby generating sensation.[19]

In *Ep. ad Herod*. 65 (quoted above), Epicurus asserts that the soul is a subtle body which is part of the organism. When this is destroyed, the soul disperses and loses its faculties. In summary, sensation is a faculty of the soul, yet it cannot exist independently of the body; the death of

[18] Hossenfelder (1985: 145).
[19] *Cfr. supra.*

the body, which results in the soul's dispersal, nullifies its faculties.

The relationship between body and soul, which governs the sensation or its cessation, is most clearly articulated in Lucretius, the intermediary of Epicurean knowledge in Rome. In the third book of his work *De rerum natura*, the poet devotes his attention to the theme of the soul.

Lucr. *De re. Nat.* 3, 830sqq.[20]

Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur;
[…]
sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai
discidium fuerit, quibus e sumus uniter apti,
scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,
accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,
non si terra mari miscebitur et mare caelo.
Et si iam nostro sentit de corpore postquam
distractast animi natura animaeque potestas,
nil tamen est ad nos, qui comptu coniugioque
corporis atque animae consistimus uniter apti.

Therefore death is nothing to us, it matters not one jot, since the nature of the mind is understood to be mortal; […] so, when we shall no longer be, when the parting shall have come about between body and spirit from which we are compacted into one whole, then sure enough nothing at all will be able to happen to us, who will then no longer be, or to make us feel, not if earth be commingled with sea and sea with sky. And grant for the moment that the nature of mind and power of spirit does feel after it has been torn away from our body,

[20] Text and translation follow Rouse (1924).

> yet that is nothing to us, who by the welding and wedding together of body and spirit exist compacted into one whole.

Lucretius's theory posits that death does not affect man because the soul is mortal. The disunion of the soul and body signifies the termination of the capacity to experience sensation. This is because humans are constituted of the whole of soul and body, and the moment they separate, humans cease to exist.[21] Even if the sensation does not perish, it is of no relevance to humans, who thus need not to worry about it.

In agreement with Epicurus and, perhaps, as a model for Lucan, Lucretius argues that death is not a concern for humanity and attempts to clarify the reasons for these beliefs. Lucretius's treatise is predicated on the duality of the soul and body, and their mortality, a standpoint that is likely adopted to elucidate a fundamental theme that accentuates the disparities with Stoicism, a philosophy that regards the concept of mortality and immortality of the soul as more intricate.[22] Lucretius also hypothesises a continuation of sensation; this, remaining relegated only to the soul, now separated from the body, would not afflict the dead man in any way. The *nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum* in Lucan

[21] Joncheray (2020) writes about the verse 830: "En effet, la mort est privée de réalité par rapport à nous qui sommes encore dans la vie (*ad nos*). La première personne du pluriel désigne ici le vivant en tant qu'individu, c'est-àdire comme être possédant à la fois la sensibilité, caractéristique du vivant, et une identité propre faisant sa singularité."

[22] In verse 847, Lucretius puts forward the concept of palingenesis, which is the reorganisation of atoms with the potential to revive a dying subject. This notion is further elaborated upon in the commentary provided by Ernout–Robin (1962) and Bailey (1947), which draws parallels with the philosophical tenets espoused by Heraclitus, as well as the Stoic doctrine propagated by Zeno and Chrysippus. The cited commentaries further elucidate that Epicurus would have considered this notion as not implausible, given the indestructibility of atoms. However, Epicurus attributes events to fortuitous chance; thus, although palingenesis is possible, it would not be necessary. In Lucan, however, the prospect of palingenesis is not entertained. The text of the *Bellum Civile* is pragmatic and does not require recourse to philosophical dissertations. However, the absence of the hypothetical palingenesis and the choice of words could be attributed to a direct reference to the Epicurean model.

is not a direct quotation from Lucretius, but it encapsulates the sense of his broader argument. Lucretius elucidates how death signifies the disunion of the soul and body, *quibus e sumus uniter apti*; this disunion precipitates the dissolution of the sentient self and, consequently, the incapacity to experience sensation. While asserting the preservation of this ability, Lucretius conceptualises death as the disunion of the body from the soul as from the *animae potestas*, which is precisely the capacity to feel. In its broader and more articulate form, Lucretius's discourse thus functions as a re-proposition of Epicurus's theories concerning the notion of the soul's faculties being diminished upon death and the symbiotic relationship between soul and body in their exercise, as set out in chapters 64–65 of his *Letter to Herodotus*.

Up to this point, it has been noted that Lucan's text is comparable to that of Epicurus and the verses of Lucretius. The idea of death that does not cause affliction makes it possible to associate Lucan's verses with a passage from Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, as has been done in various commentaries. Further examination of this text provides a clearer understanding of how a widespread concept in classical culture could be interpreted with different nuances, emphasising the potential for an Epicurean interpretation of Lucan's verses.

Pl. *Ap. Soc.* 40 c[23]

δυοῖν γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστιν τὸ τεθνάναι· ἢ γὰρ οἷον μηδὲν εἶναι μηδὲ αἴσθησιν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολή τις τυγχάνει οὖσα καὶ μετοίκησις τῇ ψυχῇ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον.

[23] Text follows Burnet (1961 [1900]); translation is mine.

> To be dead is one of two things: either it is like being nothing and the dead one has no perception of anything, or, according to what is said, it happens to be a change or a migration of the soul from this place to another.

In Plato's writings, the concept of death is explored through the lens of two possible outcomes: the absence of sensation or the transmigration of the soul.[24]

While there is a correspondence between the concept expressed in Lucan and the Platonic text, from which the pattern *aut* ... *aut* (ἢ ... ἢ in Plato) could be taken, the two texts present differences. The two options that Lucan presents in his verses, i.e. that death leaves no sensation or that death is nothing, in Plato represent two aspects of a single option set apart from μηδὲ (in an array of alliteration: μηδὲν εἶναι μηδὲ αἴσθησιν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς); that is, they are two parts of the same system. In contrast, the latter possibility, as outlined by Plato, is characterised by the survival of the soul (μεταβολή – μετοίκησις), a concept that is central to his philosophical system.[25] Closely examining the similarities reveals significant differences, with the primary distinction lying in the textual differences. Plato writes that τὸν τεθνεῶτα (the dead one) has no sensation.[26] In Lucan, death leaves no sensation to the soul

[24] Van Harten (2011: 168, n.4) provides further bibliographical references on the issue of the two Platonic options, which are considered non-exhaustive as they do not propose other positions on death known to the Athenian people. For example, the possibility of punishment is also present in Platonic philosophy.

[25] The initial option delineates the notion of death as a state of eternal sleep, devoid of sensation. Socrates' argument appears to be centred on the second option. In the preceding passages, Socrates asserts that death is the supreme good for humanity, a notion that can be clarified through the passages in chapter 40sqq. The prospect of survival might be regarded as the most desirable state for Socrates, as it would allow him to continue his pursuit as a philosopher. Christiansen (2000: 51) has argued that this option would express the tension to a better world, such as to a higher level of reality and experience, typical of Plato's theory of trascendence.

[26] Roochnik (1985: 214) highlights that as, in the *Apology*, Socrates describes this as a

(Luc. *BC* 3, 39–40: *nihil sensus… a morte relictum*). In Plato's philosophy, this relationship between soul and sensation is not explicitly delineated; the dead individual experiences no sensation or undergoes a transformation of the soul. In contrast, in Lucan's perspective, it is the soul itself that is devoid of perception upon death. This concept aligns with Epicurus' theory that sensation ceases with death because of the ultimate dissolution of the soul (Epic. *Ep. ad Men*. 124: στέρησις δέ ἐστιν αἰσθήσεως ὁ θάνατος). In the Epicurean doctrine, sensation is contingent on the physical body. Consequently, the dissolution of the soul–body duality, a central theme in the transition from Lucretius's work, results in the cessation of sensation. Despite the evident parallels with Plato's text, Lucan appears to adopt an almost literal interpretation of Epicurus' philosophy, encapsulating its fundamental tenets and synthesising the explanatory framework primarily provided by Lucretius.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that there are striking parallels between Lucan *BC* 3, 39–40 and Epicurus *Ep. ad Men*. 124, which appear to be more than a mere quotation or a casual reference. Through the parallel with other texts, Lucan appears to adopt Epicurus' model, both in terms of lexical choice and in his summary of the philosophy itself. He adopts the Epicurean doctrine, which posits that sensation is experienced by the contingent relationship of the soul with the body. The concept of death, as the dissolution of the soul–body duality, signifies the termination of sensation.

Even though the Epicurean interpretation of Lucan's passage has been the subject of extensive debate and is not universally accepted,[27]

peaceful dreamless sleep, the absence of sensation would not make it possible for this dreamless sleep to be pleasant.

[27] Hunink (1992: 49).

the proposed analysis demonstrates that the key to interpreting the passage lies in the relationship between the three concepts of body, soul and sensation. The concatenation of these concepts and their utilisation in the description of the concept of death facilitates the association of Lucan's verses with Epicurus *Ep. ad Men*. 124.

Epicurus's philosophy on the subject is outlined in his *Letter to Herodotus*[28], where he asserts that death is defined by the loss of the faculties of the soul. Upon the dissolution of the body and its separation from the soul, the latter is no longer capable of perception and, in the absence of these components, death is devoid of sensation. Consequently, Epicurus and Lucan posit that death exerts an influence on the body–soul–sensation system and that the alteration of the equilibrium between these components ultimately results in death. The argument is thus advanced that in the event of death, and the concomitant disruption of the balance, no sensation is experienced and that fear of death is, therefore, unnecessary.

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[28] Epic. *Ep. ad Herod.* 63: τοῦτο δὲ πᾶν αἱ δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς δηλοῦσι καὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ αἱ εὐκινησίαι καὶ αἱ διανοήσεις καὶ ὧν στερόμενοι θνήσκομεν.

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Lana Marina, id est Sea Silk

Among the textiles of antiquity, there are fabrics and clothing materials that are almost only described in literature, with the help of which conclusions can be drawn about the textiles used in antiquity. Yet, in the case of these clothing materials, even the exact identification often encounters obstacles due to the different names used for the textiles and the insufficiency of the surviving archaeological evidence. In my study, I intend to describe lana marina, that is, sea silk, one of the materials considered very rare and expensive in antiquity. My goal is to summarise its characteristics, the method of making sea silk, its history, and the problems surrounding its name, and also to describe its Hungarian aspects, as well as the Sea silk project, founded in 1998 with the intent of searching and preserving knowledge about sea silk and its production.

Keywords: silk, seashell, linguistics, textile, *byssus*, *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri*

Since they were made of organic materials, very few of the textiles of antiquity have survived: at most, small pieces of fabric, from which we can draw conclusions about the techniques used in antiquity. However, there are also fabrics and cloths that are almost only entirely described in literature. In the cases of these textiles, even the precise identification of these textiles is often hampered by the different names used for the materials, the scarcity of archaeological evidence, and the long time horizons of many centuries. In the following article, I would like to summarise the characteristics, preparation method, history, problems surrounding the naming and the Hungarian aspects of a material that

was considered very rare and expensive in antiquity: sea silk. At the end of the article, I would like to briefly describe the Sea Silk Project, which was founded to research and preserve sea silk production and the knowledge surrounding this material. In this article I also evaluate the references to sea silk from Sextus Placitus, whose work is one of the ancient sources on the material.

What is *lana marina*?

Sea silk is one of the mysterious textiles of antiquity, referred to as *'lana marina'* in the literature of the time. In antiquity it was also known as sea wool, made from the so-called bisque yarn of the *Pinna nobilis*, the large ham shell. The mussel itself is native to the Mediterranean, found in shallow waters up to 40 metres deep, and prefers clean water and sunny places. The mussel lives embedded in the seabed, using clinging threads called byssus filaments, and grows to 10-15 centimetres in the first year of its life but can grow up to 120 centimetres and live for over 50 years.[1] The mussels were fished in large quantities, not only for their byssus fibres, which are important for this study, but also for food, and as with all large marine molluscs, they were also hunted for pearls. Due to overfishing, the mussel is now a protected species.[2]

The making of *lana marina* from the bisque yarns of the mussel is a long and meticulous process. Today, very few people make this special yarn in an artisanal way, handing down the techniques through generations. Their experience gives us an idea of how this material was made in ancient times. Obviously, the process in antiquity must have looked quite similar to the techniques used today. The bisque yarns extracted from the sea are first washed in seawater to remove as much debris

[1] Muschelseide: Biology.
[2] McKinley (1998: 34–35).

as possible. They are then rinsed with clean water, and any remaining impurities are removed by hand. This is followed by another wash, and finally the yarn is dried between two cloths in a place protected from the sun. After drying, any remaining slack is removed, and then the fibres are thoroughly combed and spun into yarn.[3]

Depending on its origin, the finished product is a lightweight, heat-retaining fabric that is bronze, copper, golden yellow, brown, olive green or even black in colour and closely resembles silk. Perhaps due to the wide range of natural colours occurring, the available sources do not mention the dyeing of *lana marina* garments.[4] As for its most common colour, gold: for a long time, some researchers thought that the golden fleece, well known from Argonautica, could be identified as *lana marina*, but this assumption was soon abandoned.[5]

Byssus, but not *byssus*

One of the biggest problems in researching the history of sea silk is the scientific name of the silk itself. The zoological name for the material used to make it, the so-called 'fibre beard' of the mussel, is the Latin word *'byssus'*, meaning fine linen or cotton cloth.[6] This Latin word for the material comes from the ancient Greek feminine second-accent word 'βύσσος', which has a similar but more general meaning.[7] It is worth noting here that in ancient Greek, the masculine word 'βυσσός', which has its accent at the end and means 'the depths' and 'the bottom of the sea',[8] makes the word a simple but deceptive homonym. This also may have been the

[3] Muschelseide: Handicraft.
[4] Muschelseide: Handicraft.
[5] McKinley (1998: 26–29).
[6] Finály and Georges (1869: 652) and Lewis–Short (1879, 256).
[7] Györkösi–Kapitányffy–Tegyey (1993: 195) and Liddell–Scott (1901: 296).
[8] Györkösi–Kapitányffy–Tegyey (1993: 195) and Liddell–Scott (1901: 296).

basis for the later identification of the mussel with the word *'byssus'* by zoologists. Chinese literature aptly refers to the animal from which this particular silk is made as a water sheep or sea lamb (*shuiyang*).[9]

As for the Latin rendering of the Old Greek feminine, the second-accented 'βύσσος' word as *'byssus'*, the original Greek term goes back to the Hebrew word *Būṣ*, which also means 'fine cloth' and occurs in several places in the Old Testament. This fact is used in literature to prove that sea silk is mentioned in the Bible. However, the etymological link alone hardly proves that the Hebrew word also originally meant sea silk, so the theory that sea silk appears in the Bible is an a posteriori conclusion which cannot be taken for granted in the absence of further data.[10] The terms *'byssus'* and 'sea silk' have then become almost completely confused over time. By the time it enters modern scientific literature, such as English, German, French and Italian encyclopaedias, *'byssus'* is either taken to mean simply 'sea silk' or is used as a synonym for it.[11]

Going back to antiquity, this precious material is mentioned only twice in the texts of the time as *lana marina*: once by Marcellus in his *De medicamentis*[12] and once by Placitus in his *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri*,[13] which is based on the subject of medicine. The *Pinna Nobilis*, or *Pinna*, as it was called, a species of shellfish that produced the raw material for sea silk, was known even to the ancient Greeks. The most detailed description of it is found in Aristotle's *Historia Animalia*,[14] but the silk is only mentioned in Greek Letter literature once, just in passing.[15]

[9] Székely (2013: 164).
[10] Muschelseide: Linguistics. For more information on the appearance of *byssus* in the Bible, see the linguistic aspects section of the *Sea silk project* website.
[11] Muschelseide: Linguistics. The encyclopaedia articles concerned can be found in the linguistic aspects section of the *Sea silk project* website.
[12] Niedermann (1968: 185, VIIII. 73).
[13] Brasavola (1538: 8).
[14] McKinley (1998: 22–24) and Wentworth (IV, 4, 528a, 20–528b; V, 15, 547b, 15sqq.–548a, 6sqq.; VIII, 1, 588a, 14–15sqq.).
[15] Wright (1928: 41).

Of course, using Aristotle's data, Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* also gives us a description of *Pinna*, but in his extensive encyclopaedia, he also does not mention sea silk either. This source will be discussed in more detail below. From the imperial period we find indirect references to sea silk in Tertullian and in the imperial price lists of Diocletian, and also probably the *'pinnika'* mentioned by Periplus in the *Maris Erythraei* is a reference to sea silk.[16]

Lana marina in ancient times

Just as the term *'byssus'* is nowadays very difficult to distinguish from sea silk, the history of *Pinna Nobilis* and *lana marina* is also inseparable. As mentioned above, although Aristotle does not comment on the silk itself, he does give a detailed account of the mussel. He describes its habitat and appearance and even mentions that a species of shrimp coexists with the *Pinna*,[17] although the relevant data in ancient comic literature cast doubt on whether this coexistence is symbiotic. In any case, this shellfish was so important to the Greeks that it even appears on their coins.[18] As for the other important Greek source mentioned, the letter of Galen in Greek, there is no detailed description of the silk, understandably, since the writer merely informs his addressee that, in addition to the purchase of sea sponges, they are also asked to purchase *lana marina*.[19]

In Roman times, Pliny gave a detailed description of *Pinna*, closely following Aristotle's work, but makes no mention of sea silk, which is surprising given the *Naturalis Historia*'s many descriptions of textiles and plant materials. Instead, following his Greek source, Pliny also focuses his description on the relationship between *Pinna* and the

[16] Székely (2013: 163–164) and W. Salgó (2010: 49; 59).
[17] McKinley (1998: 22–23).
[18] McKinley (1998: 30–34).
[19] Alciphron (1928: 41).

shrimps.[20] This relationship is mentioned by several authors, including Nicander, Apicius,[21] and in two of Cicero's works: the *De finibus bonorum et malorum* and the *De natura deorum*, where he cites this symbiosis as a moral example.[22]

In relation to the appearance of *Pinna* and *lana marina* in Roman literature, it is interesting to note that while we have descriptions of *Pinna* from both oratory and scholarly works, *lana marina* is only mentioned in two medical works by Marcellus and Placitus. In both of these works, sea silk is recommended for the application of a substance for healing. Both works focus on medicine and therefore do not define *lana marina* itself. From the lack of definitions, two conclusions can be drawn, but neither can be clarified in the absence of further data. Therefore, either one or the other hypothesis is acceptable. The first conclusion is that the use of *lana marina* was widespread and therefore part of the general knowledge of the late ancient Romans, and that is why it did not need further definition. The second conclusion is the opposite of the first one, namely that the supposed users knew exactly what it was due to its rarity and special nature. In this case, too, there was no need to specify what the substance was either.

The sea silk of Aquincum

The earliest specimen of sea silk[23] is from Aquincum, the present excavation area of the Szemlőhegy, found on 12 August 1912.[24] Two burial sites were found in the Roman cemetery here, one of which had already been excavated at the time of discovery, while in the other, a female

[20] McKinley (1998: 34–35).
[21] McKinley (1998: 34).
[22] McKinley (1998: 31).
[23] Maeder (2008: 113).
[24] Székely (2013: 163).

mummy was discovered by archaeologists.[25] Thanks to the coins placed next to the mummy, the date of the closure of the tomb was estimated to be between 326 AD and the 5th century AD.[26] The discovery was made by Ferenc Hollendonner, who also inventoried the objects found in the tombs[27] and found that sea silk, which he described as a brownish,[28] coarse, brittle, easily breakable material most resembling human hair, was incorporated between the wrapping of the female mummy.[29]

Unfortunately, the excavation diary and the original analysis disappeared during the Second World War, and the only information we have on the mummy and the excavation is Hollendonner's work; therefore, further investigation of the claims is impossible. However, his publications and his professional knowledge make it likely that his identification of the unknown material found on the mummy as sea silk was correct. Hollendonner, in his short, two-page report published in 1917, says that after microscopic examination of the cloth found in the grave, he was convinced that the unknown material could not be of vegetable origin or animal hair and that it must therefore be a silk-like material of some other origin.[30] He further explains that there are striking differences between silk made from the secretions of silkworms and silk made from the byssus yarn of *Pinna Nobilis*.[31] The analysis demonstrates that Hollendonner must have been familiar with the literature on the biological and chemical structure of the sea silk; hence, the identification of the material can be reliable.[32]

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[25] Székely (2013: 163).
[26] Maeder (2017: 114) More detailed information on the coins used for dating can be found in Póczy (1998).
[27] Székely (2013: 163).
[28] Székely (2013: 163).
[29] Maeder (2017: 113) and Szilágyi (1939: 5).
[30] Hollendonner (1917: 36–37).
[31] Hollendonner (1917: 37).
[32] Maeder (2008: 113).

In contrast to traditional silk, the fibres of sea silk are twisted, ending in a point, and have a cross-section resembling a flattened ellipse.[33] However, in Hollendonner's opinion, the easiest way to distinguish between the two materials is to use polarised light: while sea silk only refracts light once, so the field of vision remains dark during the experiment, real silk refracts light twice, resulting in threads of different bright colours in the field of vision. In the case of the Aquincum finds, the field of view remained dark, as is typical of sea silk, and was chemically identical to the samples taken from *Pinna Nobilis*.[34]

It should also be noted that the researcher, thanks to his botanical training, was aware of the difference between the terms used for zoological byssus and ancient sea silk.[35] This is demonstrated by the fact that he himself found it important to point out in his account that the term *'byssus'*, which is commonly used, including in the Bible, does not refer to sea silk but to the fineness of the cloth used.[36]

The sea silk from the Middle Ages to the 20th century

For a long time in the Middle Ages, sea silk was thought to have been used to make clerical vestments. However, this claim proved to be false in light of later research on papal vestments, which were made of silk mixed with linen and gold threads and not of sea silk. The misunderstanding may have been caused by the fact that both *lana marina* and clothes made from the feathers of native birds were referred to as 'material that changes colour in the light' and may also have been contributed to by the 9th-century letter in which we find the first reference to the production of sea silk in Sardinia. Evidence that sea silk was already

[33] Hollendonner (1917: 37).
[34] Hollendonner (1917: 37).
[35] Maeder (2017: 113).
[36] Hollendonner (1917: 36).

a special treasure in the Middle Ages is provided by a letter written by Bertha, daughter of Lothair II, around 906 AD, in which she asks for the friendship of the Baghdad Caliph and mentions twenty hoods made of sea silk as a way of demonstrating her wealth.[37]

Mediaeval Jewish sources also mention *lana marina* as 'wool growing in the sea' or 'the wonder of the Western world'. There are also references to the sea silk in poems from 13th-century Italy and 14th-century Byzantium. Also, from this century comes the oldest surviving piece of *lana marina* clothing in the world, a knitted cap. The survival of this find, like that of many other ancient textiles made of sea silk, was ensured by the fact that it belonged to a private collection, but its age could similarly only be determined from the age of the other pieces in the collection. It was associated with Renaissance Florence, which was a centre of trade in expensive fabrics, and several records refer to *lana marina* as 'fish wool'.[38]

During the 15th and 16th centuries, sea silk was more of a curiosity; *Pinna Nobilis* was usually mentioned in the travel diaries of explorers, travellers and young people on their so-called grand tour, and also collectors of *lana marina* objects. It was also around this time that the first books on natural history were published, which already mentioned the great ham shells and sea silk. Following the Age of Discovery, the 18th century saw a renewed interest in *lana marina*; more natural history research on the shellfish was carried out, and attempts were made to revive the production of sea silk in France and Germany, but unfortunately without success. It is therefore interesting that most of our surviving material comes from this period. In the 19th century, sea silk garments were exhibited at several world fairs in Europe and America. At the same time, the production of *lana marina* was flourishing again

[37] Muschelseide: History, Middle-Ages.
[38] Muschelseide: History, Middle-Ages.

in Sardinia and in Apulia, now known as Puglia, but the Second World War quickly put an end to this development.[39] Between 1950 and 2000, sea silk was barely mentioned in academic works until 1998, when Daniel McKinley's *Pinna and her silken beard: a foray into historical misappropriations*, still considered a seminal work on *lana marina*, was published.[40]

Sea silk project

The Sea silk project was founded by Felicitas Maeder from Switzerland. She came up with the idea for the project in the summer of 1997, when she and her colleagues at the Natural History Museum in Basel were trying to create an exhibition of shells and snails for all generations to enjoy. One of the suggestions that came up during the preparations was sea silk, which immediately caught Maeder's attention. As a researcher, she immediately set about gathering sources, but her doubts remained after reading both the biology and the textiles literature, due to their contradictory wording.[41]

During the course of her further research, she even began to question the very existence of sea silk. The first problem was to find a term to name the objects in her possession, a task aided by her pre-existing interest in linguistics. By the winter of 1997–98, she had found evidence of *lana marina* when she was able to exhibit one glove from the Zoological Collection of the University of Rostock in the Natural History Museum in Basel, as well as a piece of sea silk and weaving tools from the Museum der Kulturen in Basel. In 1998, the Sea Silk Project began to take shape with three declared aims: 1) to inventory all objects that can be found today, 2) to explore the history of the material and the craft of

[39] Muschelseide: History, modern Times. More information about the events I mentioned can be found on the Sea silk project website.
[40] Muschelseide: History, Sea-silk in the new millennium (2000-2020).
[41] Muschelseide: Sea silk project.

making sea silk, and 3) to document the techniques still available of a dying craft.[42]

In 2000, together with Marcel Halbeisen of the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research (Eidgenössische Materialprüfungs- und Forschungsanstalt, EMPA), they were able to develop an analytical method to identify sea silk. In the same year, together with Elisabeth Wiederkehr, she came up with the idea of a sea silk exhibition, which in 2004 became the world's first exhibition on the theme of sea silk, titled *Muschelseide – Goldene vom Fäden vom Meeresgrund* / *Bisso Marino – fili d'oro dal fondo del mare*, in collaboration with the Museum of Natural History and Culture in Basel.[43]

In 2013, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Salento, in partnership with the Centre for Textile Research of the University of Copenhagen, organised the first conference on sea silk, *Treasures of the Sea – Sea silk and purple dye in Antiquity*. This conference was the first time that Assuntina and Giuseppina Pes from Sant'Antioco demonstrated the process of making sea silk.[44]

Thanks to the possibilities of the internet, the Sea silk project has collected a wealth of previously inaccessible sources from the 16th to the 19th century in many languages from different countries. Thanks to modern search engines, it is now easier than ever to find the information you need. That is what made it possible for the Sea silk project to be published online in three languages: English, German and Italian in 2010, and in 2019, after a complete overhaul when new discoveries and objects were added to the system that now includes around 100 unique objects. To this day, the project continues to add to our understanding of the sea silk and may uncover previously unknown data.[45]

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[42] Muschelseide: Sea silk project.
[43] Muschelseide: Sea silk project.
[44] Muschelseide: History, Sea-silk in the new millennium (2000-2020).
[45] Muschelseide: Sea silk project.

However, at the present stage of research, this is all the information we have on the Placitus locus under study, including the sources that have been discovered so far. Hopefully, further discoveries will also help to clarify my own conclusion about sea silk, namely that there was no need to further define *lana marina* because of its notoriety, or that the lack of a description of it is precisely because it was already a rare material that was known to all and therefore no further information was needed.

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Laronia's revenge: A female interlocutor in Juvenal's *Satire 2*

In the course of the invective against hypocrisy in Satire *2, Laronia, the only female interlocutor in Juvenal's corpus to deliver a longer monologue, emerges to speak. In line with the overall theme of the satire, her 26-line speech targets hypocritical, effeminate men who conceal their true sexual identity. The role of these men in* Satire *2 parallels the portrayal of Roman women in* Satire *6, as in both cases the narrator focuses on them while presenting a central 'sin' (hypocrisy and infidelity, respectively), alongside other minor transgressions (e.g., distortion of religious rites, conduct unworthy of the Roman elite). However, this does not imply that they are the sole perpetrators of these transgressions, nor that they bear exclusive responsibility for such phenomena.*

Keywords: Juvenal, Roman verse satire, sexism

The accusation of homophobia, primarily grounded in Satires 2 and 9, repeatedly emerges in scholarly research concerning Juvenal's satires, his narrator, and the poet himself.[1] In this paper, I examine the former text, focusing on a seemingly minor character, Laronia, who delivers her speech between lines 37 and 63. In identifying the primary target of Satire 2's invective, two possible interpretations arise: on the one hand, the satire criticizes hypocrisy and moral inconsistency; on the other

[1] To cite just a few examples: Fone (2000: 54): 'All this derision of *pathici* and *cinaedi* foreshadows some darker chapters in human history…'; Braund (2004: 230): 'Juvenal's satiric persona is the same angry extremist, with the addition of misogyny to his homophobia, chauvinism, and other bigotries.'

hand, its central figures are men perceived as effeminate and engaging in same-sex relationships.[2] The invective tone towards these men is strikingly harsh, and at some points seems particularly homophobic to the modern reader, as the following passage demonstrates:

> castigas turpia, cum sis
> inter Socraticos notissima fossa cinaedos?
> hispida membra quidem et durae per bracchia saetae
> promittunt atrocem animum, sed podice leui
> caeduntur tumidae medico ridente mariscae.
> (Juv. 2, 9–13)[3]

In these opening lines, the satirical narrator expresses his desire to flee from Rome to the farthest corners of the world, frustrated by the hypocrites of the city who pretend to be protectors of morality despite being guilty of sexual immorality.[4] Starting from line 21, other (primarily historical) examples of hypocrisy are presented before Laronia takes the stage, delivering the longest speech by a female speaker in the Juvenalian Satires. The key motif of the next section is once again hypocrisy and inconsistency, centering on the effeminate Creticus orating in the court. Before presenting an inverted ritual of Bona Dea performed solely by men, the satirist draws a contrast between the civil war fought by the

[2] For the sake of simplicity, they will be referred to as homosexual men, while acknowledging the limitations of applying this concept in the context of ancient Rome. See e.g. Williams (2010: 4–6).

[3] 'You condemn shameful acts, yet yours is the most infamous hole of all the Socratic faggots! Hairy legs and stiff bristles all along your arms suggest a rugged spirit beneath, but then a doctor cuts swollen haemorrhoids from your smooth butthole with a smirk.'

[4] It should be noted that when addressing roles, thoughts, ideas, and behaviours, and referring to them as sin, crime, or guilt, no personal value judgment is intended; rather, the views presented are inferred from the utterances of the narrator and the interlocutor.

effeminate Emperor Otho and the antics he displayed on the battlefield.

From line 117, Juvenal introduces Gracchus, a former Salian priest who becomes the wife of a horn player in a ceremony featuring typical wedding elements. The narrator considers the story outrageous, but he focuses primarily on the male bride, referring to him as a wife and employing other terms of feminine grammatical gender to describe him. It is also worth noting that this story is not Gracchus' greatest 'crime' according to the narrator, as he continues his speech with the words *vicit et hoc monstrum* (143), meaning 'Gracchus surpassed even this monstrosity', before recounting how Gracchus presented himself as a gladiator, despite being a noble from an esteemed family. Both of Gracchus' actions that provoke the narrator's indignation share a common feature: in each case, Gracchus' role is incongruous with his birth. The role of a gladiator and noble ancestry, as well as the gladiatorial attire and the toga, are as incongruous with each other as the role of a bride is with being a man, or as a bridal gown is with the cultic attire of the Salian priests. This is what the narrator refers to as a 'great crime', a *nefas tantum* (127): a nobleman becoming a wife, and moreover, the wife of a man of lower status.

In the conclusion of the satire, Juvenal asks the reader to imagine that the Underworld, the realm of Pluto, does indeed exist, and contrasts the spirits of the effeminate men of contemporary Rome with the shades of great Roman heroes. He concludes the satire with an unexpected twist: the narrator, who frequently expresses opinions that seem xenophobic, ends his speech with the bitter realization that the decayed morals of the Eternal City will corrupt even the young foreigners brought to Rome as hostages from the East.[5]

For the interpretation of the satire, Juvenal's most famous poem, the 700-line *Satire 6* on marital infidelity should be considered, as the two

[5] For a detailed discussion of the xenophobia of the Juvenalian narrator, see Gellérfi (2019) and the sources cited therein.

texts share several parallels.[6] Both satires focus on a specific group within society, which forms the basis of accusations of discrimination against Juvenal: the protagonists of *Satire 6* are Roman wives, while in *Satire 2*, the main characters are men engaged in same-sex relationships. However, in *Satire 6*, Roman women are not criticized solely on the basis of their sex, and strong arguments can be made against an interpretation that views the text and its speaker as clearly misogynistic.[7] Similarly, the primary reason for the attack on the men in *Satire 2* is not their sexual orientation, but their hypocrisy, just as the women in *Satire 6* are reproached for their infidelity. In addition to the presence of hypocrites in *Satire 6* and the theme of marriage in *Satire 2*, both texts explore what might be termed 'secondary themes' that are related to the central sin—hypocrisy and infidelity. Shared themes include the corruption of religious rituals,[8] the portrayal of individuals acting in ways unworthy of their ancestry or status,[9] and the spread of Rome's moral decadence to the more distant parts of the Empire.[10] While these are overarching characteristics of Juvenal's Rome, they are not presented from a general perspective in these satires; instead, the focus is placed on a specific group of people.

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[6] These two texts are often discussed together, as seen, for instance, in Blake's (2020: 3–37) introduction to Sulprizio's commentary and translation.

[7] I discussed the interpretation of *Satire 6* and the misogyny of its narrator in a previous study (Gellérfi [2022]), in which I argued that while *Satire 6* has strong misogynistic features, the Juvenalian narrator should not be considered a misogynistic character. In that study, I briefly explored the parallels between *Satires 6* and *2*, as well as the relationship between the satirical narrator and Laronia; therefore, some of the arguments presented there are revisited in this paper.

[8] For example, see the description of the 'reversed' Bona Dea rituals that exclude women (2, 83–90); and another reference to the Bona Dea rites and the scandal involving P. Clodius Pulcher (6, 314–345).

[9] For example, see the depiction of Gracchus parading as a gladiator (2, 143–148) and the portrayal of Messalina selling her body as a prostitute (6, 114–132).

[10] As mentioned above, according to the final lines of *Satire 2*, the city has a corrupting influence on young men arriving from the East, who, upon returning home, bring Roman morals with them (166–170). In a similar vein, in *Satire 6*, the Egyptians curse the immorality of the unfaithful Eppia (82–84).

Laronia's entrance onto the stage is also driven by the central theme of hypocrisy. Juvenal does not specify a dramaturgical framework for her speech; the most plausible interpretation is that she is mocking a man who invokes the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendi*s—the Julian Law for the Repression of Adultery—to accuse her. The primary aim of her speech is to demonstrate that her accuser lacks the moral authority to pass judgment.

,felicia tempora, quae te
moribus opponunt. habeat iam Roma pudorem:
tertius e caelo cecidit Cato. sed tamen unde
haec emis, hirsuto spirant opobalsama collo
quae tibi? ne pudeat dominum monstrare tabernae.
quod si uexantur leges ac iura, citari
ante omnis debet Scantinia.[11] respice primum
et scrutare uiros, faciunt nam plura; sed illos
defendit numerus iunctaeque umbone phalanges.
magna inter molles concordia. non erit ullum
exemplum in nostro tam detestabile sexu.
Tedia non lambit Cluuiam nec Flora Catullam:
Hispo subit iuuenes et morbo pallet utroque.[12]
numquid nos agimus causas, ciuilia iura
nouimus aut ullo strepitu fora uestra mouemus?
luctantur paucae, comedunt coloephia paucae.
uos lanam trahitis calathisque peracta refertis

[11] The *Lex Scantinia de Venere nefanda* was enacted at some point during the Roman Republic and penalized sexual offenses committed against freeborn young men.
[12] The two 'diseases' mentioned here refer to his affection for performing fellatio and his tendency to adopt the passive role in a homoerotic relationship. His enjoyment of these 'unmanly' behaviours caused him to become pale, resembling a woman, as Roman women—particularly aristocratic matrons—were expected to spend much of their time indoors, which resulted in a lighter complexion. Cf. Sulprizo (2020: 53).

uellera, uos tenui praegnantem stamine fusum
Penelope melius, leuius torquetis Arachne,
horrida quale facit residens in codice paelex.[13]
notum est cur solo tabulas inpleuerit Hister
liberto, dederit uiuus cur multa puellae.
diues erit magno quae dormit tertia lecto.
tu nube atque tace: donant arcana cylindros.
de nobis post haec tristis sententia fertur?
dat ueniam coruis, uexat censura columbas.'
fugerunt trepidi uera ac manifesta canentem
Stoicidae; quid enim falsi Laronia?
(Juv. 2, 38–65)[14]

After Laronia's monologue, the satirical narrator takes the floor again and continues his invective, this time targeting an effeminate man named

[13] It is a matter of debate whether these words contain any mythological reference, cf. Green (1998: *ad loc.*); Courtney (2013: 109); Lorenz (2017: 405).

[14] '"Happy is the time in which you guard the morals! May Rome be ashamed of herself: the third Cato has fallen from the sky! But tell me, where did you get the balm that smells from your hairy neck? Do not blush; show me whose business it is. If you want to invoke law and justice, you should start with the *Lex Scantinia*! Examine the men first, and search among them, for they are more guilty; but there are many of them, and they hide behind shields and defend themselves in formation. There is great harmony among the gay men. But our sex shows no example of such a disgrace: Tedia does not lick Cluvia, nor Flora Catulla! Hispo, on the other hand, goes down on young men and is pale from both diseases at the same time. Do we give defence speeches? Do we learn civil law? Have we ever disturbed your forums with our noise? Few women wrestle, and few eat much meat. But you card wool, you carry the well-worked fleeces in baskets, and you spin the spindle with fine thread more easily than Penelope, more nimbly than Arachnae, just as the fuzzy mistress did while sitting on a stump! We know well why a freedman is Hister's only heir, and, while he lived, why he gave so much to his bride. Rich will be the woman who sleeps third in a great bed. Marry, and stay quiet, and you will receive jewels for your secrecy. And after all this, do they pronounce such a harsh judgement on us? The crows are forgiven by the verdict, and the doves are vexed!" Confused, the little Stoics scattered at hearing this clear and true revelation. After all, has Laronia lied about anything?'

Creticus. Both the content and delivery of Laronia's speech closely mirror those of the satirical narrator. Her speech is inspired by the indignation that Juvenal identifies as the central motivation in his programmatic poem. Her own indignation is provoked by the hypocrisy of her accuser and men like him, a sentiment reflected in the narrator's opening sentence:

> Vltra Sauromatas fugere hinc libet et glacialem
> Oceanum, quotiens aliquid de moribus audent
> qui Curios simulant et Bacchanalia uiuunt.
> (Juv. 2, 1–3)[15]

Both the narrator and Laronia emphasize the contrast between the principles proclaimed by the hypocrites they target and their actual character and behaviour, referencing prominent historical figures, namely Curius and the two Catos, who were regarded as embodiments of traditional Roman morality. In the physical description of homosexual men, who deny their true selves and present themselves as something they are not, both Laronia and the narrator highlight the hairiness that is intended to signify masculinity, yet it is accompanied by telltale signs: fragrance in Laronia's speech and the hairlessness of the buttocks in the narrator's introduction. Both men are ridiculed: the former by Laronia herself, and the latter by the doctor who treats him. Moreover, although both speakers repeatedly mention homosexual acts in their invective, the attack on these men is motivated not by their homosexuality but by their own violation of the strictest principles of sexual morality, while they attempt to pass judgment on the private lives of others through moral preaching and accusations.

[15] 'I would be willing to run over the land of the Sarmatians and even the frosty ocean whenever a word about morality is uttered by anyone who pretends to be a Curius but lives in a Bacchic orgy!'

Laronia's speech should be read not only in conjunction with the narrator's invective statements in *Satire 2* but also in relation to those in *Satire 6*. In this satire, when discussing the sins of Roman wives, Juvenal repeatedly refers to the transgression of gender boundaries: these women engage in activities that the narrator deems unseemly for them, intruding on men's domain. This is why the invective targets women who express opinions in male company, discuss topics considered appropriate for men, participate in intellectual discourse after dinner, claim the right to take a lover, or practise gladiatorial skills. In other words, they are guilty of the very transgression that the narrator and Laronia condemn in men in *Satire 2*.

If we interpret these texts within a modern conceptual framework, the arguments of the narrator and Laronia are permeated by sexism, a concept which, for example, the European Institute for Gender Equality connects with 'beliefs around the fundamental nature of women and men and the roles they should play in society'. In her monograph on misogyny, Kate Manne differentiates between sexism and misogyny as follows: 'sexist ideology will tend to discriminate *between* men and women, typically by alleging sex differences beyond what is known or could be known, and sometimes counter to our best current scientific evidence. Misogyny will typically differentiate between good women and *bad* ones, and punishes the latter.'[16]

The male figures in *Satire 2* and the female figures in *Satire 6* transgress the boundaries between men and women, boundaries that the Juvenalian narrator believes to have been delineated by the rules and norms of the 'good old days,' characterised by true Romanity. The satires seldom directly depict what the narrator considers to be the essence of 'true Romanity' or what these nostalgically viewed, over-idealised, and oversimplified 'good old days' were like. Instead, they are almost

[16] Manne (2018: 79–80).

exclusively understood through contemporary negative counterparts.[17] Nevertheless, this idealised age is undeniably present, and the reader is not allowed to forget it, not only through fleeting glimpses of the past but also through time markers that consistently highlight the contrast between the present and the past.

The gender roles of the old Roman society, regarded by the narrator as the norm, are transgressed by many characters of his satires. To give one example, in the very first sentence following the prologue of the programmatic poem, that is in the first invective sentence of the entire collection, such a transgressor appears in the figure of a woman who hunts wild boars.[18] However, this theme is most prominent in Satires 2 and 6.

Both Laronia and the satirical narrator criticise contemporary Romans who fail to conform to the rigid gender roles of the society of the 'good old days'. Besides sharing the same ideological background, other common characteristics include their satirical tone, the fact that, although both mention sexual acts, sexuality is not the central focus of the invective, and the presence of elements of mock didacticism.[19] Moreover, like the narrator, Laronia does not shy away from satirical exaggeration and the distortion of reality. She claims that women do not engage in homosexual relationships and do not litigate, whereas in

[17] Cf. Gold (1998: 371) regarding the lack of the depiction of the perfect human body: 'In his *Satires,* Juvenal seems constantly to be alluding to an ideal that is always missing but nonetheless present in the satirist's very obsession with its negative counterpoints.'

[18] Juv. 1, 21–22, 30*: cum tener uxorem ducat spado, Meuia Tuscum / figat aprum et nuda teneat uenabula mamma* […] / *difficile est saturam non scribere*. 'While a soft eunuch can marry, and Mevia can hunt down an Etruscan boar […] it's hard not to write satire!'

[19] In *Satire 6,* the narrator, in addition to attempting to dissuade the addressee, Postumus, from marrying, also offers mock didactic advice to men who have already made this mistake, while Laronia urges women married to men with same-sex inclinations to keep their husbands' secrets, as it may prove financially beneficial to them.

Satire 6, the narrator provides examples of both;[20] thus, at least within the world constructed by the satires, Laronia proves to be an unreliable speaker.

However, this is far from being Laronia's primary fault, as she herself commits the very crime she condemns, falling into the sin of hypocrisy. She responds to the attack against her with a well-constructed forensic defence speech,[21] which proves effective, as the hypocrites listening to her words flee. If we were to characterise Laronia based on *Satire 2*, her most prominent feature would be her rhetorical skills, combined with her legal knowledge. However, this also means that she transgresses gender boundaries just as much as the men she criticises, even though her speech demonstrates that these boundaries exist not only in the narrator's mind but also in her own perception of men and women. This, in turn, makes her guilty of the central sin of Satire 2, namely hypocrisy, further reinforcing the significance of this motif in the text.[22] This does not, of course, render Laronia's words contradictory to the narrator's opinion, as he also professes belief in the interlocutor's truth. However, just like no other figure in the satire collection, Laronia cannot become a purely positive character. In the same way that Umbricius in *Satire 3* presents some of Rome's sins through his words and others through his character, Laronia conveys the transgression of gender boundaries and hypocrisy both in her speech and in her character.

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[20] See Juv. 6, 309–311: *noctibus hic ponunt lecticas, micturiunt hic / effigiemque deae longis siphonibus implent / inque uices equitant ac Luna teste mouentur…* 'At night, they stop their litters here, piss here, and cover the statue of the goddess with a long stream, then ride each other, with the moon bearing witness to their writhing…'; 241–245: *nulla fere causa est in qua non femina litem / mouerit. accusat Manilia, si rea non est. / conponunt ipsae per se formantque libellos, / principium atque locos Celso dictare paratae.* 'There's hardly a trial where a woman doesn't stir the strife. Manilia accuses, if she's not the accused herself. They draft and script the indictment themselves, ready to dictate to Celsus the introduction and key points of the speech.'

[21] See Watson (2018: 61–66).

[22] Cf. Watson (2018: 69–71).

Both Umbricius and Laronia, as well as the sexually exploited Naevolus of *Satire 9*, are sketch-like figures, depicted with only a few brushstrokes. Their qualities and characters are revealed almost exclusively through their words, yet we learn more about all three of them than about the satirical narrator. These details create a distance between them and the narrator, and in each case, they are essential for the interpretation. The character of Laronia helps maintain a certain balance. Just as in *Satire 6*, the narrator repeatedly suggests that women are not solely responsible for, nor the only ones to blame for, the ultimate downfall of the institution of marriage,[23] in *Satire 2*, Laronia reminds us that the transgression of gender roles and hypocrisy are not characteristics unique to homosexual men or, more generally, to men. While selecting his targets (especially when considering individual satires in isolation rather than within the context of his entire œuvre), Juvenal does not strive for fairness or proportionality. To use an anachronistic term, he does not aim for political correctness, which, of course, we could hardly expect from him. Nevertheless, he does not differentiate between groups in terms of their culpability or the extent of their responsibility for the moral and social decay he portrays. The poor and the rich, Romans and foreigners, homosexuals and heterosexuals, and men and women alike, essentially everyone except for himself, are responsible for the conditions in which the satirical narrator is compelled to live.

Laronia's own faults do not diminish the effectiveness of her speech, as she accomplishes her goal by driving away the hypocritical 'little Stoics'. This, in turn, aligns with the desires of the narrator, who, as I have previously quoted, would flee to the ends of the earth upon encountering the figures attacked in the satire. However, the narrator does not wish to escape Rome; rather, he seeks to rid himself of the sinners around him in order to reclaim the idealised 'true Rome'. Or, as W. R.

[23] Gellérfi (2022: 63–64).

Johnson expressed: 'He longs (a reliable token of patriarchal *Unbehagen*) for the good old days, for a space-time long since vanished. He yearns for Rome when it was Rome still, when it was his Rome. He wants back into the world (that womb with a view) from which he was (he feels) ejected, a world where slaves were slaves and women were women and men were... men.'[24]

The outcome of Laronia's speech, the chasing away of sinners, is a manifestation of this desire. By portraying the escape of the hypocrites, the narrator assigns purpose and meaning to his own struggle, which leads him to remain in Rome, unlike Umbricius, who abandons the sinful city in *Satire 3*. However, Laronia's own faults serve as a bitter reminder to both the reader and the narrator that no blameless figure exists in the Rome of the *Satires*. Thus, it makes little difference whether the narrator flees to the ends of the earth or the sinners disperse upon hearing his satirical declamation; in the end, he will inevitably be left alone.

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[24] Johnson (1996: 172).

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Mint and Coinage Propaganda of the Rulers and Usurpers of North Africa

This paper examines numismatic material from Roman North Africa – present-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya – from the late Republic to the Principate and Dominate periods. A sub-objective of this work is a survey of important personalities, especially emperors and usurpers from North Africa, who had coins minted with their likenesses. The overview and interpretation can therefore contribute to the study of Roman numismatics, Roman economic history and the history of North Africa in general. From the surviving finds of coins in North Africa, it is assumed that the vast majority of them was struck in Rome. However, local mints, such as those in Carthage, were also typical of the North African region.

Keywords: Coinage propaganda, mints, North Africa, Late Antiquity, usurpers

Introduction

Roman Africa was a very diverse region. Its centre was the province of Africa Proconsularis, which was located in Tunisia and included parts of present-day Algeria and Libya. This region enjoyed a relatively high level of productivity and stability, even in the 3rd century AD, when the crisis of the whole Roman Empire was a little later.[1] The prosperity of the whole region was due above all to its exceptionally fertile agricultural land.[2] The wealth derived from the grain and other products

[1] Hoyer (2016).

[2] D.S. 20,8,3–6. As an example it is possible to use Diodorus Siculus' comments on

helped the wealthy Romans to accumulate vast tracts of land and also to contribute to the regional economy. The local economy thrived mainly through the production and distribution of wheat and olive oil.[3]

It is assumed that there is a strong correlation between coinage and the presence of larger military garrisons. In North Africa, however, we can observe economic activities that are not entirely related to the military. There was usually only one legion in Africa, the Legio III Augusta, whose main camp was moved from Numidia during Hadrian's reign to the vicinity of Lambaesis in Mauretania Caesariensis. This place was located near the Aures Mountains, a major area of unrest throughout the imperial period, including the revolt of 250 AD. In 238 AD, the Legio III Augusta suppressed the Gordians' revolt at the Battle of Carthage. However, following the ascension of Gordian III to the imperial throne, the le-

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the Syracusan expedition to Africa during the Seventh Greco-Punic War (311–306): „*The intervening country through which it was necessary for them to march was divided into gardens and plantations of every kind, since many streams of water were led in small channels and irrigated every part. There were also country houses one after another, constructed in luxurious fashion and covered with stucco, which gave evidence of the wealth of the people who possessed them. The farm buildings were filled with everything that was needful for enjoyment, seeing that the inhabitants in a long period of peace had stored up an abundant variety of products. Part of the land was planted with vines, and part yielded olives and was also planted thickly with other varieties of fruit-bearing trees. On each side herds of cattle and flocks of sheep pastured on the plain, and the neighbouring meadows were filled with grazing horses. In general there was a manifold prosperity in the region, since the leading Carthaginians had laid out there their private estates and with their wealth had beautified them for their enjoyment.*" See also Plin. (*HN*. 5,3,24): „*Here commences the second division of Africa properly so called. Those who inhabit Byzacium have the name of Libyphœnices. Byzacium is the name of a district which is 250 miles in circumference, and is remarkable for its extreme fertility, as the ground returns the seed sown by the husbandman with interest a hundred-fold.*"

[3] Krajňáková (2022: 27–29). Africa's great prosperity was also due to the great wealth derived from the export of grain, as a result of which people moved to the province from all over the Empire. Large numbers of veterans of the Roman army settled in northwest Africa on farmland promised to them in return for military service. Even so, the Roman military presence in northwest Africa was relatively small, consisting of about 28,000 soldiers and auxiliary units in Numidia. Beginning in the 2nd century AD, these garrisons were composed mostly of local residents. See also Abu-Nasr (2012: 45–46).

gion was subsequently disbanded.[4] There were also smaller strongholds of individual auxiliary units. Before the crisis of the 3rd century, the whole area was relatively under-militarised compared to other parts of the empire (e.g. the Danube and Rhine borders). Later, the situation changed.[5]

Most of the coins found in the region tend to come from Numidia and Africa Proconsularis. In both Moorish provinces, where much of the region's military power was concentrated, finds are less numerous. This may be related to the fact that the Mauretanian provinces may have been more commercially involved in exchange (traders deliberately chose soldiers for their trade and then took their money away).[6]

Mints in Late Antiquity

This chapter deals with mints in Late Antiquity in general. The most popular mint in North Africa during Late Antiquity was the Carthaginian mint. However, before that, during the Late Republic and the beginning of the Principate, smaller mints appeared at Hadrumetum, Tingis, Sicca, Cirta, Utica and at present-day Cherchellum. The coins of Gaius Iulius Caesar, Augustus and the emperors of the Iulian-Claudian dynasty were minted in these mints in large numbers, e.g. in Utica it was especially successful under the emperor Tiberius. I have found no further information about these mints, other than the Carthaginian one, in the Late Antiquity period. It is therefore assumed that they probably disap-

[4] Krajňáková (2022: 27–29). Archaeological finds in areas such as modern Tunisia (e.g. around the town of Dougga) indicate the existence of settlements that were founded by veterans. These settlements often contained houses, temples and public buildings, suggesting that veterans played a key role in the development of local infrastructure. The relocation of veterans to Africa was also intended to stabilize the region. Veterans were experienced soldiers who could help maintain order and security in areas that might be prone to insurgency or attack, which was typical in Africa. See also Abu-Nasr (2012: 45–46).

[5] Morrison (2022: 410–423).

[6] Hoyer (2012).

peared and their role was taken over centrally by the Carthaginian mint. This mint has been on the rise since approximately the 3rd century AD.[7]

To illustrate the development of coinage from the Principate period to Late Antiquity, a map of important mints in Late Antiquity is provided. The mint in Rome played a key role.

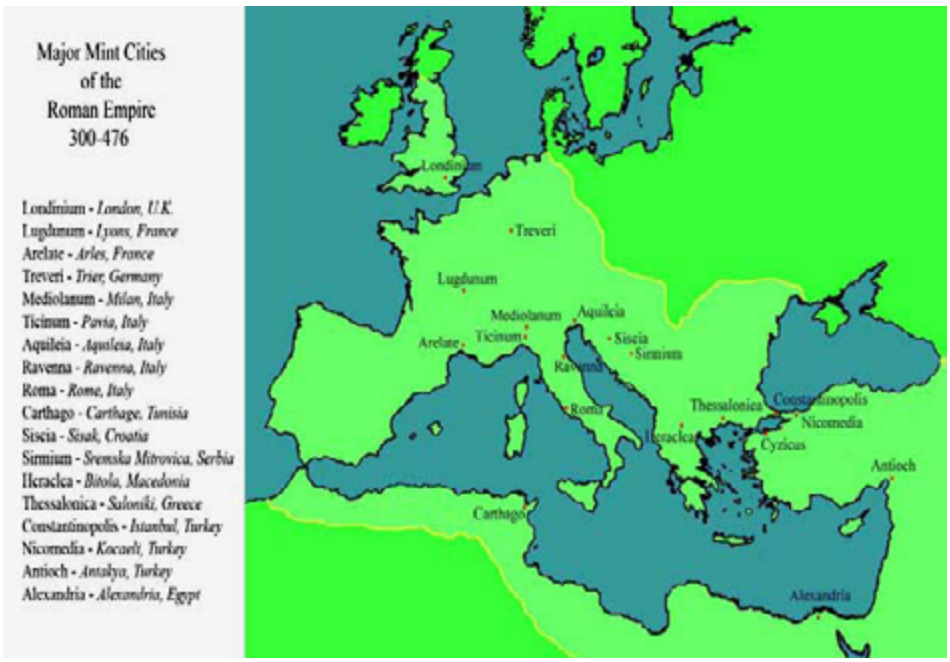

Figure 1: Major mint cities of the Roman Empire 300–476 AD. ERIC. Database available online: https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=ERIC%20-%20Mint%20Map

Each coinage consisted of 4 elements. The letter that appeared after the coin's abbreviation used to come first. These are for example the letters P (Pecunia – money), M (Moneta) or SM (Sacra Moneta). Another important element was the abbreviation of the mint, so for North Africa the abbreviation of the Carthaginian mint (K, KAR, KART) was important. The mintmark also appeared. The following picture shows their use on different types of coins (Carthage).

[7] Butrey (1976: 157–193).

Period	Gold	Silver	Bronze
296-307	PK	no mark	FK, PK
308-311	PK		PK
423-425			no mark

Figure 2: Different types of coins in Carthaginian mint with their marks. ERIC. Database available online: https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Roman%20Mints

The last elements were the identification of the mint. These were usually Latin letters, Greek letters, or Roman numerals indicating the officina. Sometimes the officina is omitted and sometimes it precedes the abbreviation of the mint name. Many mintmarks also include symbols such as dots, crescents or branches. These symbols probably indicate when the coin was struck and who was running the workshop at the time.[8]

Famous rulers related to North Africa and their coinage propaganda

The next section of this paper will examine the important personalities at the end of the Roman Republic. A specific coin depiction from North Africa is the goddess Dea Africa. However, there are no material remains of this goddess from this region in the pre-Roman period, and apart from coins, there are no other examples of this iconography in the region before the arrival of the Romans. There is also a little evidence that local personifications were part of nomadic culture; the elephants on the coins may be symbols, but they are not personifications. Nor is

[8] ERIC. Database available online: https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Roman%20Mints

there any other evidence of local use of animal heads as symbols in Numidian art; the only exception may be the lion-headed goddess. Some Numidian kings, such as Iugurtha, minted coins similar to Hellenistic coins or were depicted on coins from the Roman mint (e.g. King Bocchus). Therefore, Pre-Caesarian coins were also found in North Africa.

During the dictatorship of C.Iulius Caesar, coins with his likeness were widely minted in North Africa. On the picture below, there is a Republican silver denarius minted during Caesar's dictatorship, dated to 47–46 BC. The obverse depicts the head of Venus, facing right. The reverse shows Aeneas carrying a palladium in his right hand and Anchises, his father, on his shoulders. This proves a clear promotion of Caesar's lineage. The name is at the bottom, but it is already much worn.

Figure 3: Republican silver denarius minted during Caesar's dictatorship. PAS. Database available online:



https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/775393

Other notable figures whose coins have been found include Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio (proconsul of North Africa, fought against Caesar), Marcus Licinius Crassus (member of the First Triumvirate) and Cato the Younger. Here it is suggested that they could be considered early usurpers. This suggestion can be supported by the finds of their coins.

On the coins of Metellus Scipio, two motifs are most often preserved. The first depicts him as an emperor with a laurel wreath and a typical African emblem – an elephant. The second coin was again struck by Metellus Scipio and Publius Licinius Crassus. On the obverse there is METEL. PIVS|SCIP.IMP (Metellus Pius Scipio Imperator) and a bust of Jupiter, the head of an eagle and a sceptre. On the side of Crassus there is CRASS.IVN|LEG.PRO.PR (Crassus Iunianus, legatus pro praetore) with a curule chair, scales, cornucopia, corn stalk and dragon's head referring to his offices.



Figure 4: The coin of Metellus Scipio. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintus_Caecilius_Metellus_Pius_Scipio#/media/File:Metellus_Scipio_denarius.jpg; MANTIS. Database available online: https://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.3307?lang=cs

One of the emperors originating from North Africa, specifically from the city of Leptis Magna, was Septimius Severus (145–211 AD). Most of the silver denarii from his reign have survived, but none of the coins bears the mark of a mint located in North Africa. Severus had his coins struck most often in Rome and is usually depicted with a laurel wreath and his head pointing to the right. The obverse side most often bears the inscription SEVERVS AVG PART MAX, illustrating the victory over the Parthians and the gain of other eastern provinces. On the reverse, the inscription FVNDATOR PACIS or RESTITVTOR VRBIS often appears, celebrating S. Severus as the saviour of the old order. A typical

motif is then Septimius standing in front, veiled, holding a branch in his right hand and a scroll in his left.



Figure 5: The coin of Crassus Iunianus and Metellus Scipio



Figure 6: Septimius Severus´s silver denarius. MANTIS. Database available online: https://numismatics.org/collection/1978.64.501?lang=cs

From Africa also came the rulers Gordian I, II and III, whose family became famous in 238 AD, known as the Year of the Six Emperors. The first of these came to power as a relatively old man, but before that he had had a glittering career in various offices. Together with his son Gordian II, he ruled for several weeks. His nephew lasted the longest and ruled until 244 AD before he was killed in the province of Mesopotamia. Coins of various values and metals survive from his

time.[9] On the obverse, the inscriptions IMP GORDIANVS PIVS FEL AVG referring to his piety (especially the cult of Iuppiter), as well as the rayed crown, the cuirass, appears most frequently. On the reverse there is P M TR P III COS P P referring to the powers and offices he held during his lifetime (Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate tertia, Consul, Pater Patriae – high priest, three times tribunicia potestas, consulship, pater patriae). The coin shows Gordian veiled, standing on the left, offering from the patera in his right hand over the altar, holding a staff in his left hand.



Figure 7: The coin of Gordian I. MANTIS. Database available online: https://numismatics.org/collection/1978.64.473?lang=cs



Figure 8: The coin of one of the tetrarchs – Constantine the Great. MANTIS. Database available online: http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.4033

[9] Bland (2012: 514–537).

The mint at Carthage was most active during the Tetrarchy. It issued coins with almost all the Augusti and Caesars (most often with Maximian, his son Maxentius, Constantius I Chlorus, etc.). On the obverse the titular IMP CONSTANTIVS P F AVG appeared most often (in the case of the other tetrarchs only the name changed), on the reverse the tetrarchs were praised (inscription SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL KART). There was also the personification of Carthage as a goddess.

Usurpers from North Africa and their coinage propaganda

The last part of this work will focus on some usurpers originating from North Africa. There have been several of these throughout history, as North Africa had always been a rather unstable area due to the large number of nomadic tribes and the vast resources. The most famous usurpers of Late Antiquity are Domitius Alexander, Firmus and Gildo. However, usurpations were not only limited to the African provinces, but took place throughout the Roman Empire. In Late Antiquity, these included for example the Gallic Empire or the usurpers Heraclianus, Attalus and Joannes, *primicerius notariorum* in 423 AD.[10]

One of the above-mentioned usurpers, from whom bronze coins have survived, was Domitius Alexander. His revolt in 308–311 AD foreshadowed the events at the Milvian Bridge between Constantine I and Maxentius. Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Hispania were under Domitius' administration at the time. Domitius had the title *vices agens praefecti praetorio per Africam*, deputy praetorian prefect for Africa. His ambition to turn local usurpation into a bid for power at the highest levels of the tetrarchy could be evidenced by the legend he had struck on his coins (obverse – IMP ALEXANDER P [F] AVG). This shows his tendency to allow himself to be portrayed as the legitimately elected emperor and

[10] Pellizarri (2023: 179–200).

to use a similar titulary. The reverse then shows the supreme Roman god Jupiter and the inscription IOVI CONSERVA[TOR]I. It shows Jupiter standing on the right side, holding a thunderbolt and leaning on a scepter.



Figure 9: The bronze coin of Domitius Alexander. MANTIS. Database available online: https://numismatics.org/collection/1979.153.1?lang=cs

At the beginning of the chapter, in addition to Domitius Alexander, Firmus and Gildo, who led several revolts in the 4th century AD, were also mentioned. However, I have been unable to find any coinage evidence of the usurper Firmus. This may be due to the fact that, unlike his brother Gildo, he was quickly defeated by Flavius Theodosius. Gildo, on the other hand, held on to power much longer and there is one coin that could be attributed to him. These are four small bronze coins with the anonymous inscriptions DOMINO NOSTRO, DOMINIS NOSTRIS P(ER)P(ETUIS) AVG(USTIS) and the coinage mark CARTAGINE. This find is known as the Treasure of the City of Tapaz.[11]

The last part of the article deals with Vandal coins. The kingdom of the Vandals and Alans existed between 435 and 534 AD and its first rulers could be seen as usurpers. However, the larger coin finds are dated more to the late 5th century rulers Gunthamund (484–496 AD), Thrasamund (496–523 AD), Hilderic (523–530 AD) and Gelimer (530–534 AD).

[11] Ware (2004: 96–103).

Gunthamund minted this unusual coin (see below) during his rule, approximately between 484 and 496 AD. The front side features a diademed, draped and armored bust, which can be clearly recognized by the inscription DN RX GVNTHA (Dominus Noster, rex, Gunthamund). The various elements of this coin, which was worth 25 Roman denarii as indicated on the reverse, show the influence of the Empire, including the use of the term Dominus Noster. Other rulers usually have palms and the term Dominus Noster, not rex (king).



Figure 10: Bronze coin attributed to Gildo, which was struck during the time he was in power.



Figure 11: Coin of Gunthamund from the 5th century AD, containing an atypical titulature of a king among Vandal rulers. NGC. Database available online: https://coins.www.collectors-society.com/wcm/coinview.aspx?sc=579258

Conclusion

Roman North Africa was a very prosperous province of the Roman Empire, but sometimes somewhat unstable. The high yields from grain and olive oil production attracted local officials and the Roman-Berber aristocracy. As a result, the area was often the centre of various uprisings and usurpations. Some of them even crossed the borders of the African provinces.

A number of important emperors in Late Antiquity came from North Africa and used coins as a propaganda tool. The mint at Carthage, which has played a key role in the region since the Principate, was used for these purposes. However, the usurpers, from whom very few coins have survived, had the same intention of legitimising their rule. Some usurpers even used titles similar to those of legitimate emperors, which may refer to their tendency to extend their power beyond their jurisdiction in North Africa.

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The Adaptation of Literary Culture and Paradigms of Roman Statehood in the Transition Period of the 5th Century AD: An Analysis of Dracontius' *Satisfactio*

This article seeks to emphasise the considerable degree of cultural continuity between Graeco-Roman Antiquity and the early Christian world order that emerged in the 5th century. The arrival of Christianity is often associated with Rome's socio-political decline and the eventual downfall of the Western Roman Empire, marking the beginning of the so-called 'Dark Ages' of the early Middle Ages. A corresponding assumption is that pagan culture vanished along with the (pagan) Roman state. However, the surviving literary sources suggest the reverse is the case. By reevaluating familiar narratives of a rapid cultural decline, this paper intends to refute the widespread stance in academic discourse that portrays the period as a time when Roman tradition and identity were abandoned wholesale. Instead, this paper argues that Rome's thousand-year classical heritage was adapted to the mores of Christendom, as evinced by the literature of the 5th century. The poem Satisfactio *of late 5th century poet Blossius Aemilius Dracontius – a poet whose works were written in Vandal North Africa – is an exemplar of this cultural adaption. It is the primary source used throughout this paper.*

Keywords: Christianity, paganism, cultural continuity, adaptation, Vandals, Gunthamund, Dracontius, clemency

A Cultural and Historical Overview of the Late 5th Century

Blossius Aemilius Dracontius was a Christian poet and attorney active in Vandal-ruled Carthage during the second half of the 5th century AD.

Owing to the lack of contemporary biographical sources about him, information on his life and the context of his work must be gleaned from his accounts and his literary milieu. His works directly reveal key details about his origin and ancestry: his family is from the Roman Iberian Peninsula but migrated to Carthage, presumably to escape the Germanic tribes that were then advancing towards the southern territories of the Empire. In Carthage, Dracontius witnessed fundamental shifts in power, culture, and faith: the adoption of Christianity effected fundamental changes in the region's sociocultural structure. Pagan temples were closed, demolished, or transformed into churches. Sacral practices with a thousand years of history were banished by imperial decree. Emperor Theodosius' series of decrees targeting the old faith in 391 AD marks the beginning of the Roman state's persecution of pagans. The most noteworthy of these imperial commands was the abolition of the Vestal Virgins, a symbolic date and event indeed due to the common Roman belief that the Empire would survive only so long as the fire of the Temple of Vesta remained intact. Due to the oppression, tensions between pagans and Christians erupted into riots and violent conflict. The clashes in the West were generally more severe than in the East simply because paganism and traditional values were more deeply embedded in Western Roman society than they were elsewhere. Therefore, the pace of conversion to Christianity was correspondingly slower in the West, due to its population's firm adherence to pagan Roman tradition.[1] The Emperors in the subsequent 5th century did not even attempt to tackle the problems stemming from this divided society – they attested rigor in legislation in terms of religion. Each measure accelerated the decay of the empire. Emperor Honorius continued his father's legacy and declared all judges and officials punishable by law for not enforcing anti-pagan laws. Following the sack of Rome in 410 AD, many returned

[1] Tizzoni (2012: 20–21).

to the old faith based on their belief that the series of calamities Rome was then experiencing was the old gods' punishment for the Empire's abandonment of them. The state responded to these obstinate pagans with draconian measures; pagans were forbidden to serve in state administration or to participate in any public affairs. Theodosius II went further still, decreeing that any involvement in pagan practice was a capital offence. The old world order slowly vanished, and a new order took its place. The principles of the old state – *inter alia,* religious and cultural tolerance – ceased to exist, and this radical discontinuity in faith and tradition led to the eventual collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

The Cultural context of Dracontius' poetry

Dracontius was a Roman poet in this time of change. He was born in 455 AD in Carthage, just as this new world was coming into being: he was 21 years old when Emperor Romulus Augustulus was dethroned. The Vandals set foot in North Africa in 429 AD and declared their state in 439 AD, and were ultimately conquered by the Byzantine Empire in 534 AD, during the Vandalic War. On the former imperial territory of *Africa Proconsularis*.[2] Vandal rule was consolidated before Dracontius' birth. Hence, Dracontius – a man with strong ties to the conservative Roman elite – lived his entire life under this alien regime. Fortunately, his identity is well substantiated by his own account: *Vir clarissimus et togatus fori proconsulis almae Karthaginis.'*[3] The term' *clarissimus*' was widely used for members of the senatorial rank in the late Imperial era. At the same time, the word '*togatus*' refers to his intellect as an erudite Roman nobleman.[4] Carthage's centuries-long history as a flourishing

[2] Fielding (2017: 90).
[3] Drac. *Rom*. 5.
[4] Filosini (2018: 338).

Roman cultural centre makes this self-identification rather unsurprising. His poetic style follows the paradigms of classical poetry, including those of metrical scansion, rhetoric, and aesthetics. Dracontius presumably converted to Christianity in the early stages of his life, given that his works are predominantly Christian-themed. Such works include *De Laudibus Dei*, a collection of tales from the Bible written in hexameters in which he supplicates to the Christian God for mankind's deliverance from their sins and begs for redemption. The poem *Satisfactio* is a plea for forgiveness addressed to King Gunthamund of the Vandals, written in elegiac couplets; the poem invokes a series of moral examples from the Bible, but interestingly for our purposes, from the pagan past, too.[5] Prayers for mercy to a sovereign were a tradition in ancient poetry. It is therefore not particularly surprising that references to his pre-Christian forebearers were incorporated into a poem of this genre. From these two superficial examples, it is already clear that correspondence between Christian culture and pagan tradition was indeed possible in certain aspects of morality displayed in literature. By zooming-in on this clear-cut example of pagan-Christian continuity, this paper aims to refute the wrongly-conceived tendency of academic discourse to portray this transition period as an age of unmitigated cultural decline that led to the beginning of the so-called Dark Ages, as well as to reevaluate it as an age during which the merits of classical antiquity were preserved, and indeed, continued to exist well into the Christian era.[6]

Dracontius' proficiency in ancient poetry problematizes assumptions about the status of classical literacy in the Vandal successor state, because it demonstrates that Carthage remained a thriving centre of Roman culture even after Roman authority in North Africa collapsed. In other words, Roman classical thought and intellect – collectively termed

[5] Nikolsky (2017: 42).
[6] Tizzoni (2012: 23–26).

romanitas – outlived Roman statehood in the region. Dracontius, as a member of the former senatorial elite, carried forth the heritage of his pagan predecessors. Classical Education must have survived intact under Vandal rule despite the Vandals' ruthless religious persecution of the former Roman elite. The persecution exclusively targeted the Orthodox aristocracy because they would have refused to recognize the Arian Vandals as their ruler.[7] Thus, their persecution was an indispensable prerequisite to the successful conquest of the region. Consequently, Dracontius and his family were stripped of their fortune and later imprisoned under the reign of King Gunthamund.[89] However, the Vandals had no interest in erasing ancient culture along with the patrician class. Contrarywise, the Vandals were utterly captivated by the achievements of the imperial era. Dracontius' account in his series of poems and rhetorical exercises provides insight into this cultural continuity: *Sancte pater, o magister, taliter canendus es, qui fugatas Africanae reddis urbi litteras, barbaris qui Romulidas iungis auditorio, cuius ordines semper obstupescimus, quos capit dulcedo vestri, doctor, oris maxima* (...) (Drac. *Rom*. 1,12-1,16). This entry is the beginning of a poem which Dracontius wrote to his master, Felicianus Grammaticus, and it is written per the classical *captatio benevolentiae* rhe-

[7] Germanic tribes, including the Vandals were Arians, while the Roman elite was predominantly Catholic. The tension between the two branches of Christianity was caused by a theological dispute, namely their views on the trinity. Arians believed that the trinity was created of three separate entities, while Catholics took the view it was created by God himself. Arians also argued the Catholic position of Jesus Christ in Christian theology: Christ was not truly divine, but a created being and that God solely is self-existent. Due to this major theological dissent, the Catholics declared the Arians heretics in 325 AD at the council of Nicene, deepening the conflict between the parties.

[8] Gunthamund (450–496) was the third king of the Vandal Kingdom. He succeeded his unpopular uncle, king Huneric on the throne. During his successful reign, he brought about the consolidation after the tempestuous reign marked by the persecution of the Orthodox elite in Carthage. Thus, the state enjoyed a period of peace under his rule. During these relatively serene decades, Carthage has experienced a revival of classical literacy, due to his fondness for ancient culture.

[9] Fielding (2017: 90–91); Nikolsky (2017: 26).

torical paradigm. The phrase *littera fugata* stands out; though Dracontius does not clarify its meaning, the paradigms of classical literature suggest that it is a reference to the ill-treatment of Romans who had suffered under the Vandal occupation. The influence of classical education was decreased to some extent, for the elite suffering from Vandal persecution was the bearer of classical knowledge. These lines are also an expression of the cultural identity of Dracontius and his contemporaries; he refers to the Romans as '*Romulidae*', that is, the 'grandsons of Romulus'. This peculiar expression signifies the strong sense of Roman cultural belonging that lived on well after the decline of the Roman West. The fact that the barbarians are in 'the same auditorium' as the descendants of Romulus is clearly a matter of pride for the poet and even suggests a hint of cultural supremism, suggesting that the Romans remain the Vandals' superiors in terms of knowledge, even if they were then their inferiors politically. This idea that the cultural excellence of Graeco-Roman culture was unparalleled elsewhere was a consistent and fundamental part of Graeco-Roman identity, and literary excellence was in turn an essential aspect of Graeco-Roman conceptions of high culture.[10]

Apart from the embeddedness of old traditions, the ideology of the Vandal court itself also helped ensure the survival of Greek and Latin literacy. As foreign usurpers of Roman territories, the Vandals had a great interest in portraying themselves as the true heirs of the Roman Empire, and adopting the ancient culture of the elite they had persecuted made such portrayals far more convincing. Consequently, the Vandals were generally open to anything that was related to Graeco-Roman antiquity.[11] The following parts of this paper will discuss the interpretation of select passages of Dracontius' *Satisfactio*.

[10] Boshoff (2017: 19–22).
[11] Boshoff (2017: 19–22).

Satisfactio

Satisfactio ad Gunthárium Regem Vandalorum Dum Esset In Vinculis is Dracontius' plea for forgiveness to his sovereign, King Gunthamund. It is simultaneously a prayer to the Christian God for deliverance from his sins. Written in elegiac couplets that meticulously and seamlessly interweave motifs from Christianity with those of classical antiquity, the poem expresses regret for a past mistake that had Dracontius imprisoned by King Gunthamund; Dracontius' sin was a panegyric written to his sovereign's enemy. This mysterious enemy is not identified in the poem, and there is yet to be a decisive answer to who this enemy is,[12] because the poem merely describes him as an 'unknown lord': *culpa mihi fuerat dominos reticere modestos* / *ignotumque mihi scribere vel dominum* (...) (Drac. *Sat.* 93–94).

Following the root position of the praise written to a hostile king and aside from Dracontius' situation, the broader ideological background must be addressed as well. The dominant ideologies of late antiquity – and notably, the revival of paganism in the 3rd century AD – significantly contributed to the emergence of this peculiar form of literature. After the mischievous reign of Emperor Commodus, the Roman Empire was plunged into a cultural and economic crisis. At the same time, pagan literature was vanishing due to the ascendance of Christianity. By the middle of the 3rd century, the Christian population was numerous enough to organise a distinctly Christian literary culture that existed independent of and parallel to paganism's. Amidst this cultural low point of the 3rd

[12] However, Nikolsky (2017: 38–41), takes the opinion that the unidentified addressee of his lost panegyric was Hunerich, the previous Vandal king. Their conflict was rooted in religion and inheritance of power. Hunerich relentlessly persecuted Orthodox Christians and closed their churches down, which were only reopened after Gunthamund's surge to power. He also intended to appoint his son as the heir of the throne, but he was not able to finalize his endeavour due to his premature death, thus Gunthamund took power.

century, the Imperial Court considered measures aimed at decelerating the exponential growth of Christianity; these efforts came into fruition during the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus, who promoted classical literacy under his reign, and who is still remembered as a man of letters. However, the ideology of Roman traditionalism emerged through the reforms of Emperor Diocletian, which successfully delayed the fall of the Empire for another two centuries. The revival emerging in the century also involved the most severe persecutions against Christians, including a total ban on conversion to Christianity. It also placed literature and statesmen from the late republican and early Imperial eras on a pedestal, enshrining them as ideals to emulate and surpass.[13] For instance, when the Senate inaugurated a new emperor, the Senators wished him thus: *'Felicior Augusto, melior Traiano*'. This new ideological direction permeated the arts, literature, and state governance, and remained the official ideology up until the fall of the Western Roman Empire.[14]Additionally, *Satisfactio* also reflects the ideology of the Vandal Court. Similarly to the Romans, the Vandals intended to revive the imperial cult of earlier centuries. They viewed the ancient state structure as essential for their legitimisation across the Mediterranean and peaceful diplomacy with their neighbours; it was a common practice for Vandal kings to depict themselves wearing traditional *toga picta* – i.e., Roman imperial clothing – as evinced by numerous surviving coins found throughout North Africa. The kingdom is therefore labelled as an *'imitatio imperii*' in modern scholarship due to its adoption of Roman imperial principles in its organisation of political, economic, and social structures.[15] Moreover, Vandal kings married their children to the successors of Eastern Roman emperors to further shore up their legitimacy

[13] Virgil, Ovid, Horace, or Cicero in literature, the exemplary statesmen were Julius Caesar, emperors Augustus and Trajan.
[14] Adamik (2009: 662–663).
[15] Steinacher (2008: 269).

as the successors of Rome. The first component of Vandal self-representation was therefore that of Roman cultural heritage. Religious portrayal was no less important; the Vandal Kingdom was surrounded by the Christian successor states of the former Western Roman Empire, and so their convincing adoption of Christian tradition was equally vital. On that account, their diplomatic communications were framed to demonstrate their status as the truly *Christian* heirs of the Roman emperors.[16] Their political, literary, and artistic discourses were imbued with the traditionalism of the late imperial era, reflecting the Vandals' general openness to Graeco-Roman culture. The Vandals, therefore, utilized ancient literature as a means of propaganda, patronising poets who were willing to spread their ideology and utilise their poetic talents in the service of the 'imperial' state, as was common practice during the imperial era proper. Dracontius and his *Satisfactio* are no exception; the poem is a panegyric – a poet singing the praises of his (secular) lord – and serves as an example of state intervention in and control over cultural life. In the poem, Dracontius expressly states that should the king grant him mercy, his poetic ability would serve as an asset to the king: (...) '*Ipse meo domino Deus imperat atque iubebit ut me restituat respiciatque pius, servet, avi ut laudes dicam patriasque suasque perque suas proles regia vota canam.*' (Drac. *Sat*. 49–53). These lines also demonstrate Dracontius' submission to a regime that he is compelled to comply with for his survival.

Dracontius' Strategies of Argumentation

The following section of this paper intends to examine how Dracontius aligns his poetry with the aims of Vandal propaganda. To appeal to the king and to gain his sympathy, his rhetorical approach accords with the

[16] Nikolsky (2017: 37–38).

Vandals' self-depiction.[17] The erudite poet takes on the role of the king's educator, lining up a series of moral *exempla* from the pagan past and the Bible to convince Gunthamund of the importance of mercy and forgiveness to any true Christian monarch. The first element of his strategy is the invocation of the imperial heritage of the former Roman Empire. Idealised portrayals of merciful leaders are a motif that originates from the ancient tradition; the thought was conceived during the civil wars and later became a principle of rule in Imperial Rome.[18] The core figures of the Empire's glorious past are Julius Caesar and his nephew, Emperor Augustus. Caesar's example exemplifies the correct conduct of a statesman towards his defeated foes; he introduces his poem with the values of Caesar's political propaganda, *venia* and *clementia*:[19]

> Caesar ubique potens hosti post bella pepercit,
> (et quod erat peius, cuius et civis erat)
> sponte facultatem redhibens reparuit honores,
> inde vocatus abit dignus honore Dei,
> Cuius ab imperio surgens et origine Caesar
> Augustus meruit tempus habere pium,
> tempore namque eodem est natus de Virgine Christus,
> cuius emicuit stella per astra poli. (Drac. *Sat.* 175–182).[20]

That Caesar's forgiving character is here portrayed as pious by a Christian author indicates that clemency was a core value in both the pre-Christian and Christian eras, an indication which in itself bears witness to a considerable degree of correspondence between Christian and pagan principles; put, the fundamental truths and values held by

[17] Filosini (2018: 335).
[18] Konstan (2005: 65).
[19] Filosini (2018: 332–336).
[20] The edition of *Satisfactio* is *Patrologia Latina*: Migne, ed. (1841–1855: vol. 060).

ancient authors and statesmen continued to be upheld, and they constituted valuable segments of emergent Christian values.[21] Dracontius invokes Caesar's good deeds as well as his benevolent nature; after granting forgiveness to his enemies, Caesar restored them to their former positions, even when some of these former enemies were fellow Roman citizens who had turned against him. As a result, Caesar left Earth with a godlike glory; he was summoned to ascend into heaven. With Caesar's propaganda considered, the dynamic of adaptation here is simple but requires proficiency in both cultures, because it involves the integration of motifs common to both. This aspect of interpretation suggests the conclusion that the transition period of the 5th century was not so much a cultural revival as it was a direct continuation of ancient culture; in other words, contrary to widespread narratives, Roman culture did not vanish in the Christian era.[22] Dracontius restates this idea in the lines concerning Emperor Augustus. On the shoulders of his uncle's imperium, Augustus achieved a blessed era of Peace and prosperity now known as the Pax Romana; the poet even goes so far as to attribute the birth of Jesus Christ to Augustus' imperial consolidation after decades of civil war. Augustus is also praised as the founder of the Roman Imperial cult and the Principate, under which the Roman Empire reached its economic and cultural peak. Dracontius encodes an essential message in this passage: that good deeds never go unrewarded. Just as Caesar's clemency precipitated Rome's golden age, King Gunthamund's pardon of Dracontius may lead to similar rewards. The cited lines hold up Caesar as the (pagan) archetype of morality, while Augustus' reign represents the ideal state structure.

The moral teaching of mercy is further emphasised through specifically Christian ethical teaching. Dracontius acquaints his king with the

[21] Tizzoni (2012: 141).
[22] Fielding (2017: 117).

correct manner of punishing sinners, urging Gunthamund to treat his prisoners humanely and to practice empathy towards them:

> (...) Tempore tam longo non decet ira pium. Nam qui inimicorum culpis veniale minaris, captivosque tuos deliciis epulas, puniat ut sit quod Christus, tu parcis iniquis, vindice quo regnas, quo vigilante viges. (Drac. *Sat.* 120–124).

Dracontius highlights the importance of repentance by invoking the well-known Biblical story of David's affair with Bathsheba. According to the moral narrative in the *Book of 2 Samuel* in the Hebrew Bible (2, 11–12:25), one is always pardoned if they confess their sins and show repentance. God punished David with the deaths of four of his newborn babies due to the misdeeds he committed in the lead-up to his misbegotten marriage with Bathsheba, but once David confessed and showed remorse for his sins, he was pardoned. His fifth child, Solomon, was spared. Dracontius writes that '*Rex inimicorum iugulis mucrone pepercit, David et hic sceleris certus adulter inest, confessus facinus veniam pro clade meretur*' (...) (Drac. *Sat.* 157–159), emphasising the importance of repentance; Dracontius does not argue that his punishment was unjust – contrarywise, he concedes that Gunthamund's retaliation was an expression of God's wrath – yet he also emphasises that Christian teaching commands forgiveness and mercy once sinners show penance for their misdeeds. The king ought to absolve Dracontius from his sin by releasing him, according to Biblical teaching. Dracontius finishes his poem by adding that punishments ought always to be proportionate and humane: '*Sessorem, dum carpit iter, si cornea palpans / ungula concutiat quadropedantis equi, / Verbere corrigitur culpa, plectente flagello, / Non simul abscisi crura, pedesque iacent*' (Drac. *Sat.* 312–315). The ending of *Satisfactio* conveys another important message from the Holy Writ about forgiveness: when there is crime and repen-

tance, there ought to be forgiveness, and not once, but again. To this end, Dracontius writes '*Non semel dixit ignosci lex sancta reatum, / sed quotiens culpa est, sit quotiens venia*' (Drac. *Sat.* 307–308), intentionally applying moral pressure on the king; the authority of the Bible and the unappealable truth of religion is, after all, binding upon all.

The usage of examples from classical antiquity in *Satisfactio* is telling of the high level of literary proficiency and vibrant cultural life of Vandal North Africa. In his dual role as a Christian poet and a carrier of Roman tradition, Dracontius is well-read in and familiar with the traditions of both Christianity and Graeco-Roman antiquity. With this extraordinary knowledge at his disposal, he was able to compose a compelling plea to his sovereign, which later led to his forgiveness and eventual rehabilitation.

Literary Models

Given the conclusions of the preceding section on the role of Christian tradition in the work, this section seeks to emphasise that the role of the classical literary tradition is of no less importance. The previously discussed penitential tone is indeed purely Christian, but the poem's compositional paradigms and rhetorical strategies are rooted in the classical canon. *Satisfactio* is deeply influenced by both the poetic and prosaic works of numerous authors of previous centuries, and fully appreciating this sheds a great deal of light upon the dynamics of the cultural continuity of late antiquity. It is essential to highlight that Dracontius draws upon a variety of works in this plea alone – listing them comprehensively would require further research – but the following paragraphs highlight some of his most obvious inspirations.

The plea closely resembles Ovid's poetry of exile. Motifs from his *Tristia* are conveyed in the way *Satisfactio* lays out its moral teachings. Al-

lusion is a significant technique in Latin literature, employed as a means of preserving ancient customs and expressing reverence towards one's predecessors, and this is also the case in Dracontius's work.[23] The way of the ancestors (*mos maiorum*) was an irrefutable authority for Romans to live by. The passages of the poem that instruct the morals of ancient figures are thus a manifestation of this core value. As stated previously, piety was a principal element of moral thought in ancient Rome. For that reason, Dracontius invokes pagan exemplars of this value in his discourse: '*Sic leo terribile fremit horridus ore cruento, / unguibus excussis, dente minante neces/acrius iratus crispato lumine ferri / et mora si fuerit, acrius inde furit. / At si venator trepidans venabula ponat, / territus et iaceat, mox perit ira cadens*' (Drac. *Sat*. 137–142). These lines recall the Ovidian motif of Augustus as a forgiving lion: *Quo quisque est maior, magis est placabilis irae / et faciles motus gens generosa capit. / Corpora magnanimo satis est prostrasse leoni, / pugna suum finem, cum iacet hostis, habet* (Ov. *Tr.* 3,5, 31–34). Dracontius' argument is strengthened by the fact that pagan and Christian poets alike hold that the ability to overcome the urge of vengeance and to practice forgiveness instead are basic virtues that any good leader must possess.[24] Since the poem consists of a series of moral teachings, it is also essential to address the influence of ancient didactic poetry. The relevance of didactic poetry as a literary source is justified by the fact that it was Virgil who developed this genre in Latin literature.[25] On the other hand, Virgil's works laid the foundation for subsequent Roman poetry; thus, the model he set cannot be omitted. There are echoes of the *Georgics* in *Satisfactio,* both in the poem's moral teaching and in a particular word connection that is typical of Virgil's epic vocabulary: '*Littera doctiloquax apibus cognata refertur, / quis datur ut habeant* ***cerea castra*** *favos*'

[23] Boshoff (2017: 51).
[24] Filosini (2018: 344–345).
[25] Tizzoni (2012: 18).

(Drac. *Sat.* 61–62). The reference to beeswax alludes to the fourth book of the *Georgics*, in which didactic Virgil describes the organization of the beehive as a model for humans to follow. The main parallels between Dracontius and Virgil are found in the didactic program of their works, as both expound moral doctrines cast in the form of idealistic models for human behaviour that ought to be emulated. On the other hand, the use of the term '*castra*' for beehive shows undeniable Virgilian Influence from the *Aeneid*: '*vestigavit apes fumoque implevit amaro, illae intus trepidae rerum per* ***cerea castra***' (Verg. *Aen*. 588–589).[26] After locating the appropriate set of values and a suitable didactic program in the classical canon, Dracontius also required good rhetoric to ensure that his message was readily decodable; in this regard, *Satisfactio* follows the standards of classical rhetorical practice, that is, it is organised into three units by Cicero's discussion on orations. In the *exordium*[27] or introductory section, Dracontius opens the poem with a hymn to the Christian God, describes God's authority over human actions, and concludes that the royal punishment that was inflicted upon him reflected the Divine Will: *Sic mea corda Deus, nostro peccante reatu / temporis immodici, pellit ad illicita* (Drac. *Sat.* 19–20). The central section or *confirmatio*[28] begins by the author recognising his sin, followed by the core teaching of the poem, i.e., the discussion of misdeeds and the correct manner of punishing and forgiving them. The section begins by laying out the doctrines that are discussed throughout the central section: *culpa quidem gravis est, venia sed digna reatus, / quod sine peccati crimine nemo fuit*. In this section, Dracontius confesses, albeit indirectly, that the panegyric he wrote to the aforementioned 'unknown

[26] Tizzoni (2012: 50–51).

[27] Cic. *Inv.* 1, 15, 20. *Exordium est oratio animum auditoris idonee comparans ad reliquam dictionem: quod eveniet, si eum benivolum, attentum, docilem confecerit.*

[28] Cic. *Inv.* 1, 24, 34. *confirmatio est, per quam argumentando nostrae causae fidem et auctoritatem et firmamentum adiungit oratio.*

lord' was an act of sin. In the closing section or *peroration*,[29] Dracontius summarises his message to the king and attempts to alleviate his anger by invoking several social and naturalistic phenomena to advance the notion that everything has its proper time; thus, his punishment shall come to an end: *Tempora gaudendi, sunt tempora certa dolendi. / Tempora dant lucrum, tempora damna ferunt*. (Drac. *Sat.* 258–259). In the final lines, he reveals the reason for composing his plea: '*Inclitus armipotens, vestrae pietatis origo, / et docto genio pronior ad veniam, / "non homini ignosco" dixit, "lingua meretur", hic reus et doctus Vincolamos fuerat*' (Drac. *Sat.* 299–302). He recognises that education is a source of benevolence: King Genseric, Gunthamund's predecessor, had similarly spared the life of the rhetorician Vincomalus because he was impressed by his eloquence. Here, Dracontius is clearly expressing the hope that like cases be treated alike.[30]

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[29] Cic. *Inv.* 1,52, 98. *Conclusio est exitus et determinatio totius orationis*

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A *Hymn to Justinian*? The Aspect of Hymn Poetry in the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* by Paul the Silentiary

The Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*, written by Paul the Silentiary in 562 AD, is known for its vivid description of Hagia Sophia. However, the Greek hexameter poem also includes panegyrics to Emperor Justinian. In v. 145–185, Justinian is praised with a hymn that resembles the* Homeric Hymns*. This is remarkable because the* Homeric Hymns *did not conform with the concept of hymns of the 6th century, which was defined by liturgical hymns. In the* Ekphrasis*, the contemporary concept is very present. The text frequently refers to liturgical chanting and even relates to a specific hymn. Thus, the aspect of hymn poetry in the* Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia *appears very ambiguous. This paper addresses this ambiguity. It discusses how hymn poetry is involved in Paul's* Ekphrasis *and asks if the contrast given by the Hymn to Justinian in v. 145–185 reflects the literary programme of the poem.*

Keywords: *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*, Hymn, Paulus Silentiarius, Justinian, *Homeric Hymns*, Late Antiquity, Christian classicism

In 557 AD, a heavy earthquake hit Constantinople and caused the dome of Hagia Sophia to collapse. Five years later, on Christmas Eve of 562, the church was finally re-inaugurated. For this solemn occasion,[1] Paul the Silentiary composed a poetic presentation of the church that is known to us as *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*.[2] The text, comprising 1029 lines, con-

[1] On the occasion of the *Ekphrasis*, see Whitby (1985).
[2] Paul also wrote an appendix to the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*, the *Ekphrasis of the Ambo*, which is not included in this paper.

sists of two iambic prologues (vv. 1–80; 81–134) and a hexameter poem (vv. 135–1029) that can be divided into three parts. The main theme of the *Ekphrasis*, the description of the newly-restored Hagia Sophia, is given in the central part of the text (vv. 311–920). It reviews the re-inauguration ceremony and takes the reader on a virtual tour through the sacred space.[3] The description is preceded by an extensive introduction (vv. 135–310). The vv. 920–1029 conclude the poem. The three parts of the *Ekphrasis* have very different foci. While the central part focuses on the church, in the other parts the building is only of secondary interest. Instead, they are dedicated to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and foremost to the emperor Justinian (reg. 527–565), who was responsible for the construction of Hagia Sophia.

The introduction focuses in particular on Justinian. He is basically the main character of the entire section. In this context, vv. 145–185 are noteworthy. These forty lines appear to praise the emperor with a hymn. This is not unusual, for hymns were very popular in late antique poetry and we often find hymnic sections integrated in larger contexts.[4] But the example from the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* seems to be exceptional. First, because the object of praise is a person, whereas hymns conventionally address divine agents. And second, because it strikingly resembles the Homeric Hymns. In Late Antiquity, however, these archaic hymns were generally not used as models for the composition of praise. At best, they were used as sources for phrases and narratives of classical mythology. [5]

Due to its similarity with the archaic Homeric Hymns, the passage of vv. 145–185 contrasts the concept of hymn singing employed in the *Ekphrasis*. The poem frequently mentions the chanting of prayers and

[3] For an analysis of the ekphrastic technique of Paul the Silentiary, see Macrides–Magdalino 1988; Webb 1999.
[4] An ideal example is the *Dionysiaka* by Nonnus of Panopolis, which includes several hymns. See Braun 1915.
[5] On the Homeric Hymns in Late Antiquity, see Agosti (2016).

psalms in and outside the Hagia Sophia. In this regard, the *Ekphrasis* reflects the concept of hymn poetry of the so-called 'Age of Justinian', which was defined by Christian liturgical chants. Moreover, the *Ekphrasis* is closely related to a specific hymn that was composed for the very same occasion. Paul's poem seems to refer to that hymn, employing the same motifs and using similar images.

Hymn poetry appears to be a key aspect of the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* – although, so far it has not received much scholarly attention.[6] However, this aspect is rendered ambiguous by the vv. 145–185. On one hand, the entire poem is interrelated with Early Byzantine hymnography. On the other hand, it includes a hymn that does not correspond to this concept but resembles a form, which is commonly associated with the praise of pagan deities. This paper addresses this ambiguity by discussing the aspect of hymn poetry in the *Ekphrasis* and, in particular, the passage of vv. 145–185, which I would like to call *Hymn to Justinian*. What characterizes that passage as a hymn? In what sense does it contrast the concept of hymn-singing reflected in the *Ekphrasis*? And how can this contrast be contextualised? Is it a mere literary play by an erudite poet? Or is it an expression of the programme on which the poem is based? However, before turning to the *Hymn to Justinian*, it seems appropriate to look at how hymn poetry is generally involved in the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*.

I

The aspect of hymn-singing is introduced right at the beginning of the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*. In the opening hexameters we read: 'Let us sing the house (…) with very holy hymns' (οἶκον […] | εὐιέροις ὕμνοισιν ἀείσομεν, vv. 142–143).[7]

[6] Only Macrides–Magdalino (1988) seem to deal with the issue.
[7] All quotations from the original text of the *Ekphrasis* are taken from De Stefani (2011). All translations are by the author, except for the translation of vv. 331–336 (see below).

This example demonstrates the complexity of the matter, for in this sentence 'hymns' has various connotations. Over the centuries, the term *hymnos* (ὕμνος) resp. the verb *hymnein* (ὑμνεῖν) underwent profound changes in meaning.[8] In archaic sources, for instance, *hymnos* can refer to any poetic text, regardless of its purpose or content.[9] In classicising texts, this lived on until Late Antiquity (e.g. Nonn. *D*. 1, 15). The definition of *hymnos* as a praise specifically of a deity is first attested in Plato (Pl. Lg. 700b) – although it is already implied in the Homeric Hymns. Plato distinguishes the *hymnos* from the *enkomion* that addresses persons (Pl. *R*. 607a). This is elaborated further by grammarians like Menander Rhetor (1st century AD), who explains the different types of hymns (Men. Rh. 333, 1–344, 14). In panegyrics, however, *hymnos* is also used as *topos* for praise in general.

All of this is relevant for Paul's *Ekphrasis* – a classicising text, which is strongly influenced by imperial age rhetoric theory.[10] Thus, the opening lines could indicate the following hexameter poem. Or, more generally, represent a panegyrical *topos*. However, there is also a religious connotation, emphasised by the attribute 'very holy'. The *Ekphrasis* is firmly rooted in the Christian world of 6th-century Constantinople. Thus, the Judaeo-Christian understanding of *hymnos* is relevant here. In that context, *hymnos* can refer to sung prayers and psalms[11], and liturgical hymns such as the Kontakia. These chanted homilies were very popular in the 'Age of Justinian'. They were established elements of the liturgy and had a strong place in the cultural life.[12] In his poem, Paul of-

[8] The transformation of the concept of hymn cannot be covered in this paper. Lattke (1991) offers a comprehensive overview.
[9] See Bremer (1981: 193–194). See e.g., Hes. Op. 662.
[10] For these aspects of the *Ekphrasis*, see e.g. Friedländer (1912: 105–132), Macrides–Magdalino (1988), Webb (1999), Bell (2009).
[11] The psalms are called *hymnoi* already by Philo of Alexandria (see Lattke [1991: 3 and 129–132]).
[12] On the history of Early Christian liturgical hymns, see Koder (2005: 14–25). For the Kontakia in the byzantine liturgy, see Lingas (1991).

ten mentions liturgical chanting in- and outside the Hagia Sophia. This means, the announcement to 'sing the house with very holy hymns' in vv. 142–143 could also anticipate the references to liturgical hymn-singing in the *Ekphrasis*.

These references are relevant for the purpose of this paper. However, as the example of vv. 142–143 shows, they cannot be identified solely on the basis of passages that include the term *hymnos,* due to its ambiguity. Moreover, we should also expect them in passages where the term does not occur at all. Nevertheless, the instances of *hymnos*[13] in the *Ekphrasis* offer a suitable starting point for a discussion about how liturgical hymn-singing is used as a motif in the poem.

The term *hymnos* occurs seven times in the *Ekphrasis*, including the v. 143 discussed above. But only in the context of the description of the church it appears to explicitly describe liturgical hymn-singing. This concerns two instances: v. 335 and v. 342.[14] They are both in the passage that prepares the detailed description of Hagia Sophia by reviewing the day of the re-inauguration (vv. 311–353). And both instances refer to liturgical acts. The one in v. 342 is embedded in the review of the procession towards Hagia Sophia. The text says, the participants chanted 'pious hymns with suppliant mouths' (ἱκεσίοις στομάτεσσι θεουδέας ἤπυεν ὕμνους, v. 342). Later, in vv. 350–353, we learn from an intertextual reference to Psalm 24 that they were singing that very psalm.[15]

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[13] The verb *hymnein* is barely relevant for this observation, for it occurs only twice in the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*. In vv. 311–312, as part of a rhetoric question, it translates to 'sing' in the sense of 'praise' (ἀλλὰ τί δηθύνω λαθικηδέος ἦμαρ ἑορτῆς | ὑμνῆσαι;). In v. 313, we read θεὸν δ' ὑμνήσατε μύσται. Whether this refers to hymn-singing or not, seems to be a question of interpretation, for it calls the priests either to 'sing hymns to God' or to 'praise God'.

[14] The other instances are either in the introduction (v. 143; 146; 172) or in the conclusion (v. 967; 970).

[15] This is also mentioned by John Malalas (MalalT 18, 143). On the intertextual reference, see Opstall (2018: 44–46).

Before describing the procession, the *Ekphrasis* discusses the vigil the night before the re-inauguration ceremony. This brief passage is particularly relevant in the context of hymn poetry and is thus worth a closer look (vv. 331–335):[16]

καὶ δὴ νὺξ τετέλεστο προηγέτις εὔποδος ἠοῦς
εὐφροσύνην καλέουσα, θεοῦ δ᾽ ὑπεδέξατο κῆρυξ
ἄμβροτος ἀγρύπνοιο χέων[17] κελάδημα χορείης
θεσπεσίοις τεμένεσσι νέοις, ὅθι μύστιδι φωνῇ
παννυχίους Χριστοῖο βιαρκέος ἀνέρες ὕμνους
ἀσπασίως ἐβόησαν ἀσιγήτοισιν ἀοιδαῖς.

And so the night guide of fair-footed dawn, had come to an end,
summoning joyfulness, and God's immortal herald
gave welcome, pouring out song from the unsleeping choir,
in the wondrous new precincts, where men
with mystic voice gladly shouted night-long hymns
for life-preserving Christ in songs never silent.

The *Ekphrasis* in general reflects the Neoplatonic idea that the absence of light equals the absence of the divine. Night and darkness are therefore presented very negatively throughout the entire poem.[18] But the night of the vigil is introduced in a surprisingly positive way. It is a joyful, sacred night. And it is a night full of chanting. In these only six lines, hymn singing is mentioned three times. So, it appears that according to the *Ekphrasis* the terror of this particular night was taken by the constant chanting of hymns.

[16] The translation is taken from Opstall (2018: 41).
[17] The Pal. Gr. 23, the only manuscript that preserves the text of the *Ekphrasis*, reads λαῶν κελάδημα in v. 333, which has already been substituted in the manuscript. De Stefani (2011) changes λαῶν to χέων.
[18] For a discussion of this aspect, see Schibille (2014: 16–41).

It becomes clear from this passage that for the presentation of the vigil the motif of hymn-singing fulfils a specific purpose: It serves to convey the poem's philosophical-theological concept. In other instances, this motif seems to support the characteristic purpose of an ekphrastic description, i.e., to 'bring the subject matter vividly before the eyes.'[19] This seems to be the case, for example, in the description of the Narthex of Hagia Sophia (vv. 417–443). The text says that 'from there at night a melodious sound rises continuously and cozens the ears of life-giving Christ' (ἔνθα δέ τις κατὰ νύκτα διαμπερές ἦχος ἀνέρπων | εὐκέλαδος Χριστοῖο βιαρκέος οὔατα θέλγει, vv. 429–430). Here, the image of the high-rising sound illustrates the height of the architectural structure. In this way, it can support the reader in visualising the space that is constructed on the literary level. Furthermore, this image charges the virtual space with a religious atmosphere similar to that one could experience in the actual Hagia Sophia. Thus, the motif of hymn singing contributes to the vividness of the ekphrastic description. It conveys the spiritual soundscape of the liturgy on the literary level. So, it can give the reader the impression of being actually surrounded by the sacred space and perceiving the contemplative sounds.

The *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* was recited some days after the re-inauguration of Hagia Sophia on December 24th 562.[20] For those, however, who were present at the re-inauguration ceremony, the references to hymn singing must have evoked memories of the liturgy on that day, which was most certainly celebrated with an abundance of hymns. One of those hymns has been preserved. The Kontakion *On the Inauguration*

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[19] See the definition of ekphrasis by Nicolaus Rhetor: ἔκφρασίς ἐστι λόγος ἀφηγηματικός, ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον (Nicol. Prog. 68, 8–12). For ekphrastic description in general, see Webb (2009).

[20] The text of suggests that it was recited either on 6th of January 562 or on 31st of December 562. See Friedländer (1912: 109–110); Macrides–Magdalino (1988: 63–67). The vv. 1–81 were recited in the Palace of the Emperor, the rest in the Palace of the Patriarch.

of Hagia Sophia[21] was composed by an unknown poet, especially for this occasion, just like the *Ekphrasis*. However, the two texts are not only connected through the common occasion. They also employ the same key motifs when depicting the Hagia Sophia and equally present the church as a manifestation of divine power on earth that will outlast all times, using similar images.[22]

The parallels between the *Ekphrasis* and the Kontakion suggest that the two texts are supposed to convey the same message to different addressees.[23] The Kontakion reaches out to the community of faithful gathered in the Hagia Sophia for the liturgy of the re-inauguration ceremony. Its language is close to the New Testament and patristic homilies and the symbols are taken from the Bible, so the participants of liturgies in the 6th century were most likely familiar with them. The *Ekphrasis*, on the other hand, provides a fundamentally different text. Paul the Silentiary followed the poetic tradition of Nonnus of Panopolis (5th century), the poet of the *Dionysiaka* and the *Paraphrasis of the Gospel of John*.[24] This means, his poem is based on the principle of variegation (ποικιλία). It displays a variety of expressions and a plethora of images that sometimes make it difficult to follow the description. In addition, the *Ekphrasis* draws on a long tradition of epic poetry in various ways. Paul reuses motifs and phrases from the works of Nonnus, but also from other poets like Callimachus and the Homeric Epics. To comprehend this elaborate, complex text required a high level of literary education. Against this background, the *Ekphrasis* has rightly been considered the more erudite version of the Kontakion.[25]

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[21] For a short introduction and an edition of the text, see Trypanis (1968: 139–147).
[22] See the comparison in Macrides–Magdalino (1988: 76–78).
[23] See Macrides–Magdalino (1988: 77–78): '(The Hymn) did not need the Ekphrasis in order to be understood, whereas the Ekphrasis had to assume prior knowledge of the concepts expounded in the hymn.'
[24] See e.g., Friedländer (1912: 112 passim); De Stefani (2011: XXVI passim).
[25] See Trypanis (1968: 139); Macrides–Magdalino (1988: 77–78).

II

In the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*, the complex interrelation between the text and hymn poetry is not only reflected through references to the latter. In vv. 145–185, the poem even includes a passage that can be read as a hymn. The object of praise is the emperor Justinian. The Hymn to Justinian follows immediately after the ten opening hexameters and starts with an invocation to Roma (vv. 145–151):

> Ἀλλὰ σύ μοι βασιλῆα φερέσβιον, ὄμπνια Ῥώμη,
> στέψον ἀκηρασίοισι χύδην καταειμένον ὕμνοις,
> οὐχ ὅτι σὸν ζυγόδεσμον ἐφήρμοσεν ἔθνεσι γαίης,
> οὐχ ὅτι σῶν ἐτάνυσσεν ὑπέρβια μέτρα θοώκων
> τέλσα παρ' ἐσχατόωντα κατ' ὠκεανιτίδας ἀκτάς,
> ἀλλ' ὅτι σὸν περὶ πῆχυν ἀπείρονα νηὸν ἐγείρας
> Θυμβριάδος ποίησε φαεινοτέρην σε τεκούσης.
>
> Come you, nourishing Roma, and crown the life-bringing Emperor,
> who is covered abundantly with pure hymns,
> not because he fastened the people of the earth to your yoke;
> not because he extended the unmeasurable dimensions of your seats
> from the most remote land to the coast of the Ocean;
> but because he erected in your arm an eternal sanctuary
> and made you more splendid than your mother at the Tiber.

Roma is identified with Constantinople. This becomes clear from the reference to her mother at the Tiber (v. 151). She is called to honour the emperor – not for his conquests, but for building the Hagia Sophia and making her more glorious than Rome in Italy.[26]

[26] The exposition of why the emperor deserves to be glorified is given with a priamel. This figure of speech is very common in hymnic literature. See Race (1982: 43–54 for

To sing in honour of the emperor, who is already 'covered abundantly with pure hymns' (v. 146), appears to be a key theme of the *Hymn to Justinian*. In vv. 155–156, Constantinople, referred to as Anthusa, is called to sing the emperor together with 'honey-voiced choirs' (μελιφθόγγοισι χορείαις, | χρυσοχίτων Ἀνθοῦσα, τεὸν σκηπτοῦχον ἀείδειν) because he defeated the barbarians and the personification of Envy (v. 157–163; this passage is discussed below). Later, in vv. 164–167, 'Roma Latina of Old' (πρεσβυγένεθλος Λατινιὰς Ῥώμη, v. 164) is asked to sing together with 'new blooming Roma' as if with a single voice (σύνθροον ἀείδουσα μέλος νεοθηλέϊ Ῥώμῃ, v. 165).

In v. 168, the priests are summoned to celebrate the re-opening of Hagia Sophia and to join the praise (μέλψομεν […] εὔποδας ὕμνους, v. 172).[27] They should glorify Justinian because he 'made all sorrows vanish' (ὅλας ἤμβλυνε μερίμνας, v. 175) that followed the collapse of the 'work of the rulers' (δούπησεν ἐρισθενὲς ἔργον ἀνάκτων, v. 176). With the call to the priests, the hymn gradually passes from praising the emperor to preparing the next section, the account of the earthquake in 557 AD (vv. 186–213). In the last lines of the hymn, the singer repeatedly asks the emperor to forgive him for recalling that sorrowful event (vv. 176–185, see below).

As stated above, since Plato hymns are traditionally regarded as songs specifically for deities. Hence, the question arises of how the praise of Justinian in vv. 145–185 of the *Ekphrasis* can be a called hymn.

Roman emperors used to be venerated as deities. But this changed after the 4th century due to the rising impact of Christianity. The emperor could no longer be regarded as God. Instead, he was seen as legitimised by the Christian God and appointed by Christ as a placeholder on earth until doomsday.[28] Justinian, however, emphasised this divine

the priamel in the Homeric Hymns; 99–104 for the hymns by Callimachus).

[27] The attribute εὔπους (lit. 'with good feet'), relating to the rhythm, makes clear that ὕμνοι here must mean 'songs'.

[28] For this conception of the ruler in Late Antiquity, see Meier (2001: 115–116).

legitimisation. This becomes clear, for example, from his legislative documents, in which he presents himself as acting by God's direct mandate and as particularly close to God. Sometimes he seems to consider himself as almost equal to a deity.[29]

The portrayal of Justinian in the *Ekphrasis* seems to reflect this imperial propaganda, esp. in vv. 145–185. A key point is the presentation of the emperor in the lines quoted above, where he is called 'life-bringing' (φερέσβιος, v. 145). This is an unusual attribute for a person. It is first attested in Hesiod (T. 693) and the Homeric Hymns (h.Cer. 450; h.Ap. 341), always applied to fertile land. In later texts, it was used for several deities: Prometheus (A. Fr. 204b**, 12), Demeter (S. Fr. 754, 2–3), Hera (Emp. 6, 3) and Helios (Orph. L. 301). Gregory of Nazianzus finally adopted it for the Christian God (*De vita sua,* 1326, 6; 1448, 9). However, it remains very uncommon for humans. The only example of a person being called 'life-bringing' seems to be Ino, the wet-nurse to Dionysos in the *Dionysiaka* by Nonnus (*D*. 5, 560). We find the term several times in Nonnus' works. In the *Dionysiaka*, it is mainly used for body parts and almost exclusively in the context of birth-giving and parenthood – as in the example of Ino. But in the *Paraphrasis*, φερέσβιος is frequently applied to Jesus Christ (e.g. 6, 99; 8, 92).

As we can see by the few instances of φερέσβιος in ancient literature, the attribute serves to present something or someone as life-providing. And in general, the term relates that quality to divinity. Against this background, it seems plausible to assume that by calling the emperor 'life-bringing', the *Ekphrasis* suggests right at the beginning of the *Hymn to Justinian* that he should be regarded as a divine figure.[30] The frequent

[29] Meier (2001: 107–114) demonstrates this on the example of the legal document *Deo auctore* by Justinian.

[30] One might read φερέσβιος in v. 145 in context with the invocation to Roma, who in the same line is called 'nourishing' (ὄμπνια Ῥώμη). In this way, Justinian would be portrayed as the agent by whom the nourishment provided by Roma creates life.

use of φερέσβιος in Nonnus is particularly relevant in this context. Since Nonnus was very influential to Paul the Silentiary, Paul could have drawn inspiration from his works when calling the emperor 'life-bringing'. With the *Paraphrasis* in mind, one can even speculate that v. 145 of the *Ekphrasis* suggests comparing the emperor to Jesus Christ.

III

The presentation of Justinian as a divine agent, who deserves veneration, continues throughout the whole passage of vv. 145–185 and qualifies it as a hymn. However, the *Hymn to Justinian* is also distinguished by the formal arrangement. In this regard, it sharply contrasts the way the motif of hymn singing is generally employed in the *Ekphrasis*. In the poem, references to actual hymn singing, like in the passages discussed above, always relate to liturgical hymn chanting. The *Hymn to Justinian*, however, features characteristics of ancient, non-Christian hymnic texts. The most conspicuous characteristic is the structural arrangement of the passage, which seems to follow the distinctive structure of the extensive Homeric Hymns (*Hymn to Demeter*, *To Apollo*, *To Hermes*, and *To Aphrodite)*.[31] Those hymns basically consist of three parts: In the beginning, the deity the hymn is dedicated to is not addressed directly, but only mentioned; the middle part tells myths about the deity or explains his/her attributes; only in the closing lines, the deity is addressed directly with a salute (e.g., χαῖρε) or a plead (e.g., κλῦθι).[32]

The 'movement from the distant third-person announcement of the opening to the proximity of the final meeting'[33] is the most distinctive aspect of this structure. It is also discernible in the *Hymn to Justinian*. In

[31] The collection consists of 33 hexameter hymns from the 7th century BC to the 5th century AD. They differ in length and style. The hymns mentioned above are considered the oldest of the corpus. See Allen–Halliday (1963); Faulkner (2011).
[32] For this structure, see Janko (1981); Clay (2011).
[33] Clay (2011: 236).

the beginning, the text addresses Young Roma – the emperor is only referred to (βασιλῆα φερέσβιον, v. 145). Only after addressing once more Constantinople, then Old Roma, and finally the priests, the singer turns to the object of praise. In the final verses of the hymn the emperor is directly addressed (vv. 176–177):

> […]· ἵλαθι μύθῳ,
> ἵλαθι τολμήεντι, μεγασθενὲς ἤρανε γαίης,
>
> (…). Be gracious to the tale,
> be gracious to the bold one, powerful ruler of the earth,

So here, like in the Homeric Hymns, the singer and the object of praise come closer to each other in the course of the song. This progression seems to characterise the *Hymn to Justinian* as a hymn in the style of the Homeric Hymns and distinguishes it from other late antique hymnic texts. Only very few examples from that period feature the same distinctive structure, like some hymns by Proclus (412–485).[34] Most of the material, however, reflects the structure known from the Orphic Hymns: The object of praise is invoked in the opening lines, followed by an accumulation of attributes.[35]

The Homeric Hymns generally did not experience a vivid reception in Late Antiquity, not even by archaising poets like Nonnus.[36] They were, however, reused by the Hellenist poet Callimachus (ca. 305–240 BC), who also wrote hymns. Six of them have come down to us: *To Zeus*,

[34] According to Agosti (2016: 223), the hymns by Proclus are 'the only Late Antique corpus showing an influence of the Homeric Hymns.' Three of them are structured like the Homeric Hymns: *Hymn to Aphrodite*, *To the Muses*, and *To the Lycian Aphrodite*. See Van den Berg (2001).

[35] See Agosti (2016: 223), who rightly points out that most of the hymnic material from this period is probably lost.

[36] On Nonnus and the Homeric Hymns, see De Stefani–Magnelli (2008: 557–562), Agosti (2016: 224).

To Apollo, *To Artemis*, *To the Bath of Pallas*, *To Demeter*, and *To Delos*. Callimachus imitates the extensive Homeric Hymns and adopts their distinctive structure. Paul the Silentiary drew great inspiration from Callimachus.[37] The *Hymn to Justinian* even includes a striking intertextual reference to the Callimachean *Hymn to Apollo*. In the final passage of the *Hymn to Apollo*, the god confronts the personification of Envy (v. 105–107, ed. Pfeiffer [1953]):

> ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὔατα λάθριος εἶπεν·
> 'οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει.'
> τὸν Φθόνον ὠπόλλων ποδί τ' ἤλασεν ὧδέ τ' ἔειπεν
>
> The insidious Envy said to the ear of Apollo:
> 'I don't admire the singer who doesn't sing about what is as large as the sea.'
> Apollo chased the Envy off with a kick and said: (…)

In this famous passage, Envy can be seen as a chiffre for those, who accuse the poet of not writing extensive poems. Apollo could represent the poet's patron, who supports him even though he prefers to write short poetry.[38] Paul reuses this image and applies it to the emperor. After presenting Justinian as victorious over external enemies in vv. 157–160, the text goes on as follows (vv. 160–163):

> ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς
> τετριγὼς ὑπέροπλα μέλας Φθόνος ὤκλασε τόξῳ
> ἀστυόχου βασιλῆος, ἐπασσυτέροις δὲ βελέμνοις
> ῥωγαλέος δούπησε, πέσων δ ἐβάθυνε κονίην.

[37] For references to Callimachus' works in the poem by Paul, see De Stefani–Magnelli (2008: 562, n. 111).
[38] For this interpretation, see Williams (1978: 85–97).

> Even
> the black Envy sank down, shrieking, by the bow
> of the Emperor, the protector of the city, and torn by one arrow
> after the other, he crashed, and tumbling he fell deep into the dirt.

The parallels between the two passages are remarkable. But in the *Ekphrasis*, the motif does not seem to concern poetological discussions. Instead, given the context of fighting enemies, Envy most probably stands for the emperor's rivals referring to failed attempts to overthrow Justinian.[39] Or, more symbolically, for the forces of misfortune that pose a threat to his reign. However, it seems crucial how Paul reuses the Callimachean image. Apollo only kicks the Envy, whereas Justinian kills him and his fall is described in detail. This is no *imitatio* of the Hellenistic hymn, but clear *aemulatio*.

On a meta-level, the reference to the Callimachean *Hymn to Apollo* implies a comparison between Justinian and the Olympic God. This is further suggested by the portrayal of Justinian with Apollo's attributes, bow and arrow, that provides a very unusual depiction of a Roman emperor as an archer. Under this aspect, the *Ekphrasis* makes Justinian appear as a better Apollo, who is more effective when fighting his enemies. The *Hymn to Justinian* thus seems to elevate the emperor above the Olympic God. One might read this comparison in the context of the conflict between Christianity and Polytheism. Justinian is known to have pursued a harsh policy towards non-Christians and to even have persecuted them. Thus, one interpretation of this comparison between Justinian and Apollo might be that it is supposed to emphasise the superiority of Christianity, represented by the most pious emperor, over Polytheism, represented by Apollo.

[39] Like the ominous Nika-Revolt of 532 or a failed coup in 562, which the *Ekphrasis* discusses in v. 22–39.

IV

The role of the *Hymn to Justinian* in the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* can be considered in two contexts. First, as an aspect of the panegyrical programme of the 6th-century poem. The hymn in v. 145–185 displays right from the beginning of the hexameter text, how we ought to see Justinian when reading the following presentation of Hagia Sophia: As a divine figure that embodies God's power on earth; Justinian introduced a new Golden Age for the Roman Empire through his many deeds; but in particular, he deserves veneration for (re-)constructing Hagia Sophia, because the church provides a space on earth for the heavenly power to transcend. Thus, it gives proof of Justinian's godlike wisdom.

Secondly, we can gather the literary programme in the poem by Paul the Silentiary, if we compare the *Hymn to Justinian* to the concept of hymn reflected in the *Ekphrasis*. The description frequently uses the motif of hymn singing to visualise the literary space of Hagia Sophia and charge it with a religious atmosphere. In this context, the text only refers to liturgical chanting and relates to the Christian concept of hymns. The *Hymn to Justinian*, however, contrasts this concept. It is designed according to an archaic, Hellenic tradition of hymn poetry. Thus, through the *Hymn to Justinian*, Paul reveals the classicist character of his poem right from the beginning. We might further regard the *Hymn to Justinian* more specifically as an expression of Christian Classicism.[40] Paul takes the conventional elements of a literary genre that is commonly regarded as archaic and Hellenic and reuses them in a new, distinctively Christian context. The programme behind this seems to be aimed at integrating ancient literary forms into the contemporary Christian world. In this light, the *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* appears to adapt the non-Christian way of praising divine agents to the Christian context of the Age of Justinian through the *Hymn to Justinian*.

[40] See Kaldellis (2007: 173–187).

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Between Paleography and Heraldry: the Case of *Urb. Gr.* 141

In this paper I focus on the Urbinas Graecus 141, one of the poetic manuscripts from the library of Federico da Montefeltro. I give a summary of the manuscript's content and the main codicological and paleographical features, noting the presence of Angelo Vadio's hand, a 15th-century humanist from Rimini. After carrying out a survey on the Federico's heraldry and on the problematic aspects of dating methodologies based on the use of miniature, I focus on the coat of arms of the Urb. Gr. 141 to sheds light on the intricate history of its acquisition. For this aim, I carry out a comparison with Urb. gr. 111, which shares the same decorative pattern as Urb. gr. 141. Additionally, I also examine the miniature as a whole and consider its position within the manuscripts. Then, I extend the analysis to other Urbinates Graeci codices adorned with a coat of arms but not flanked by the letters F.C./F.D. or FE.DUX, of which Urb. gr. 111 and 141 are part. Through comparative analysis with such codices, I conclude that it is plausible to propose a ducal period acquisition for Urb. Gr. 141 and 111.

Keywords: Federico da Montefeltro, Library of Urbino, coat of arms, *Urbinas Graecus* 141

The manuscript *Urb. Gr*. 141 is one of the 14 Greek poetry codices belonging to the library of Federico da Montefeltro. In 1657 by the will of Pope Alexander VII it became part of the Vatican Apostolic Library. It is one of the 53 Greek codices presenting a coat of arms.[1]

[1] According to an analysis of the *Old Index*, the Greek poetic manuscripts arranged on

This manuscript is a paper codex, in 4° format, consisting of 191 folios. It contains five tragedies by Sophocles (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone*, *Philoctetes* up to verse 1297) and four comedies by Aristophanes (*Plutus*, *Clouds*, *Frogs*, *Birds*), with a rich scholastic apparatus. The first 71 folios include Sophocles. Folios 72r-72v are blank. Folio 73r includes 27 hexameters from the poem by Michael Psellos Πρὸς τὸν σαββαΐτην (verses 262-288), followed by the *Epistula ad Innocentium Papam* by John Chrysostom; this text continues until folio 75r. Grammatical annotations appear continuously on folio 75r and 75v, and on folio 76r there is the incipit of Michael Psellos' poem Πρὸς τὸν σαββαΐτην. This textual arrangement, combined with the analysis of the quire structure, allows us to conclude that the folios have been transposed. The manuscript consists of 9 quaternions containing the Sophoclean part; 5 folios (ff. 73r-77v) are sewn in an inverted manner, since the correct order would be: 76r 76v 77r 77v 73r 73v 74 r 74v 75r 75v, and then from folio 78r, there are 14 quaternions containing Aristophanes. After the Aristophanic section, grammatical and lexicographical content annotations appear on folios 190r and 191r. Folio 190v is blank, and finally,

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the shelves of the Library room were 14 (*Urb. gr.* 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, Ambr. Q. 88 sup., Ambr. H 77 sup. and R 429). The list of codices *Urbinates Graeci* with coat of arms can be found in Manfredi-Potenza (2022: 119, n. 372): «la presenza massiccia di emblemi aggiunti su codici greci si può constatare invece tra gli Urbinati, dove però gli emblemi e gli stemmi di Federico da Montefeltro sono ovunque; tra i libri greci lo stemma attualmente si ritrova, quasi sempre aggiunto, su 52 codici, gli attuali *Urb. gr*. 2, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 61, 64, 66, 78, 80, 81, 85, 94, 98, 99, 102, 108, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 128, 129, 130, 131, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 146, 149, 151, 157, 159». They listed 52 codices, but among these, the number 149 should not be considered as it features a non-Federician coat of arms. Stornajolo (1895: 284–285), advances the hypothesis that it is the ducal coat of arms of Emanuele Filiberto. Furthermore, Manfredi and Potenza omit from the list the numbers 69, 84, 101, and 148, which instead feature Federician coats of arms, and instead include number 84, which does not feature a coat of arms. They also include in the count the number 151, which does not feature a coat of arms, but only the decoration of the circle for the title. Therefore, the Urbinates Graeci codes decorated with coats of arms are 53.

on folio 191r, there is the ὑπόθεσις τῆς ὅλης Ἰλιάδος. This title proves that the manuscript originally transmitted the Iliad, now preserved in *Ambrosianus* H 77 sup., a witness dated to the 14th century that exhibits paleographical and codicological characteristics similar to *Urb. Gr*. 141, as proved by Battezzato.[2]

According to the paleographical analysis presented by Stefec, *Urb. Gr.* 141 shows marginal annotations written by the hand of Angelo Vadio, a 15th-century humanist from Rimini who played a significant role in importing codices from the East to the West.[3] As Stefec briefly suggests, it is probable that Vadio's manuscripts were integrated into the Urbino library as a collection shortly after the humanist's death, which, according to the scholar, can be dated before 1482. Some of Vadio's manuscripts indeed bear the *großen Wappen* of Federico da Montefeltro and therefore were likely acquired before 1482.[4] The *großen Wappen* is the ducal coat of arms of Federico; the German term translates the expression *tessera gentilicia maior* already used by Stornajolo in his work on the *Urbinates Codices* to describe the coats of arms of the ducal period.[5]

A brief excursion into Federico's heraldry becomes necessary, as an analysis of his coats of arms reveals different types with distinct characteristics.[6] First, there is the simple coat of arms, which takes the form of an inverted egg-shaped shield divided into six alternating bands of gold and blue, with a black eagle prominently displayed in the upper gold band (Fig. 1). Next, the quartered coat of arms appears, characterized by a polygonal shield divided into four quarters: the first and fourth quarters feature a black eagle on a gold background, while the

[2] Battezzato (1996: 29–34).
[3] Stefec (2012:142–143, n. 186).
[4] Stefec (2012: 122).
[5] See Stornajolo (1902: XVIII).
[6] For this categorization see Stornajolo (1902: XVII–XVIII); Riou (1982: 520–521); Fronzi (2000–2001: 38–54).

second and third quarters are adorned with three alternating bands of blue and gold (Fig. 2). Finally, the tripartite coat of arms emerges, consisting of a shield vertically divided into three compartments. The first and third compartments are further subdivided horizontally, with one section showcasing the black eagle on a golden background and the other presenting three alternating gold and blue bands. The central compartment, in contrast, is distinguished by the presence of papal emblems on a red background (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1 simple coat of arms



Fig. 2 quartered coat of arms

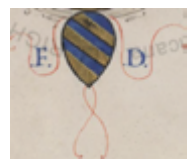
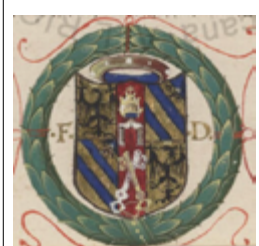
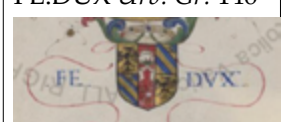


Fig. 3 tripartite coat of arms



I include here a summary table of the coats of arms associated with the letters F.C., F.D., FE.DUX as they appear in the *Urbinates Graeci*, where F.C. means 'Federicus comes', F.D. and FE.DUX 'Federicus dux'.

Table 1. Distribution of Federico's Coat of Arms in Urbinates Graeci Manuscripts

Coat of arms	F.C.	F.D.	no letters
simple	*Urb. Gr.* 7 	*Urb. Gr.* 148 	*Urb. Gr.* 113 
quartered	*Urb. Gr.* 101 	Not found in the *Urbinates Graeci*	Not found in the *Urbinates Graeci*
tripartite	Not found in the *Urbinates Graeci*	*Urb. Gr.* 108  FE.DUX *Urb. Gr.* 146 	*Urb. Gr.* 64 

Based on the assumption that the coat of arms was illuminated on the manuscript either prior to its entry into the library or during a period closely following its acquisition, it is possible to trace a coat of arms to

a particular moment in the history of the Urbinate library. The simplest dating criterion is constituted by the presence of letters: F.C. means the count period of Federico's reign, indicating a date before 1474, while the variants F.D /FE.DUX denote the ducal period, a title that Federico received from Sisto IV only in 1474.

Against the methodological validity of using the coat of arms as a dating element, two arguments can be advanced. Firstly, it is plausible that a codex could have been illuminated even years after its acquisition. Secondly, a previously affixed coat of arms might have been updated or replaced by another. However, contrary to the first argument, it is crucial to consider the establishment of the Federican library, which prioritized acquiring high-quality codices, superior to those already possessed, with the coat of arms serving as a marker of distinction for the most prestigious manuscripts. In this context, delaying the affixing of the coat of arms on purchased codices would have been counterproductive, as these manuscripts needed to be promptly placed on library shelves to showcase prestige and wealth. Contrary to the second hypothesis, it is worth noting that within the Greek collection, there are unquestionably 12 coats of arms associated with the count period, evident from the letters F.C. (*Federicus Comes*). Therefore, if one were to suggest the substitution of comital coats of arms with ducal ones, explanations would be required regarding the persistence of the 12 codices with count coats of arms. Moreover, analyzing the position of the coats of arms on the *codices* enables us to definitively reject the hypothesis of coat of arms replacement. Coats of arms of the count period are illuminated on the initial leaf of writing of each codex. Any replacement of these coats of arms would have caused the loss of the first leaf of writing.[7]

[7] Regarding the validity of using miniatures as a criterion for dating, see Stornajolo (1902: XVII–XVIII) and Fronzi (2000–2001: 55–64). About the comparison with the Ducal Palace see Rotondi (1950: 113–118).

For these reasons and thanks to a parallelism with the decorative project of the Ducal Palace *in toto* - entirely signed by Federico both as count and duke - the criterion of using the miniature as a dating element is considered reliable.

Among the *Urbinates Graeci*, 53 codices out of 168 (31.54%) present a Federician coat of arms: the codices with count letters, F.C., are 12 (*Urb. gr*. 2, 7, 34, 36, 43, 46, 101, 114, 115, 116, 131, 137); the codices with ducal letters, F.D. and FE.DUX, are 28 (*Urb. gr*. 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 37, 42, 44, 49, 41, 66, 69, 78, 80, 84, 85, 94, 102, 108, 128, 129, 130, 146, 148, 157, 159); the codices without letters are 13 (*Urb. gr*. 32, 33, 64, 98, 99, 111, 112, 113, 135, 136, 139, 140, 141).

Our attention will now be directed to *Urb. Gr*. 141. This codex presents dual Federician coat of arms on the flesh side of the third flyleaf that covers the manuscript. The coat of arms is of a simple (or minor) type, it does not present letters and is associated with the circle for the title. The latter exhibits a decoration of lanceolate leaves, green in color, oriented counterclockwise. There are joints at the north and south cardinal points, without any reversal in the direction of the decoration. The external decoration outside the circle, of a circular type, consists of a variably expanded weave of thin tendrils, made with a light brown ink. Then there are floral elements in blue and purple as well as numerous gold dots, bordered in black. Inside the circle, on a blank background, lies the title text featuring the authors' name, the title of the works, expressed both in Greek and Latin, alternating lines in blue and red ink (Fig. 4).

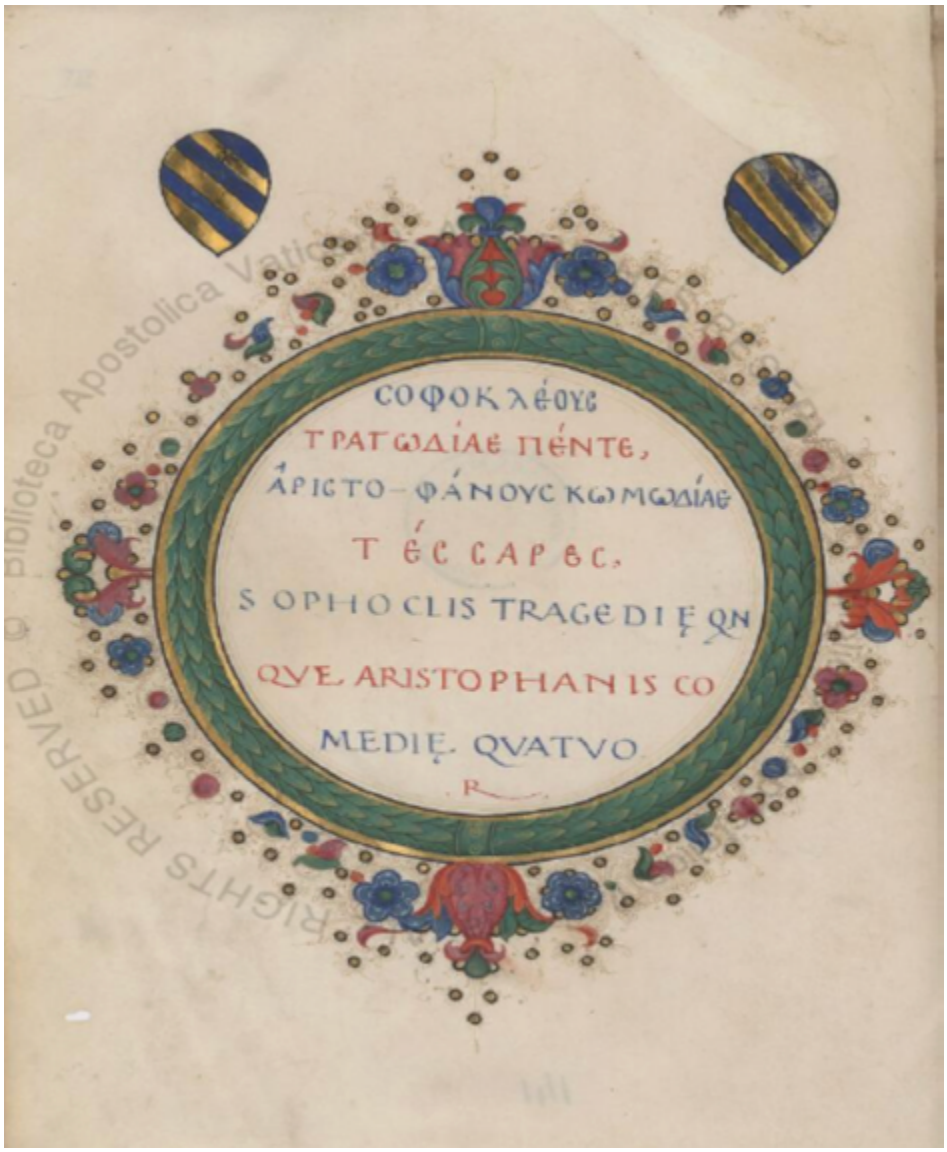


Fig. 4 Coat of arms of the Urb. Gr. 141

The decorative model of *Urb. gr.* 141 is also reproduced in *Urb. gr.* 111, another manuscript belonging to the library collection of Angelo Vadio, as evidenced by the presence of his marginal annotations.[8] (Fig. 5)

[8] Stefec (2012: 146, n. 192).



Fig. 5 Coat of arms of the Urb. Gr. 111

The miniature of the *Urb. Gr.* 111 is described as follow by Martin:

> 'sur le verso du second de ces feuillets, nous trouvons le blason de cette maison répété de chaque côté du feuillet, à droite et à gauche.

> Au-dessous des blasons, le titre de l'ouvrage, en grec et en latin Ἰσοκράτους λόγοι. Isocratis orationes, est enfermé dans une couronne de laurier, entourée elle-même d'ornements qui remplissent presque tout le feuillet'.[9]

The scholar, using the coat of arms as a dating element, merely states that this coat of arms belongs to the Montefeltro family and not to the Della Rovere family, thus predating 1508, hypothesizing that it was more likely annexed under Federico da Montefeltro rather than Guidubaldo.[10] Furthermore, Pinto in 2003 argues that *Urb. gr*. 111: '[è] entrato a far parte della biblioteca dei duchi di Ubino prima del 1504, probabilmente già sotto Federico da Montefeltro'.[11] Already in 1895, Stornajolo clarified that it was acquired by Federico, as he describes the miniature of the *Urb. gr.* 111 manuscript: 'in summa pagella dextrorsum et sinistrorsum insunt duae tesserae gentiliciae minores ducis urbinatium Friderici, quae aquilam tantum, uti insigne familiare, praebent'.[12]

Now, the coat of arms defined as simple (also known as minor) - shaped like an inverted shield, divided into six alternating bands in gold and blue - could belong to either the count period or the ducal one, as suggested by the analysis of such coat of arms in the *Urbinates Graec*i manuscripts. The simple coat of arms may indeed appear associated with the letters F.C. (see *Urb. gr*. 7), F.D. (see *Urb. gr*. 148), or it may appear without letters, as in the case of *Urb. gr*. 111, 113, 136, and 141.

In his thesis on the Greek manuscripts of Palla Strozzi, Fronzi dedicates a section to the study of coats of arms in the *Urbinates Graeci* codices and considers *Urb. gr.* 111 as the only case of a manuscript with

[9] Martin (1881: 2–3).
[10] Martin (1881: 3).
[11] Pinto (2003: 38–39).
[12] Stornajolo (1895: 173).

a coat of arms from the count period associated with the circle.[13] *Urb. gr.* 111 is dated by Fronzi to the count period (before 1474) based on Stornajolo's assertion: 'antiquiores, ut mihi videtur, tesseare gentiliciae Friderici, unam aquilam nigram aut ad summum tres praebent'.[14]

As previously mentioned, Stornajolo in the analysis of the *Urb. gr*. 111 manuscript, describes the decoration as composed of 'duae tesserae gentiliciae minores ducis urbinatium Friderici'.[15] It is interesting to observe Stornajolo's description regarding the *Urb. gr.* 141 manuscript, which, as stated, presents a decoration similar to that of *Urb. gr. 111*. Concerning the *Urb. gr.* 141 manuscript, Stornajolo writes: 'in summo folio duae tesserae gentiliciae parvae comitis Friderici'.[16] The comparison between the descriptions of *Urb. gr.* 111 and 141 thus shows an oscillation in the use of the terms comes and dux.

Another aspect of the miniature that deserves attention is the decoration of the circle. The analysis of coats of arms in the *Urbinates Graeci* manuscripts shows that this element is never associated with comital coats of arms, while all the codices with ducal letters (F.D. or FE.DUX) present the circle as an additional decorative element for the title. Therefore, if *Urb. gr.* 111 and 141 were from the count period, they would represent the only two exceptions within this framework.

Furthermore, we need to consider the position of the miniature within the manuscripts. Codices from the count period feature the coat of arms illuminated on the first or the first few leaves of writing.[17] In contrast, manuscripts from the ducal period have the coat of arms illuminated on a blank leaf, frequently added specifically to include the coat

[13] Fronzi (2000–2001: 59). He does not include the *Urb. gr.* 141 codex among the list of manuscripts adorned with a coat of arms.
[14] Stornajolo (1895: XVI), quoted by Fronzi (2000–2001: 37, n. 4).
[15] Stornajolo (1895: 173).
[16] Stornajolo (1895: 267).
[17] See the following codices form the count period with letters F.C.: *Urb. gr.* 2, 7, 34, 36, 43, 46, 101, 114, 115, 116, 131 e 137.

of arms and the circle for the title.[18] Among the ducal codices, there are three cases where the decorative apparatus is spread across two different pages: the circle for the title on a separate blank leaf and the coat of arms on the writing page.[19] Both *Urb. gr*. 111 and 141 present the circle decoration and the coat of arms on the same page, particularly on the flesh side of an added parchment leaf to contain the decorative apparatus.

Examining all the 13 *Urbinates Graeci* codices without letters – as said more difficult to date - of which *Urb. gr*. 111 and 141 are a part, it emerges that *Urb. gr.* 112, 135, and 136 do not have the circle decoration and have the coat of arms on the first leaf of writing. Based on the characteristics outlined above, it can be inferred that they belong to the count period.[20] This conclusion gains further support from the analysis of the provenance of these three codices, specifically originating from the Florentine workshop of Vespasiano da Bisticci. He was the primary supplier of codices for Federico's library, having dispatched the largest number of manuscripts to Urbino before 1474.

Among the remaining ten codices without letters, all feature the circle decoration for the title, a characteristic exclusively associated with ducal coats of arms as already said. Two of them have the coat of arms and the circle decoration on separate pages (*Urb. gr*. 32 and 33), while the other eight display them together on the same page (*Urb. gr.* 64, 98, 99, 111, 113, 139, 140, and 141).[21] If we accept the miniature decoration as a valid dating indicator, these ten codices are dated to the ducal period. Consequently, their inclusion in the Federician library would have occurred after 1474.

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[18] See the following *codices*: *Urb. gr.* 16, 17, 18, 22, 37, 42, 44, 49, 61, 69, 78, 80, 84, 85, 94, 99, 102, 128, 129, 130, 140, 146, 148, 157. They all are unquestionably from the ducal period as proved by the letters F.D. or FE.DUX.

[19] See *Urb. gr.* 15, 20, 21.

[20] See Fronzi (2000–2001: 136–137).

[21] Out of these ten manuscripts, Fronzi considers 32, 33, 64, 98, 99, 113 and 139 to be ducal. He does not count 140 and 141 and he considers 111 to be comital. See Fronzi (2000–2001: 135–145).

Additional support for the suggested ducal dating of 111 and 141 could come from their inclusion, along with numbers 64, 98, and 99, in the group of manuscripts belonging to Angelo Vadio.[22] None of Vadio's manuscripts present count coat of arms, as there are no miniaturized codices with the letters F.C. annotated by the humanist. Among the manuscripts unquestionably belonging to Vadio (totaling 51), those adorned with a coat of arms feature a ducal emblem.[23] Specifically, out of the 18 Vadio's codices displaying a coat of arms, 13 exhibit ducal letters (*Urb. gr*. 37, 44, 61, 66, 78, 85, 94, 102, 108, 129, 146, 148, 159), 3 have been attributed to the ducal period by Fronzi based on ornamentation to the ducal period (*Urb. gr*. 64, 98, 99). Although *Urb. Gr.* 111 and 141 have been overlooked in previous studies, they too can be linked to the ducal period based on the analysis of their coats of arms. The hypothesis of a ducal dating for these codices, based on the analysis of the miniature, thus confirms the argument proposed by Stefec. According to Stefec, Vadio's manuscripts were probably incorporated into the library after the humanist's death, which probably occurred shortly before 1482.[24] Moreover, Stefec's study of Vadio's biography suggests a timeline aligning with the acquisition of *Urb. gr.* 111 and *Urb. gr.* 141 after 1474. Vadio is documented between Padua and Vicenza in 1475, and from September 1476, he is recorded as a teacher in Cesena for two years, after which his whereabouts become uncertain.[25]

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[22] About these manuscripts see Fronzi (2000–2001: 135–145).

[23] I regard manuscripts that were undoubtedly owned by Vadius as those that were partially or entirely copied by the humanist himself. In addition to these manuscripts, I also include those for which Stefec has reconstructed the acquisition history, identifying the places of purchase in Crete, Constantinople, Cyprus, and Italy. See the following *Urb. gr.* 6, 37, 39, 44, 47,50, 51, 52, 55, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 78, 81, 85, 91, 94, 95, 98, 99, 102, 103, 104, 108, 110, 111, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 127, 129, 141, 144, 145, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161e R429. See Stefec (2012: 95–198).

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On Two Annals of the Long Turkish War[1]

The Long Turkish War proved to be the most devastating warfare in the until-then history of Hungary. Its history has been dealt with by numerous contemporary writers of Hungarian Neolatin historiography; however, the majority of their works do not have any critical edition or modern Hungarian translation. The present study focuses on two such texts. After presenting an outline of the war and the contemporary Neolatin historiography, first I will discuss some characteristics that the two texts have in common, such as the fact that the copies we have are truncated and deal with the year 1597. In the third part, I will emphasise the differences between the two texts, for example, the intentions of the authors, and the fact that in one text, the ruling dynasty is heavily criticised (with carefully chosen words) for their inefficiency against the Ottomans, while in the other, they are hardly mentioned (although this text is heavily truncated).

Keywords: János Joó, 16th-century, Neolatin historiography, manuscript, Fifteen Years' War, Pápa

The Long Turkish War, also referred to as the Fifteen Years' War (1591–1606), was the most destructive war in Hungary's history up to that time.[2] A number of the consequences of the era in question (for example, the change in the country's ethnic relations) have persisted to the present day. Consequently, the examination of sources pertaining to this

[1] Supported by the ÚNKP-23-3 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Culture and Innovation from the source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

[2] Some reviews: Tóth (2000); Bagi (2000: 527–547); Bagi (2015: 79–95).

period is of paramount importance.[3] In this study, I first provide a concise overview of the war and the salient elements of contemporary Latin historiography related to it. Thereafter, I deal with two Latin texts that have been neglected by research so far.

Following the defeat suffered by the Ottoman Empire at Mohács in 1526, Hungary[4] became part of two empires: its northern and western regions, that is, the remaining parts of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom, joined a newly formed composite state, the Habsburg Monarchy. Meanwhile, its central part was annexed by the Ottoman Empire, and the eastern region – known as the Principality of Transylvania from the 1570s – became a tributary vassal state of the latter Empire. The Fifteen Years' War was an ongoing conflict between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, fought on the territories of both powers. At times, the Principality of Transylvania and Moldavia entered a state of alliance with the Habsburg Monarchy, which received support from the Holy Roman Empire, the Court of Madrid, and the Papal States. The most significant and the most memorable military encounter of the war was the battle fought at Keresztes in October 1596, which ultimately led to the dissolution of the Christian forces. The war was finally concluded in 1606 with the Peace of Zsitvatorok.

The war and the Ottoman threat prompted significant reflection in Latin, both within Hungary and abroad. A notable example from the former is Miklós Isthvánffi's[5] monumental history,[6] which provides an overview of events in Hungary between 1490 and 1607. To date, no critical edition of this work has been published, nor does a modern translation

[3] For an example, see: Lovas (2021: 143–157).
[4] Pálffy (2022).
[5] On the life of Miklós Isthvánffi (1538–1615), the humanist historian, see: Nagy (2018: 103–123).
[6] The first edition: Isthvanffius (1622).

exist.[7] Among the surviving items from Isthvánffi's library of books and manuscripts is the collection entitled *Apparatus Historicus*,[8] now preserved in the National Széchényi Library. The first volume of this collection contains the historical notes of János Joó, of which the account dealing with the military events of 1597 constitutes the first subject of the present study.

Little is known about the life of János Joó;[9] the precise dates of his birth and death remain unknown. His father, Balázs Joó, served as legal director of the Treasury. His administrative career earned the family a noble title, which enabled János Joó to enter the aristocratic circle. From 1587 onwards, he was a member of the Supreme Court,[10] i.e. he was also one of the grand judges of the kingdom. His diplomatic activities included participation in the 1594 Regensburg Imperial Diet, involvement as one of the preparers of the Treaty of Prague,[11] and membership in Rudolf's Polish embassy in 1596. In 1603, following a complaint lodged by another aristocrat, István Illésházy, he was arrested on charges of lèse-majesté and could only escape the death penalty by surrendering his entire estate. Although he was later acquitted, he died while in the process of recovering his property during the reign of Matthias II. Joó recorded notes on the events of the Long War. The first volume of the aforementioned Isthvánffi-colligatum preserves six such texts, which cover the period between 1593 and 1597.[12] It should be noted that this

[7] Hungarian translations of the Historia: Istvánffy (1867); Istvánffy (1962).; Benits (2001–2009).

[8] OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606.

[9] János Joó (*? – † before February 1610) chief justice from 1587, on his life, see: Nagy (2009: 471–514); his notes: Nagy (2004: 151–170).

[10] He was one of the grand judges of the country and head of the lower house of parliament.

[11] On 28 January 1595, the contract was signed, whereby Rudolf II and Zsigmond Báthory formed a military-political alliance against the Ottoman Empire. Tóth (2008: 165–166).

[12] Each year has its own text, with the exception of 1594, which has two accounts: one discussing the recapture of Nógrád, and the other focusing on the sieges of Esztergom and Győr.

volume also originally contained an account for the year 1598; however, this section has been torn out.[13] An other text in the second volume of the collection is also presumed to be by János Joó; it deals with the events of 1605. No critical edition exists for most of these manuscript notes,[14] and, naturally, no translation has been produced for any of them.

Given that the financial burden of defending Hungary was primarily borne by the Holy Roman Empire, and the protection of the kingdom also ensured the security of the German territories against the Ottoman threat, it is unsurprising that the war aroused considerable interest within the Empire. An illustrative example of this is the collection of texts published by Nicolaus Reusner in Frankfurt in 1603,[15] which comprises fifteen accounts covering the various years of the war, some of which are attributed to unknown authors.

Another focus of the present study is an unknown manuscript[16] preserved in the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, which also belongs to the previously unexamined Latin narrative sources[17] of the Long War. According to the brief note on the cover,[18] this text concerns the events of 1597 in Pápa. The memory of the year 1597 is of particular significance, on the one hand, because it follows the aforementioned Battle of Keresztes (October 1596), and on the other hand due to the recapture of Tata and Pápa by Christian forces. Since the subject of my doctoral research is the life and

[13] Nagy (2009: 486).
[14] The sole exception is the note on the recapture of Nógrád in 1594, published by: Nagy (2009: 497–509).
[15] Reusner (1603).
[16] B.E.M.S. Cat. X. Manuscripta historica, Tit. III. Manuscripta praelo iam expressa, g.
[17] At least the ones who do not mention: Kruppa (2021: 91–107); Nagy-L. (2021: 67–91); Pálffy (1997: 7–81); Pálffy (2022).
[18] „E* paragraphus 3. 4. 5. 6. & 7mus /: etsi is mancus sit :/ authoris incerti de anno 1597. – Expugnationem arcis Papae adumbrantes. – Ex quo authore desumptum sit, non liquet, neque comportandi tempus aderat – Caeterum authoris cuius opus hoc typis excusum sit, vix dubium est.”.

notes of János Joó – including the text dealing with the year 1597[19] – the comparison and examination of these two sources is therefore natural.

In consideration of the partial overlap in the subject matter of these two sources, it is advisable to begin a detailed presentation of both by examining their shared characteristics. Both sources are written entirely in latin and are truncated. Joó's note preserves the beginning, and its title is known, but the ending is missing. However, the remnants of pages at the end of the volume suggest that an additional eight pages may originally have belonged to this note.[20] As for the other, anonymous text, both its beginning and end are missing; it begins at section III and concludes in the midst of section VII. The precise number of missing pages at the end remains unknown. The original title of the work is also uncertain, as the title appearing on the manuscript's cover must have been assigned at a later date.[21] While this provides limited information regarding the exact content, a six-line note beneath the title indicates that it deals with the recapture of the stronghold of Pápa in 1597. On this basis, it is plausible that the subject of the two texts is the same.

Corrections can be seen in both manuscripts. In Joó's account, they appear in two ways: at times, a necessary word that had been omitted from the sentence is inserted above the line.[22] Several instances can also be observed in which the first syllable of a word is separated from the

[19] OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 73r–84v. *Res gestae anni millesimi quingentesimi nonagesimi septimi.*

[20] The last intact page of the colligate is 84v; the following pages initially show the same hand, then on 88v the text ends at three-quarters of the page, and on 89r a different hand appears.

[21] „Fragmentum historicum de rebus Mohacsianam". The first line of the text ("Durus hic annus, et post cladem Mohácsianam ..." 484) indicates that the title is an expression taken from here.

[22] „…ut vel assignatam sibi ditionem ita tueri et defendere posset, [quin] ad praesens usque tempus singulis ferme armis aliquid de ipso regno, seu fraude dolone seu aperto marte hostis Thurca ac vicini principes non adimerent, avellerentque." (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 73r).

rest, as if it were a preposition or another word. Some of these were later contracted.[23] The unknown manuscript exhibits corrections,[24] deletions,[25] and, in one instance, traces of shading.[26] Despite these amendments, both texts remain fully legible. It is known that Joó's account is a copy, and presumably so is the *Fragmentum historicum*…. I shall return to the evidence for this below in the context of the intelligibility of the texts. The autograph manuscripts, as well as the identities of the copyists, remain unknown.

Having outlined the similarities, we now turn to the differences. The first and most evident distinction is that the author of one text is known (János Joó), while the authorship and origin of the other is unknown. The person who inscribed the note on the cover was unaware of the original author, and the date of compilation is also unknown. According to this note, the text had been printed, although I have not yet been able to identify the publication.[27]

The outer margins of the Esztergom-manuscript are notably wide, whereas in Joó's text, the inner margin on the recto pages is confined, and the outer margin on the verso pages are broad. Joó's text comprises

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[23] In the case of „Thurcae tamen impavidi nihil minus faciunt, …" (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 79r) "impavidi" originally stood separately as "im pavidi".

[24] An example can be seen right on the first page: „Tunc demum advertere coeperunt vicini Austrii Styriique, quantum finibus suis detractum sit securitatis". (484) The word "quantum" was originally written as "quantam" before correction.

[25] An example: „Cum vero in itinere, non procul Papa abesset". (491) The manuscript originally read "Papam" with the "m" subsequently crossed out. It also occurs that a whole line is crossed out: „Cuius nec opinato casu, nostri irritati potius ~~usque ad oppidi portas, cedenda et contrucidando insequuntur~~ quam animis fracti, cohortante Nadasdio, Gallos fortiter retundunt, et usque ad oppidi portas, cedendo et contrucidando insequuntur; multos praeterea eorum sauciatos capiunt." (492).

[26] „tormentorum ictibus eum in modum procubuisset, ut aditus ad adsultum sufficere posse videretur". (485) Most of "tormentorum" was written with a darker ink; faint traces underneath suggest it may have originally been another word.

[27] According to the catalog of the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, the manuscript was classified among historical manuscripts, among already printed sources: Beke (1991: 119–120). All texts in this category could be identified except the *Fragmentum historicum*….

twenty-four pages (73r–84v) and is not divided into sections or paragraphs. The Esztergom-text is considerably shorter, spanning ten and a quarter page; it is not divided into paragraphs, but it is organized into sections averaging two and a half pages in length.[28] A marginal note in the Fragmentum historicum... refers to a passage in the first edition of Miklós Isthvánffi's history.[29] This provides a terminus post quem for the copy, which can therefore be dated to 1622. In the case of the Joó-text, I have not managed to determine this yet. Although it cannot be claimed based on a single word, the marginal note in the Fragmentum appears to be in the same hand as the main text, suggesting that a single scribe executed the entire copy. By contrast, Joó's manuscript shows evidence of two hands: one from 73r–76v, and the other starting from 77r.[30]

Furthermore, a divergence in content is observable between the texts. János Joó commences his account of 1597 with a strong opening, criticising the dynasty for several pages. Among other points, he complains that Hungary is the sole country that ruled by foreigners who are unacquainted with the customs and laws of the country. Thereafter, he transitions to describe the events that transpired during the year: he outlines the aims of the year and reports the appointment of Archduke Maximilian III as general. The author describes the events surrounding the siege of Tata in May, subsequently addressing the occurrences in Pápa (78r–80r), where the content of the two texts temporarily aligns. The extant version of the *Fragmentum historicum…* makes no mention of the spring events; following a brief introduction, it moves directly to the events in Pápa, thus sug-

[28] Based on this, the first and second paragraphs may have spanned approximately five pages.

[29] „Istvanffy XXX p. 708 seq." An asterisk appears at the beginning of the marginal note, with no corresponding mark in the main text.

[30] This is not an unusual phenomenon; Joó's other notes also feature alternating hands within a manuscript. In the OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 19r–44r. *Historia earum rerum, quae in oppugnatione Strigoniensi et expugnatione Iauriensi Anno Domini 1594 actae sunt*., at least two different hands can be distinguished (19r–26v and 27r–44r).

gesting that the two initial sections that are absent may have addressed other matters. The author describes the court-martial at Óvár, followed by a concise description of the castle itself, and then narrates the siege: the Ottomans ultimately surrendered the castle in exchange for guaranteed safe passage. However, as the author notes, the Italians brutally killed three hundred of the Turks as they left the castle. Although the text, according to the note on cover, ostensibly concerns only the events of 1597 in Pápa, it extends beyond that year. In the opening sentence of the fifth section, the author alludes to the continuation of events: *'This turn of Pápa, although it was favourable for Christian affairs, had been the beginning of another more harmful one, which was caused by the betrayal of the Gauls and Walloons two years later'*.[31] He then goes on to describe the rebellion of the mercenaries from Pápa in the summer of 1600 (489–494), whose dissatisfaction, according to the author, stemmed from a lack of pay and provisions.[32] From the final lines, we learn that the suppression of the rebels was led by Ferenc Nádasdy,[33] followed by Melchior von Redern,[34] who died soon afterwards. We can therefore infer the terminus post quem of the text itself, which may therefore be placed in the autumn of 1600. In accordance with this, the text can be divided into two parts, with the shared content of both texts consisting of the events in Pápa.

In Joó's note, following the account of the events in Pápa, the manuscript also documents the occurrences of the autumn, including the unsuccessful siege of Győr, the capture of Tata by the Ottomans, and the events in Vác. The intact part of the manuscript ends while describing the latter. The last-mentioned event can be dated to the beginning of November, when the castle eventually fell into Turkish hands. No

[31] „Papae haec conversio, tametsi rebus Christianis opportuna accidit; tamen praelusit calamitosiori alteri, quam Gallorum, Vallonumque perfidia, biennio post, procuravit." (489).
[32] On the rebellion of the mercenaries: Tóth (2000: 309–312).
[33] Ferenc Nádasdy (1555–1604), general, known as the "Black Bey".
[34] Melchior von Redern (1555–20 September 1600).

significant military events took place in this year after that; the Ottoman troops withdrew home in the late autumn.

The only shared content element of the two texts is thus the recapture of the castle of Pápa in 1597, which is narrated to the same extent in both. The comparison, however, reveals that, aside from this common subject, the texts do not show close identity. It is evident that there are common elements observable in a number of passages, although it is possible that this is simply a reflection of the fact that they recount the same events. Behold an example:

Res gestae…	Fragmentum historicum …
'Capta vero Papa archidux cum exercitu septem adhuc dies illic mansit, ac purgatis fossis, et nonnullis aliis quae collapsa fuerant reparatis, pro praesidis Barone Hofkircherum[35] et Michaelem Marotii[36] cum certa militum Germanorum et Ungarorum manu ibi reliquit, sicque postea continuato initere ultima die mensis Augusti in Altenburgensem insulam, in qua initio castra metatus fuerat rediit, …' (80r)	'Maximilianus, mille *Germanis et Hungaris* in praesidio relictis, arcem *Andreae Hoffkirchio* tuendam reparandamque commisit, … *in oppido vero commendante Francisco Nadasdio, Michael Marothius*, equitum suorum praefectus Hungaris *praeesse* iussus est, quibus rebus ad eum modum a duce instructis militi, quatuor dies, ad requietem dati sunt, postea (489) vero exercitus, in nupera ad *Ovarum* castra, incolumis reductus est.'

Beyond the content itself, a difference in authorial intention is also discernible. János Joó's critique[37] of the Austrian government in Hungary,

[35] Georg Andreas von Hofkirchen (1562–1623).

[36] Mihály Maróthy (?– † before May 18, 1601), captain-general of Pápa from 1598 until 1601.

[37] Some examples: „Sola Ungaria est, quae ab externis et peregrinis legumque et consuetudinum Ungariae minus peritis viris gubernatur et cum maxima Rei Publicae iniuria peregrinis et alienis legibus regitur." (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 74r); „quae eo illos induxit ut neglectis Ungarorum consiliis exterorum hominum iudicia ac consilia

which extends over several pages, provides a vivid impression of the prevailing mood in the year following the defeat at Keresztes.[38] In the *Fragmentum historicum...*, no indication of the author's intent is given, nor is it possible to determine for whom or for what purpose it might have been composed. In the case of Joó, the task is facilitated by the existence of five additional extant texts. In these, the author interprets some terms on multiple occasions, a practice that would have been superfluous had he intended the texts solely for a domestic audience.[39]

The last point of comparison concerns the comprehensibility of the texts. In Joó's notes, copying errors are infrequent, and are confined to the omission of a single letter, or to words written separately that should be joined.[40] Despite these errors, the text remains fully intelligible; they do not impede the reader's interpretation.

In contrast, the *Fragmentum historicum...* is replete with errors, eighty-four in total, averaging eight or nine per page, ranging from misspellings to unintelligible corruptions. Among the cases that can be readily solved is *'Ea tamen re factum fuisse, credidere multi, in primis disciplinae militaris tenaces ac veterarii milites...'* (487). The copyist resolved the syllable *-ri* incorrectly, as *veterani* should be here. A more problematic case is *'Franciscus postea Nadasdius, atque Colonicsius, cum suis aliis et nobilitatis*

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sequerentur et semper plus in horum peregrina administratione quam in illorum patria experta usu firmata ac iam olim multorum Regum regimine approbata gubernatione positum esse arbitrarentur." (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 73v).

[38] Military leaders are also criticised in Joó's texts. On Hardegg Ferdinand, the captain-general of Győr, Joó makes the following note: „improvidus et ad segnitiem potius ac mollitiem, quam ad laborem et virtutem natus fuerat" (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 3r); regarding Hardegg in the following year: „Comes autem Hardekius, ... ebriosus, avarusque erat, ac exiguo iudicio pollebat, negligenter omnia agebat, nec an recte res circa militiam agerentur curabat." (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 20r).

[39] Some examples: „…Beghi quem nos praefectum dicere possumus…" (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 4r) vagy a „milites etiam, quos Nazadistas vocant; …" (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 19v).

[40] In the case of „Thurcae tamen impavidi nihil minus faciunt, …" (OSzK Fol. Lat. 3606/I. ff. 79r) "impavidi" originally stood separately as "im pavidi".

copiis accesse, qui obsidionem et consilio iuvarent et ope: ...' (492), in which the main clause lacks a predicate, and the form *accesse* is uninterpretable. The subordinating predicate *(iuvarent)* introduced by *qui* provides a clue: according to the *consecutio temporum*, the predicate of the main clause should be *accesserent*. It appears that the second half of the word was omitted during copying, likely due to an unresolved abbreviation.

There is only one passage that is not merely uninterpretable, but it is also not written in Latin: *'parum ducerent nisi foedissima quaeque loca, et quorum vel in sermone mentionem aucesamum pertentarent'* (486). The original meaning of the word *aucesamum* remains unclear. Notwithstanding these errors, the text remains intelligible throughout. Given the quantity and nature of the errors, it is evident that this text is a copy.

The two sources are therefore found to differ in a number of aspects. Their only point of connection is the account of the recapture of the castle of Pápa in 1597, yet, apart from this common object, these parts do not show a close match either. The situation regarding the missing parts remains unknown: the end of Joó's note is missing, the original extent of the *Fragmentum historicum…* is indeterminate, and the date of its composition cannot be defined. However, given the yearbook-like structure of Joó's writings, it is conceivable that he recorded events of the intervening years, including the year of 1600. In order to determine whether János Joó could have been the author of the *Fragmentum historicum...*, it will be necessary to undertake a comprehensive grammatical analysis of all extant texts by János Joó.

Despite the unknown text shows no clear congeniality with Joó's note, its sole marginal note refers to Isthvánffi's work, thereby making it evident that his history must be taken into consideration. A comparison of the corresponding sections of the two texts reveals that, in most instances the two texts align almost verbatim, with differing words often being mere synonyms. Here is an example (the deviations are marked in italics hereafter):

Historiae	Fragmentum historicum…
'Sed oppidum fossa plena profundioribus aquis, ac duplici vallo circumdatum, *munitumque* erat, et *ideo* difficiliorem habebat oppugnationem.' (708)[41]	'Sed oppidum, fossa, profundioribus aquis plena, ac praeter aggeres validos, duplici vallo circumdatum, *communitumque*, difficiliorem habebat oppugnationem.' (485)
'*Supra haec* captivos Turcas, solutis *ergastulis,* et adapertis carceribus, liberos abire iusserunt; *scriptisque ad Albanos* Turcas literis, *se eis* urbem arcemque tradituros *significarunt*, siquae emeruerant stipendia, sibi *solverentur*.' (751)	'*Igitur* captivos Turcas, *vinculis* solutis, et adapertis carceribus, liberos abire iusserunt, *et datis ad Albae Regalis praesidiarios* Turcas litteris urbem *ipsis* arcemque tradituros, *nuntiarant*, si quae *apud Romanorum Imperatorem* emeruerant stipendia, sibi **repraesentato arce Turcico, dissolverentur**.' (490)

Furthermore, there are also some passages that are barely verbatim. Here is an example of this: (the identical parts are underlined):

Historiae	Fragmentum historicum…
'Postero die, quo memoria Divi Stephani primi regis Ungariae colitur, concessa est edicto principis militibus cuius nationis oppugnandi oppidi facultas, non tamen ex aequo, sed distinctis ordinibus ita ut Germani et Vallones uno eodemque, agmine, Gallli atque Itali, altero moenia invaderent, tertia pugna ab Ungaris iniretur.' (708)	'Postero die, qui memoriae S. Stephani erat sacer, errore animadverso, quod nationum delectus ille, intempestive fuisset habitus, universim omnibus, qui in castris fuerant, gentibus facultas ad adsiliendum promulgatur, ea tamen lege, ut totus oppugnationis labor, distinctis ac iustis ordinibus, auspicato susciperetur, atque adeo agmen primum Germanorum et Vallonum, alterum Gallorum atque Italorum, tertium denique Hungarorum esset.' (486)

[41] The punctuation of quoted passages in this study is based on the 1622 edition.

It can be asserted that, although the Fragmentum occasionally utilises more verbose phrasing, it does not offer a greater quantity of information than Isthvánffi, and in certain instances, it even provides a lesser amount.[42] Given this level of textual similarity, the question arises as to which one was written first. It is plausible that Isthvánffi used the unknown text and in some cases augmented it. Conversely, it is also possible that the unknown author excerpted from the Historiae. Moreover, it cannot be excluded that both drew upon a third source. However, as the original form of the *Fragmentum historicum…* is unknown, the extant evidence does not allow for a definitive determination of the relationship between the two texts.

In summary, an analysis of the two sources – the Joó-account and the *Fragmentum historicum…* – demonstrates that, while both partly recount the events of the same year, they differ in several aspects. It is noteworthy that both of these texts feature introductory sections that do not pertain to the year 1597: in the case of Joó's account, this is his critique of the House of Austria; and the introduction of the Fragmentum is absent, but it is certain that the text did not commence with the events of 1597. A closer relationship between the two manuscripts might be determined, but this would necessitate a comprehensive grammatical analysis. The Fragmentum shows a close textual connection with Isthvánffi's work, while its relationship to Joó's note remains uncertain. One point, however, is clear: in some way both can be linked with Miklós Isthvánffi.

[42] Examples: In the description of Pápa's surroundings, both texts mention a certain "Tüzes-kapu", (for Pápa's city and its gates, see: Mithay [1984: 319–332]). In Isthvánffy's work, this appears as "ignea porta", a gate that opens toward Sümeg and Lake Balaton (Isthvanffius [1622: 708]). Within the *Fragmentum historicum…* (485) the *Tőzes kapu* is identified as the gateway to Veszprém. Furthermore, Istvánffy provides figures with greater frequency than the anonymous author. For instance, the *Historiae* documents the arrival of six hundred carts loaded with bread and other provisions at the Pápa camp, and it also records that in June 1600, the castle was guarded by a thousand men (Isthvanffius [1622: 708–709 and 751]).

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"I *Am* My Freedom": Myth and Existentialism in Sartre's *The Flies*

Rather than a close adaptation of the myth of Orestes and Electra, Jean-Paul Sartre's The Flies *(1943) adapts the story from an existentialist standpoint. This paper first considers the significance of classical myths for existentialist writers, as well as the common critical approach to Sartre's theatre. Instead of using Sartre's existential bent as a critical starting point of* The Flies*, this paper then examines the work as an example of Sartre's theatre of situations, utilising the myth as a simultaneously familiar and distanced subject matter. Focusing on the representation of characters in particular, the paper tracks the steps they take in reacting to the situation of the play, until they reach the point of acknowledging freedom and its consequences. Lastly, this paper interprets the final responses of Electra and Orestes as enactments of bad faith and authenticity respectively, and the inconclusive ending of the play as a formal choice that correlates with the indeterminacy of freedom.*

Keywords: Sartre, *The Flies*, myth, Orestes, theatre of situations, freedom, responsibility

Introduction: Myth and Existentialists

The presence of Greco-Roman myths in existentialist texts, literary or otherwise, is apparent even upon a superficial browsing of the oeuvre of writers affiliated with this philosophical approach. The most obvious examples are *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) by Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre's theatrical version of the Orestes myth, *The Flies* (1943). The

same trend would later continue particularly in theatre, where myths were incorporated to depict existential themes and concerns. Notable examples are Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) and *Médée*, written in 1946 and performed in 1953. While existentialists embrace a detachment from the authority of the past and emphasize instead the importance of the present moment, this utilisation of myths needs consideration.

Critics have proposed several reasons as to why myths provided a fruitful source material for existentialist authors. Hazel Barnes attributes this to the fact that myths provide "a total situation, a complex of experience which is immediately intelligible to any reader," that authors can use and reinterpret for modern times to show their position with regard to "these fundamental truths."[1] George Boas moreover suggests that the existentialist approach was compatible with one typical characteristic of Greek tragedies, the fact that in every case "the heroes have to make a choice," and it is this particular moment that is useful to existentialist writers, especially after they disrobe classical and mythological characters of their fixed traditional depiction, and put on them the appearance of human beings.[2] However, some have found this selective approach to be opportunistic. Distinguishing among three phases of the literary myth, Harry Slochower states that existentialists deliberately choose only the middle phase, the moment of choice and the exercise of freedom, and raise it "to an absolute," ignoring the preceding phase where "ego is *born*" and the following where "the ego finds *reconciliation*."[3] As such, rather than a solution, their final destination is that of anguish and self-isolation. Thus, according to Slochower the existentialists' use of myths is disproportionate, partial and highly selective.

[1] Barnes (1955: 122).
[2] Boas (1955: 9).
[3] Slochower (1948: 42–43).

Sartre's *The Flies* seems to follow the pattern described by Slochower in that it neglects the past of Orestes, starting at the midpoint in his journey, and not providing a clear resolution in the end. As such, the focus and the main conflict of the play seems to be Orestes' acknowledgement of his freedom and the final moment of choice. However, there appears to be a continuous trend in the critical reception of *The Flies* and of Sartre's early plays in general. From earlier interpretations until the more recent, there are two main approaches that deserve attention.

The first has to do with the historical context of the time when the play was written. The mythological foundation of *The Flies* has often been considered as "camouflage,"[4] to allow Sartre to implicitly criticize the Nazi system and the Vichy regime without facing any censorship. In addition, it is interpreted as "an indictment of the [French] people," who had been following a sort of cult of guilt, surrender and inferiority towards this regime.[5] This is in part a direct consequence of Sartre's own statements regarding the play, as he states that:

> By writing my play I was trying by my own unaided effort, feeble though it may be, to do what I could to root out this sickness of repentance, this complacence in repentance and shame . . . I was saying to my fellow Frenchmen: You do not have to repent, even those of you who have in a sense become murderers; you must assume your own responsibility for your acts, even if they have caused the deaths of innocent persons.[6]

This historically-oriented approach has resisted times and remains prevalent even in the most recent analyses of *The Flies*.[7]

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[4] O'Donohoe (2005: 54).
[5] Slochower (1948: 46).
[6] Cf Morgan (2013: 97).
[7] See A. Van den Hoven (2025: 13–24).

Secondly, a more frequent starting point of analysis on *The Flies* and Sartre's theatre is his philosophy. His plays are interpreted as by-products of Sartre's non-fictional writing, where the stage becomes a medium to transmit his existentialist theories to an audience. This approach typically results in ambiguities, and sometimes, even contradictions. For example, Slochower argues that, while Sartre places great importance on the notion of thrownness, "Orestes is not 'thrown' into existence," and nothing in the story, with the exception of the murder act perhaps, is really unmotivated.[8] Moreover, he argues that despite the individualistic emphasis of existentialism, there is a strong social motif in the final act of the play, which becomes even more questionable considering that the people whom Orestes wants to save are not even worthy of being saved.[9] Rhiannon Goldthorpe also questions this resolution, stressing a lack of balance between the moral and aesthetic effect of *The Flies*, debating whether Sartre is using the mythical to receive a moral, emotional or aesthetic response, whose end is not even clear.[10]

This analytical approach from Sartre's philosophical theory to his theatre, still continues. Dennis A. Gilbert's review of the scholastic efforts on Sartre's theatre throughout decades, despite his emphasis on "a rebirth of scholarship" in this area after the year 2005, actually reveals that these efforts, "at their best, expand the commonplace philosophical reading of these plays."[11] Although these considerations are viewed through different lenses, whether they be aesthetic, ethical, or otherwise, Sartre's philosophy remains their starting point. However, on a later occasion, analysing Simone de Beauvoir's views on existentialist theatre, Gilbert stresses that she "rejects the notion that Sartre theorizes first and then uses the novels and the plays simply to illustrate certain

[8] Slochower (1948: 46).
[9] Slochower (1948: 47).
[10] Goldthorpe (1984: 81).
[11] Gilbert (2010: 248).

points of [existentialist] thinking."[12] It follows then, that it is the situation depicted in the play that can lead to theoretical and philosophical interpretations, not the other way around.

This paper does not consider the historical background of the play, and reverses the order of the aforementioned approach. Thus, the starting point and primary focus will be the play itself, supported by Sartre's theoretical formulations on theatre, particularly what he calls "theatre of situations," as well as his views on the use of myths. Following the trajectory of the situation presented in *The Flies*, from the introduction of Orestes until the open ending of the play, this paper will then analyse the steps and the outcome of this trajectory to interpret what this version of the classical myth reveals for modern audiences and readers.

Myth in Sartre's Theatre of Situations

Sartre highlights two main aspects that make myths a suitable source material for his theatre. On the one hand, they provide a sense of familiarity for the audience. According to him, "if it is to address the masses, the theatre must speak … in the form of myths which anyone can understand and feel deeply."[13] In that sense, myths provide a familiar terrain, where the audience does not have to strain to follow the plot, but focus on its thematic content and meaning instead. However, on the other hand, this familiarity should remain moderate, as Sartre also draws attention to the concept of distance. According to him, "a play should not seem too familiar … even as it speaks to the spectators of themselves it must do it in a tone and with a constant reserve of manner which … will increase the distance between play and audience."[14]

[12] Gilbert (2012: 112).
[13] Sartre–Contat–Rybalka (1976: 38–39).
[14] Sartre–Contat–Rybalka (1976: 41).

Elsewhere, he states that this distance is indeed "the real origin, the real meaning of theatre."[15]

Sartre had already explored this interplay between familiarity and distance in his first play, *Bariona, or the Son of Thunder* (1940), in its essence a Nativity play. While the birth of Christ is an easily recognizable narrative for the average audience, its temporal removal from their immediate present is the first step of the distance that the author aims for. The same approach persists in Sartre's subsequent play, *The Flies*. In both cases, audiences and readers are introduced to a recognizable situation, enabling a smooth involvement in the events of the play. Yet, particularly through the dialogue, they are gradually distanced from the play. The use of myth in *The Flies* makes this transition even easier, considering the fictional nature of the subject matter. According to Jacques Guicharnaud, through such familiar subjects, "Sartre's plays lead the spectator from the universe of perception, common sense, and psychological or aesthetic habits to an existentialist conclusion, often difficult in its newness."[16] Adding to the existentialist worldview, this newness is apparent in the theatrical nature of Sartre's treatment of the myth.

Adapting or reinterpreting myths was obviously something that had been done before. However, Beauvoir considered Sartre's use of myth as a novelty in the French theatrical tradition, "as a way to replace a theater of fatality … with a theater of freedom."[17] This meant that, instead of the typical approach of following the classical plot with loyalty, it was the translation of its meaning for a modern audience that became the focal point. Nevertheless, there is a thematic aspect of mythology that might be thought to cause a problem for existentialism: the pervading theme of fate. In classical sources, whether through the order

[15] Sartre–Contat–Rybalka (1976: 12).
[16] Guicharnaud (1962: 70).
[17] Gilbert (2012: 112).

of events, or characters like gods, the Moirai and the oracles, fate and destiny are depicted as deterministic forces. The idea that man is bound to his fate seems to oppose the notion of freedom that is so crucial for existentialists. How then does one go from fatality to freedom? Sartre uses theatre in particular to answer this question.

Sartre does not see this sense of destiny and fatality as the centre of classical myth and tragedy. Instead, he argues that human freedom is "the chief source of great tragedy"; that "the fate we think we find in ancient drama is only the other side of freedom."[18] The classical meaning of fate is translated into facticity, that is, the biological, economic, cultural, in short, every external factor that is present in one's situation out of one's control. However, Sartre sees these seemingly deterministic circumstances as prerequisites for one's exercise of freedom. Rather than these fixed factors, it is instead one's reaction to and negation of them that gives meaning to one's existence. With acting and reacting, as well as enacting freedom at the root of this understanding, the use of theatre as a medium becomes even more significant.

To challenge the existing theatrical tradition of the time, Sartre conceived his notion of "theatre of situations." This new type of theatre shifted its focus from the character, which had been at the centre of realistic theatre, to the situation instead. With the restricting nature of facticity being a prerequisite of freedom, Sartre envisioned his heroes as "freedoms caught in a trap."[19] According to him, facticity should not indicate a fatalistic and fixed human nature, but a human condition instead. As such, they highlight the moment of free and deliberate choice, where one acknowledges the capacity of accepting or reacting to said facticity. It is this (re)action to the situation where he is thrown that defines the character. In other words, the maxim "*doing* reveals *being*" is

[18] Sartre–Contat–Rybalka (1976: 3).
[19] Sartre (1988: 235).

apparent.[20] In choosing how to react towards said situation, characters are depicted in a continuous pattern of becoming, where each choice shapes the features of their existence. With the theatre of situations not being concerned with any preconceived "thesis" or underlying ideology,[21] it is this gradual unravelling of the character that is of interest.

The Flies: Characters in a Situation

The Flies is a typical example of Sartre's theatre of situations. The play starts at the midpoint of the myth of Orestes with the hero's return to Argos, his birthplace. The character is thrown into an unfamiliar setting and situation, as the domineering presence of a blood-smeared statue of Zeus and a group of old women dressed in black make no sense to Orestes. His detachment from the reality of the situation is immediately apparent in three main levels. Firstly, he does not recognize the place, as he states that "I was born here – and yet I have to ask my way, like any stranger."[22] Secondly, the established cult of guilt for the death of Agamemnon that the current leader Aegistheus has imposed on the people to force them into submission does not appeal to Orestes. Therefore, in addition to his detachment from the place, he rejects the customs or connections to its citizenry, declaring "These folk are no concern of mine. … I don't share their remorse, I don't even know a single one of them by name."[23] Lastly, and more importantly, upon being asked by his tutor about the reason of his return to his birthplace, Orestes dismisses the question rhetorically asking "Did I say I had a purpose?"[24] Through these three levels, Orestes shows himself as the ideal "Sartrean hero, the

[20] Sartre (1988: 193).
[21] Sartre–Contat–Rybalka (1976: 38).
[22] Sartre (1989: 50).
[23] Sartre (1989: 61).
[24] Sartre (1989: 58).

homme sans qualites."[25] He does not have a fixed character or a preconceived ideology and purpose that holds authority on his actions.

His sister Electra is initially depicted in a relatively similar light. She refuses to partake "in this mummery," and rejects the dead that the people are mourning for; they are not *her* dead.[26] However, in contrast to Orestes, who is in a position of reflection, Electra is the only one who acts. Declaring herself "sick with – hatred,"[27] she makes it her *raison d'être* to disrupt the ghostly atmosphere of Argos. Her revolt is immediate upon her entrance, as she addresses the statue of Zeus with blasphemous remarks, even rubbing her body inappropriately against it.[28] Yet, the most significant manifestation of her hatred comes during the ceremony of the dead, where the entire city visits the mouth of a cave, out of which it is said that the dead will visit their living relatives, to torture them by inflicting shameful remorse. Electra presents herself in the midst of the grieving crowd in a white dress, and starts dancing with a "look of ecstasy."[29] This sudden break of the ceremony is not just a more dramatic reiteration of the words "I'm young, I'm alive," that she had said to the statue of Zeus upon her entrance,[30] but also a challenge to the status quo, confronting the cult of death with a celebration, a "dance for happiness and life."[31] This way, against the passive background of the citizens of Argos, Electra emerges as the only active character, conscious of her freedom and capacity of choice.

As an observer of the events that happen in Argos, Orestes eventually makes his own choices, which are not only sudden, but depict a further detachment from others and a closer return to individuality.

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[25] Goldthorpe (1984: 75).
[26] Sartre (1989: 71).
[27] Sartre (1989: 65).
[28] Sartre (1989: 62).
[29] Sartre (1989: 81).
[30] Sartre (1989: 62).
[31] Sartre (1989: 81).

Although he has been educated by the teachings of his tutor, he finally rejects any external authority dictating his acts and ideas. He proudly declares that "from now on I'll take no one's orders, neither man's nor god's," and that he is ready to face the "emptiness" of this detachment.[32] Having severed the ties of any external influence or any value system, be it moral, social, religious or otherwise, he realizes that he is the sole actor of his situation. It is at this point that he makes the decision of killing Aegistheus and Clytemnestra, not because of any prophecy or the pressure imposed by his sister, but only as his own deliberate choice. This extreme act is the direct consequence of the recognition that "there is another path – *my* path."[33] Goldthorpe interprets this moment as the crucial instant of "pure reflection," distanced from emotion or past acts and motivations, and founded instead upon "conscious evaluation of our situation."[34]

Not only does this act distinguish Orestes from the other passive characters, but it also marks a breaking point between the versions of freedom depicted so far by him and Electra. Guicharnaud considers Electra to be a portrayal of "frivolous freedom," exemplified in chaotic acts fuelled by hatred and the desire for revenge against her mother.[35] However, the fact that she has not acted on this long-lasting hatred before and even after the arrival of Orestes, shows that her motivation and elusive freedom is inconsequential. This becomes even more apparent in the final act of *The Flies*. Orestes, on the other hand, through his process of pure reflection and self-realization, discovers "metaphysical freedom,"[36] an authentic version of freedom, that is simultaneously necessary and unbearable.

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[32] Sartre (1989: 90).
[33] Sartre (1989: 90).
[34] Golthorpe (1984: 67–68).
[35] Guicharnaud (1962: 65).
[36] Guicharnaud (1962: 65).

The Burden of Freedom

The second act of the play ends with Orestes killing Aegistheus and Clytemnestra, leaving the hero and his sister alone to face the consequences. Orestes has discovered real freedom, exclaiming "Freedom has crashed down on me like a thunderbolt."[37] The simile holds great significance regarding this moment of realization, in that it is quick, sudden, enlightening, but at the same time violent and difficult to experience. Orestes becomes "the hero who understands that the act is his and only his," while acknowledging the inevitable consequence that he will also be the only one who has to face the consequences of this act.[38] Electra claims that the burden of the act is too heavy to bear, because a committed act cannot be reversed or undone, the actors "are no longer free to blot it out."[39] It is at this point that the burden of freedom is experienced in different ways by each of the siblings.

While Electra's previous determination fades against the irreversibility of matricide and begins to feel the crushing burden of the act, Orestes is pleased with its weight, considering this burden to be freedom itself.[40] Failing to face the anguish born from the act, Electra finally rejects her brother altogether and begs Zeus to save her. While she considers the newfound freedom as "misery and squalor," she falls into an inconsolable state, vowing to become a "creature" and a "slave" to Zeus in a final act of repentance,[41] rejecting her human condition and becoming almost "thing-like."[42] This reveals that Electra had been in fact playing "the self-assigned role of tragic heroine with theatrical

[37] Sartre (1989: 105).
[38] Guicharnaud (1962: 66).
[39] Sartre (1989: 105).
[40] Sartre (1989: 105).
[41] Sartre (1989: 121).
[42] O'Donohoe (2005: 68).

passion."[43] Her previous acts of rebellion served merely as fuel for her hatred and revenge, despite the fact that she never acted on this emotion. Now, with the act of revenge already finalized, she has nothing left to motivate her existence. Thus, Electra succumbs to the comfort of guilt.

Electra's response reveals what Sartre calls "patterns of flight," processes of distraction that one follows in order not to face the burden, anguish and uncertainty of freedom.[44] These patterns lead to the elusive destination of bad faith (*mauvaise foi*), where the individual, while being conscious of the truth of the situation, lies to himself, becoming simultaneously the liar and the lied upon.[45] However, the essence of this contradictory position rests in the fact that to be a liar, one has to be conscious of the truth. Therefore, while outwardly appearing as blind to her capacity for free action in the last act of the play, Electra emerges as a character entirely conscious of this freedom. After all, Orestes, the clearest example of true freedom, is standing right in front of her at this point. It is her conscious choice of attempting to evade this inescapable path that demonstrates Electra's final position as a character in bad faith.

In contrast, Orestes not only embraces the burden of the newfound freedom, but even identifies with it, declaring "I *am* my freedom."[46] Therefore, he not only acknowledges and accepts the crime that he has committed as an act of his own deliberate choice, but expresses his readiness in facing its consequences as well. In redefining himself to Zeus, Orestes states:

> Foreign to myself – I know it. Outside nature, against nature, without excuse, beyond remedy, except what remedy I find within myself.

[43] O'Donohoe (2005: 65).
[44] Sartre (1978: 40–41).
[45] Sartre (1978: 49).
[46] Sartre (1989: 117).

> But I shall not return under your law; I am doomed to have no other law but mine.[47]

Declaring himself outside and against nature, Orestes echoes Sartre's concept of the theatre of situations, where the fixed nature of the character is disregarded and rejected, together with its psychological and emotional background, as well as any preconceived and external ideas that contribute to this concept of fixity. Instead, the character is shaped by his actions and reactions to a certain, usually restrictive, situation. Moreover, Orestes does not have and does not offer an excuse for his act, since it was a deliberate and free choice, made in full consciousness and not based on any other reasons but his own judgment. Lastly, he recognizes that he is beyond redemption, because the weight of the acknowledgment of his freedom has already been placed upon his shoulders, and he will have to carry it from now on. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties of this position, Orestes reaffirms the understanding of his individuality, together with the fact that, being unfixed and unattached to any sort of external ideology, belief or value system, he is solely responsible for his actions.

The conclusion of the play demands further consideration; there are more questions, because Sartre presents an open-ended resolution to the situation of *The Flies*. Orestes claims that from this point he will have to open the eyes of his people, so that they can tear from their eyes "the veils" that Zeus has laid on them, in order to comprehend their own freedom.[48] However, the specifics of this mission are not discussed any further, adding a notion of uncertainty. Nevertheless, it is important to note that uncertainty is inherent to the existentialist way of thinking. Being constantly in a situation, one's chain of decisions and choices exists

[47] Sartre (1989: 119).
[48] Sartre (1989: 119).

in continuity. Therefore, an absolute and everlasting acknowledgement of freedom, together with its consequential authenticity and responsibility, is unattainable. As Morgan argues, it is "the constant redefinition of one's situation that both allows for and defines the process of *becoming*."[49] In demonstrating the act of free choice in an isolated situation, Orestes becomes "the character from Sartre's plays who best embodies Sartre's idea of a free man."[50] Yet, the isolated nature of this situation, together with the fact that other situations will follow, indicates that this process of becoming is continuous and its results uncertain, considering that the individual has to constantly renew his commitment to this way of thinking. *The Flies* demonstrates this fact through its formal open-endedness, surpassing the limits of performed play or written drama, and ultimately becoming a "situation" to which the audience member and the reader can react and exercise their free judgement.

Conclusion

Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Flies*, in its rendering of the myth of Orestes, demonstrates that classical myths can serve as a suitable source material for modern drama, not only from the obvious plot device that their reimagined versions still hold appealing and timeless relevance, but also as narratives that can illustrate complex ways of thinking, such as existentialism. They provide an adequate amount of familiarity to engage even the average reader or audience member, yet the distance arising from their fictitious nature enables such application. While the recurring motif of fate and destiny may seemingly present a challenge to the emphasis that existentialism puts on the notion of freedom, Sartre transforms the motif into the concept of situational circumstance. As an

[49] Morgan (2013: 90).
[50] Morgan (2013: 101).

example of Sartre's theatre of situations, *The Flies* treats prophecy and fate as prerequisites for the hero's enactment of his freedom, as situations to which characters can react in pure and conscious reflection.

It is a fundamental aspect of the theatre of situations to limit its scope to a certain situation, without any preconceived idea or thesis serving as a foundation. It is the course of events presented throughout a play that should reflect and result in the formation of some idea, not the other way around. Therefore, while the commonplace interpretation of *The Flies* has at its starting point Sartre's philosophy, it is an analysis of the play itself and the way how actions unfold that ultimately depicts some characteristics of the human condition that reveal an existentialist manner of thinking. The characters of *The Flies* are not initially indicative of any philosophical formulation, considering that they do not have any fixed essence. It is the reactions to the situation presented in the play that shape each character. Thus, upon experiencing the anguish caused by the recognition of individual freedom, Orestes finally emerges as a hero of freedom, acknowledging his inherent capacity for free and deliberate action, together with the consequential responsibility that it entails, whereas Electra, in the attempt of subduing this anguish, ends up as an agent of bad faith. These deliberations are evidently concerned with an individualistic standpoint. The indeterminate conclusion of the play, on the other hand, reflects only an anticipation or suggested intention to open the eyes of the people towards the recognition of their freedom. Thus, it provides an opportunity to expand this analysis beyond the scope of this paper, to further ponder whether the realization of individual freedom may have a wider social impact.

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Platonic Dramaturgy in Modernist Drama: *Waiting for Godot* as Socratic Dialogues

Although Plato is usually known as an anti-theatre figure, many studies have been done on his Socratic dialogues as dramatic texts. The dramatic characteristics of Plato's dialogues rely most on its 'diegetic' feature, meaning 'narrative', away from the 'mimetic' or 'imitative' performance. This Platonic dramaturgy was revived in modernist drama due to the resistance against realistic imitation, the prevalence of philosophical concepts, and anti-Aristotelian structures. Beckett's Waiting for Godot *is one of the best examples of this modernist 'diegetic drama', which realizes philosophical matters in a dialectical process, through diegetic speech-oriented text, with the least imitative action on stage. It is not that diegetic dramas do not have performance capabilities, but they have the potential to be realized only in the form of dialogues and narratives; a feature similar to Socratic dialogues. This paper seeks to discuss these features of* Waiting for Godot *aligned with Platonic dramaturgy.*

Keywords: Plato, Socratic dialogues, diegetic drama, mimesis, Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.

Introduction

Plato's dialogues, known as Socratic dialogues, often have a greater value in philosophy than in the dramatic field. Although there have been theorists who specifically focused on the dramatic aspect of these dialogues, these texts are usually not considered very serious as an independent dramatic genre. One of the common reasons for this matter

may have been Plato's negative approach to the issue of mimesis and mimetic arts such as theatre, which has always made him an anti-theatrical figure. On the other hand, even when dramatic focus is placed on these dialogues, they remain largely outside the scope of dramatic studies. Since they rely solely on diegesis and narrative speech rather than elements of stage performance, they deviate from classical or Aristotelian principles of drama.

Mimesis and diegesis were always the main topics of philosophy and literary criticism in classical Greece. Apparently, the word mimesis belongs to the period after Homer and Hesiod (8th century BC), because no trace of this word is found in their works.

> The word mimesis is post-Homeric: it does not occur in either Homer or Hesiod. Its etymology, as linguists maintain, is obscure. Most probably it originated with the rituals and mysteries of the Dionysian cult; in its first (quite different from the present) meaning mimesis-imitation stood for cult acts performed by a priest - dancing, music and singing… Another concept of imitation, which acquired greater popularity, was also formed in the fifth century in Athens but by a different group of philosophers: it was first introduced by Socrates and further developed by Plato and Aristotle. To them imitation meant the copying of the appearance of things.[1]

However, the concept of mimesis was probably first analyzed by Plato philosophically. He specifically and extensively discusses mimesis in books 1, 2, and 5 of *The Republic* and also in *Ion*. Plato does not limit mimesis to the world of art, but considers the entire material world to be an imitation of the ideal world. Therefore, he considers the realm of imitation to be a low level of truth. In the realm of imitative art, he also

[1] Tatarkiewicz (1980: 266–267).

considers mere mimesis to be low and emphasizes the diegetic poetry in contrast to it. He paid particular attention to the narrative characteristics of the epic genre such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which were in diegesis, without the necessity to imitate or show the actions:

> If the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetizing and narration [diegesis] would have been accomplished without imitation [mimesis], (Pl. *Rep*. 3, 229).

In fact, diegesis was Plato's preparation to counter theatrical mimesis.

Aristotle, on the other hand, defended mimesis in his *Poetics*. He gave a positive value to the principle of mimesis by bringing forward concepts such as the human desire for imitation and the consequent occurrence of catharsis. Aristotle presents an aesthetic critique in response to Plato's moral criticism of imitation. In other words, Aristotle's *Poetics* is a defense of mimetic arts:

> Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude… in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions, (Arist. *Poet*. 23).

According to Aristotle, art in general, in all its forms, by imitating nature and combining it with the artist's creativity, purifies the human psyche. Therefore, the more mimetic an art form is, the more valuable it is. From this perspective, contrary to Plato's view, tragedy is superior to epic.

With the long-standing predominance of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the realm of theatre studies in Western literature, the concept of diegetic representation and narrativity was gradually moved away from the poetics of dramatic literature. However, modernist theatre, which dis-

tanced itself from mimesis and used the element of speech to create its dramatic world, has many similarities with Plato's dialogues. Modernist anti-Aristotelian dramas, by consciously rejecting the mimetic or imitative aspect in theatre and relying instead on the diegetic or narrative element in literary texts of drama, somehow revived the Platonic dialogues as an independent genre. Samuel Beckett's dramas are some of the best examples in this regard, which will be examined from this aspect in this study.

The Origins of Platonic Drama

As mentioned earlier, Plato portrayed himself as anti-theatrical due to his opposition to mimesis. Therefore, calling his dialogues 'Platonic drama' seems to contradict his own theories on the subject. However, despite this anti-theatrical perception of Plato that has always existed in literary and philosophical discussions, there are clear evidences that Plato's dialogues are not outside the realm of drama and that Plato can even be considered a dramatist. The most important of these evidences are Aristotle's own references to Plato's dialogues as a subgenre of drama. Aristotle presented the first classification of drama genres in *Poetics*. This classification includes the three main genres of tragedy, comedy, and satire. Aristotle, however, goes on to mention two subgenres that have an unconventional prose:

> There is another art which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse… but this has hitherto been without the name. For there is no common term and we could apply to the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus and the Socratic dialogues on the one hand; and, on the other, to poetic imitations… in any similar metre, (Arist. *Poet*. 9).

Therefore, according to Aristotle, the first of these subgenres is the mime, a short and satirical play that gained some literary prominence with the writings of Sophron; and the second of these subgenres is the Socratic dialogues, a new genre introduced by some of Socrates' students.

But it was not only Aristotle who officially called Plato a dramatist by including the Socratic dialogues in this classification. Diogenes Laërtius, the biographer of Greek philosophers, described Plato in his biography as someone who was involved in the Athenian theatre throughout his life, even after his tragedies were burned in the fire. Laërtius mentions that: 'Plato also released his dialogues in tragic tetralogies, the way the tragedians used to compete with four plays in the Dionysia'.[2] It is important to note that Plato himself was a theatergoer.

In the 20th century, with new approaches to interdisciplinary discussions, Plato's dialogues entered the field of theatrical studies seriously, and in the meantime, the emphasis on the dramatic aspect of these works was taken into account. One of the scholars who has conducted detailed and extensive studies on the dramatic aspects of Plato's dialogues in the modern period is James A. Arieti (1948–). In one of his most important books, entitled *Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama* (1991) Arieti argues that Plato's dialogues are more similar to comedy and tragedy, especially the old comedy of Aristophanes, than to scientific and literary texts of the pre-Socratics. Therefore, Arieti believes that instead of ignoring the dramatic aspects of Plato's dialogues or, as most theorists do, considering this dramatic aspect as secondary to the philosophical one, 'Plato's works should be studied in the same way as the works of Sophocles and Shakespeare'.[3] Arieti emphasizes that Plato did not want us to read his dialogues as philosophical treatises, but rather that he wrote his works as prose comedies and expected his audience

[2] Laërtius (2020: 152).
[3] Arieti (1991: 1).

to interpret them as such. For example, he considers Plato's *Symposium* to be 'an intellectual comedy rather than a serious discussion of love'.[4]

But perhaps one of the most important theorists about Platonic drama is the contemporary literary critic, Martin Puchner (1969–). In his book *Drama of Ideas* (2010) Puchner writes:

> It is true that Plato was extremely critical of the entire theatre system… his critique, however, must be understood not as that of an outsider but as that of a rival; he was not an enemy of theatre but a radical reformer. Attacking many features of Athenian theatre, he sought to create an alternative form of drama, the Socratic dialogue, which avoided all of these features: it was mostly read aloud by one person in front of small audiences; it was based on a new subject matter, philosophy; and it lacked the spectacular effects of choral dancing.[5]

Although the Socratic dialogues were a new genre and a rival to the genres of tragedy and comedy, they were not without similarities to them. As mentioned before, Plato lived in the theatrical environment of Athens and was in contact with many playwrights. Therefore, 'the general spirit of tragedy and comedy may have overshadowed him and his works'.[6]

The Dramaturgy of Platonic Drama

According to what has been said, the dramaturgy of Platonic drama has some fixed components: it is a prose dialogue on political, social, and philosophical topics that is rooted in the characters' conversations and not in

[4] Ibid., 99.
[5] Puchner (2010: 5).
[6] Nightingale (1995: 92).

their actions; the dialogues that are written with the aim of being read to a relatively small audience and not to be performed in public places.

The audience element for Greek comedy and tragedy was a crucial matter. More than fifteen thousand people participated in the Theatre of Dionysus. Citizens formed the chorus and playwrights performed their works in front of the public. But Plato was against such an approach to theatre. He considered this kind of widespread audience 'a kind of mob rule caused by playwrights who, without proper philosophical knowledge, incite the baser emotions of the audience'.[7] This means that, in Plato's view, the audience of his writings should be free from emotion, meaning that he wanted the process of interpreting his works to be a contemplative-philosophical process, rather than simply evoking emotions and feelings in the audience. For this reason, he could not attract the general public, although the doors were open to everyone.

> Plato's critique of theatre contains a powerful critique of passive audiences. His ideal is closer to what one might describe as participant observers. Bystanders, in Plato's dialogues, often enter the argument, the action. This is why the technique of role switching is so central.[8]

In classical Greece, where the established form of theatre included tragedy and comedy with the presence of a chorus and the masses of spectators, a literary form with such dramaturgy seemed strange and unconventional. However, this style of dramaturgy has many similarities with the structures of modernist anti-mimetic drama. The participant observer reminds us of Brecht's Epic Theatre, which was also produced with the aim of performing for a smaller audience. Or the dramas of the 20th

[7] Puchner (2010: 28).
[8] Ibid., 27.

century dramatists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Samuel Beckett, whose main subject always included philosophical issues.

Diegetic Drama and Platonic Dialogues

In *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (2002), Puchner applies the exact term 'diegesis' to describe such anti-mimetic plays:

> I propose a term to designate the descriptive and narrative strategies through which modern drama tries to frame, control, and interrupt what it perceives to be the unmediated theatricality of the stage and its actors/actresses. This term is 'diegesis'.[9]

According to modernist scholars, Plato's texts can be considered the first examples of diegetic dramas. Therefore, diegetic drama, by definition, is not merely a narrative drama, but an 'anti-mimetic' (and not necessarily 'non-mimetic') drama, which is based on words and speech (not only by the narrator but also in dialogue or even by stage directions); independent (but not incapable) of mimetic actions; containing abstract and philosophical concepts. Diegetic drama celebrates solitary readings and contemplations and is away from (but not incapable of) the collective reception of theatrical performances. The essence of diegetic drama is its resistance to mimesis. So, in diegetic drama, any component that reduces the mimetic representation, adds to the narrativity of the text; components such as: descriptions by the characters, prologues, epilogues, narrators, direct addressing to the audience, the introduction of the actor/actress by himself/herself, abstract scenes and spaces, change of perspective from the first-person to the third-person, reports of the events behind the scene, monologues in the form of soliloquy or aside,

[9] Puchner (2002: 21–22).

the existence of messengers or similar roles, non-human characters such as animals, objects or anything that cannot be staged.

Modernist Diegetic Drama

In modernism, when the path of drama underwent fundamental changes compared to the classical period due to various factors, attention to Platonic dialogues as dramatic texts gradually increased. As a result, the long-held consensus in theatre and philosophy that viewed Plato as an enemy of theatre gradually weakened. Playwrights also became familiar with Plato's dialogues as a unique dramatic form. This kind of drama, which can be called Platonic drama, became the standard-bearer of modernist anti-mimetic drama. But how does modernist drama trace its roots to Platonic drama? In fact, where exactly is the intersection point of Platonic diegetic drama with modernist anti-mimetic drama?

The relationship between modernism and theatre is complicated. After the revival of mimetic arts in the Renaissance, with the onset of modernism, art once again moved away from mimetic representation and went towards abstraction. A variety of different art schools such as Surrealism, Expressionism, Symbolism, etc. relied on anti-mimetic representations. Modernist art not only moved away from imitative representation, but imitative art was generally condemned and considered devoid of aesthetic value. According to Adorno:

> Ever since the beginning of the modern age and the emergence of the self-reflecting diremption of subject and object, bourgeois reality -in spite of the limitations set by its incomprehensibility- has had a trace of unreality, of the illusory, just as in philosophy reality became a web of subjective determinations.[10]

[10] Adorno (1997: 281).

In this anti-mimetic modernism, theatre no longer relied solely on the stage performances. The main material of the performing arts, unlike other arts such as painting and sculpture, whose main materials are paint, canvas, wood, or metal, has always been humans. Even cinema had the ability to create a film with images without the presence of humans in them. In such arts, when these materials imitate something in the real world, the result is a realistic mimetic work of art. And when they move away from the objective imitation of nature and create an abstract work, the result is a non-mimetic work of art. However, in theatre, the issue is not so simple. Theatre, in its most abstract form, is always considered a mimetic art because of the presence of a living human on stage. Therefore, when modernist art questioned the principle of mimesis, theatre was in trouble. In other words, theater is inherently in conflict with the critique of mimesis.

However, modernism never stopped its mimesis criticism of theatre. Modernist theatre came into being with all the conflict it had. 'The success of modernism in the theatre depends on the theatre's ability to resist the personal, the individual, the human, and the mimetic'.[11] The theatre's reliance on acting on the stage was an obstacle to the modernization of the theatre. Modern playwrights and theatre directors each crossed this barrier in their unique ways. For example, Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, through the method of distancing and presenting the actor/actress as a reporter or narrator, reduced the mimetic aspect of the theatre. Epic Theatre combined epic or diegetic narrativity into the classical dramatic structure in order to activate the spectators' minds, and finally, it broke the Aristotelian structure. Perhaps it is for this reason that Brecht himself changed the title of his Epic Theatre to Dialectical Theatre after a while. Brecht explicitly referred to this shift in his theoretical writings, particularly in his notes and essays about Epic The-

[11] Puchner (2002: 4).

atre from the late 1930s and 1940s. For instance, in *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948), Brecht elaborates on his concept of theatre and emphasizes its dialectical nature: 'This technique [alienation] allows the [epic] theatre to make use in its representations of the new social method known as dialectical'.[12] Brecht later wrote a number of appendices to this essay and linked it to his last collection of notes *Die Dialektik auf dem Theater* [Dialectics in the Theatre].

Samuel Beckett is another brilliant example of this anti-mimetic effort in modernist theatre. Beckett struggled with this barrier more than any other modernists and depersonalized dramatic characters with brutal attacks on the presence of real and objective human beings. The scenes of Beckett's theatre are full of gestures, symbols, narrators, voices with a non-human source; all of which are away from mimetic humans, so that they can perhaps deal with the mimetic human dilemma. Therefore, since modernism, anti-mimetic and anti-Aristotelian theatre led to the revival of diegesis in drama.

Beckett and Platonic Dramaturgy in *Waiting for Godot*

Beckett challenged mimetic theatre in a way that led to a revival of Platonic dramaturgy. In line with his philosophical approach, Beckett created dramas that overturned mimetic representation, and in this respect, they can be considered among the best examples of diegetic drama. The diegetic nature of Beckett's dramas is evident in the aspects of both form and content.

There are many diegetic elements in his dramas; such as third-person narrations, direct address of the audience, dialogues with philosophical references and abstraction. For example, in the play *Waiting for Godot* (1952), the abstract setting and discontinuous narratives of the

[12] Willett (1978: 193).

characters are completely far from imitating the external objective world. *Waiting for Godot* is a play in two acts with two main characters Estragon (Gogo) and Vladimir (Didi). They, along with Pozzo and Lucky, discuss a variety of issues while awaiting Godot, who never comes.

In *Waiting for Godot*, there is no external narrator to guide the audience or provide explanations. The story exists entirely within the characters' dialogue, and it is the characters themselves who enter the third-person point of view with their narratives and take on the role of narrator. The audience learns about the world, the characters' past, and their existential dilemmas through what they say and what they hide in their speech. For instance, the nature of Godot and the reasons for their waiting are never explained outside the characters' speculations, leaving the interpretation open-ended.

The play relies heavily on dialogue to convey its themes and structure. The characters' repetitive, fragmented, and often circular conversations form the backbone of the drama:

> VLADIMIR: Let's go.
> ESTRAGON: We can't.
> VLADIMIR: Why not?
> ESTRAGON: We're waiting for Godot.[13]

This brief exchange exemplifies how the dramatic world of the play is realized without performing the mimetic act (going), but solely through diegetic way of articulating the words.

Estragon and Vladimir share anecdotes, debate philosophical ideas, and engage in trivial jokes, which contribute to the diegetic pattern. For instance, Vladimir's story of the two thieves crucified with Christ illustrates how narrative layers are embedded in their discussions:

[13] Beckett (1954: 14).

> VLADIMIR: One of the thieves was saved. It's a reasonable percentage.[14]

This anecdote is diegetic because it describes an event external to the play's immediate action, interpreted through Vladimir's philosophical musings. Or in act 2, Pozzo speaks about time and memory, reinforcing existential despair:

> POZZO: Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! ... One day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second...[15]

Here, Pozzo is not acting but telling a reflection about time, making this passage more diegetic than mimetic.

The setting—a barren landscape with a single tree—offers little context or external mimetic cues. The minimalist environment forces the audience to focus solely on the characters' interactions and what they reveal about their inner worlds. On the other hand, scene descriptions are part of the diegetic components. In Beckett's dramas, the scene descriptions go far beyond guiding the performer and creating a stage atmosphere. These narrative and descriptive pieces are always the main complement to the overall concept of the play and are embedded in the dialogues in such a way that it is as if the main concept of the play can be realized simply by reading the scene descriptions alongside the dialogues.

Memory functions as a diegetic element that shapes the characters' understanding of their reality. For example, the characters repeatedly refer to past events (e.g., meeting Godot before, or being beaten), but

[14] Ibid., 11.
[15] Ibid., 109.

these references often contradict each other or remain ambiguous. Therefore, the characters often engage in discussions that are self-referential, acknowledging their repetitive existence and lack of progress:

> VLADIMIR: Who beat you? Tell me.
> ESTRAGON: Another day done with.
> VLADIMIR: Not yet.
> ESTRAGON: For me it's over and done with, no matter what happens.[16]

This is a classic example of diegesis; Estragon tells us about the beating, but we never witness it. The lack of detail and the ambiguity of who beats him reinforce the absurdity and unreliability of memory. Also, Estragon and Vladimir's discussions about leaving but never actually departing highlight their awareness of being trapped in an endless loop, a hallmark of Beckett's absurdist style.

Pozzo and Lucky's dynamic interaction introduces a secondary layer of diegetic storytelling. Lucky's monologue, while chaotic and nonsensical, serves as a dense, fragmented narrative that contrasts with the sparse dialogue of Vladimir and Estragon. Their arrival and departure disrupt the monotony but do not fundamentally alter the diegetic world, reinforcing the static nature of the play. Pozzo recounts how Lucky used to be a great thinker before falling into his current degraded state:

> POZZO: He used to dance… He capered. For joy. Now that's the best he can do.[17]

[16] Ibid., 70.
[17] Ibid., 48.

Here, Pozzo tells a story from the past, contrasting Lucky's former intellectual life with his current pathetic condition. The audience does not see Lucky's past; they only hear Pozzo's subjective account.

The diegetic pattern of *Waiting for Godot* leaves much unsaid, requiring the audience to fill in gaps and interpret meaning through the characters' experiences. For instance, when Estragon attempts to share a dream, but Vladimir refuses to listen:

> ESTRAGON: I had a dream.
> VLADIMIR: Don't tell me!
> ESTRAGON: I dreamt that—
> VLADIMIR: DON'T TELL ME![18]

This is an interesting diegetic moment that is cut off before it fully unfolds. Dreams are inherently diegetic because they involve recounting an experience rather than performing it. Here, Vladimir's refusal suggests either an unwillingness to confront subconscious fears or an avoidance of further absurdity. On the other hand, the absence of a clear resolution or explanation reflects the philosophical uncertainty that defines the play. The entirety of the play is built without relying on a specific action and solely on the basis of language-based games that rely on narrative techniques, all of which have a philosophical and dialectical basis.

The unparalleled predominance of non-mimetic elements in *Waiting for Godot*, along with the non-Aristotelian narrative structure, strongly place this text in the category of diegetic Platonic dramas. In fact, what Beckett does is a continuation of the path that Brecht began, namely, combining features of the epic genre with the dramatic genre to reduce the excitement of pure drama and instead invite reflection in a Platonic way. In Beckett's dramas, there is no traditional suspense of classical dra-

[18] Ibid., 16.

mas, meaning there is no conflict, climax, or resolution in the traditional sense. Instead, by eliminating the element of suspense and replacing it with repetitive and circular back and forth, his drama traps the audience in a stillness that ultimately leads to more concentration and further contemplation. A feature that, according to Auerbach, is specific to the epic genre rather than the tragic dramatic text. Auerbach argues that:

> Yet in both modern and ancient times, there are important epic works which are composed throughout with no 'retarding element' in this sense but, on the contrary, with suspense throughout, and which perpetually 'rob us of our emotional freedom', which power Schiller will grant only to the tragic poet… But the true cause of the impression of 'retardation' appears to me to lie elsewhere, namely, in the need of the Homeric style to leave nothing which it mentions half in darkness and unexternalized.[19]

This element of slowing down and reducing emotional excitement in order to combat classical dramatic suspense is a constant feature of the form of Beckett's dramas, giving them a diegetic quality.

In Beckett's dramas, speech does not follow the style of speech in classical mimetic dramas. Dialogues do not serve to represent mimetic action, but rather to propose philosophical concepts and establish a dialectic that emphasizes the process of philosophizing rather than relying on response. Exactly the same as Socrates' style in Socratic dialogues. And this is precisely the true function of Platonic texts, which, instead of proposing philosophical propositions, proposes philosophical processes.

[19] Auerbach (1968: 2–3).

> Philosophical dialogue (unlike technical understanding) is not meant to cause problems to disappear but to gain knowledge about the idea of man as a rational being as well as the idea of a rational life.[20]

In other words, 'knowledge does not come to those who choose the right teachings, but to those who do the right exercises, so that their minds become strong in the perception of facts'.[21] Concerning drama, it means that Platonic diegetic dramas are instructions about how to participate in a philosophical conversation.

Conclusion

In my understanding, Platonic diegetic drama is an exercise in philosophizing; no absolute truth is expressed and by establishing a real dialogue, it provides the possibility of thinking to create a new logos. This is what Beckett does in his dramatic texts in general, and in *Waiting for Godot* in particular; he does not attempt to present the definitive answer in any way, he merely raises philosophical questions. When a playwright simply asks a question, he is no longer accused by Plato of having knowledge, which would have led him to expel poets from his ideal Republic. The playwright has simply asked a question without claiming to have knowledge. Also, according to Socrates, posing a question is the basis of the method of philosophizing and an invitation to think.

Viewed through a Platonic lens, *Waiting for Godot* operates as a modern philosophical diegetic drama that reflects anti-mimetic concepts both in form and content. The diegetic pattern in *Waiting for Godot* highlights the interplay between dialogue, abstraction, and dialectic in creating meaning within a self-contained world. By avoiding the structure

[20] Mittelstrass (1988: 128).
[21] Womack (2011: 13).

of Aristotelian mimetic drama, and relying on diegetic-driven plays, Beckett effectively presents a modern example of Platonic dramaturgy.

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Betwixt and Between: Hester Swane as a Liminal Symbol of Irish Identity

This paper examines the character of Hester Swane in Marina Carr's By the Bog of Cats *(1998) as a powerful liminal representation of the intricacies of Irish identity through cultural, historical, and social transitions. Drawing on Euripides'* Medea *and theoretical frameworks on liminality by Victor Turner and Michel Foucault, it investigates how Hester's life is suspended between past and present, tradition and modernity. The analysis will follow how Hester struggles to come to terms with her mother's abandonment, unpredictable landscapes, and social isolation and how they serve as manifestations of the broader Irish experiences. Hester's defiance reveals that liminality is not a transition but an ongoing condition that determines her agency, identity, and fate. Finally, the paper argues that Hester's tragic finale highlights the never-ending tension in Irish society, challenging notions of progress, belonging, and continuity of traditions.*

Keywords: liminality, social change, Irish drama, tradition and modernity, *By the Bog of Cats*

Introduction

In *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), Marina Carr situates her play within a liminal space, bridging the past and present by reimagining and recontextualising the mythic and tragic frame of Euripides' *Medea* and introducing Medea as Hester Swane in the Irish midlands. Hester and Medea are

both abandoned by their men and rejected by society, yet they exist in cultures at very different temporal points in their respective histories. Carr, while focusing on the universality of Medea's fights, grounds Hester's in the reality of modern Ireland. This setting intertwines tradition and modernity, as well as realism and myth, establishing a realm where both Euripides' Medea and Carr's Hester coexist. Mary Trotter recognises a 'Yeatsian fascination with the transcendent, liminality, spirituality, myth, and the occult'[1] in Carr's work, emphasising the play's rootedness in thresholds—between worlds, identities, and times. *By the Bog of Cats* follows Hester Swane, a Traveller woman living in the bleak Bog of Cats, as she struggles to come to terms with her past and the betrayal of her lover, Carthage Kilbride, who is marrying a younger woman. Hester struggles to keep her home and maintain a connection with her daughter, Josie, as she grows increasingly desperate and isolated. The play tragically culminates when Hester, unable to see a future without her daughter, kills Josie and then takes her own life.

This essay examines the various ways in which the liminal spaces of Hester Swane–informed by Euripides' *Medea*– correspond with the transitional experiences of the Irish individual. The liminality Hester Swane symbolises positions her in a condition of marginalisation and weakness while going through her rites of passage. Not entirely existing in either the world she is from or the one she attempts to fit into, Hester becomes a displaced character. Her broken identity reflects the broader struggles the Irish face due to the overlap between cultural and personal identities, which are intertwined and constantly evolving. Irish dramatists, including Carr, recognise that identities are interwoven with actualities. They have consistently sought to reconcile the tension and fluid nature of their cultural heritage and the influences of modernity and tradition.

[1] Trotter (2000: 168).

Hester's liminality

The first convergence in which *By the Bog of Cats* intersects with *Medea* is within adaptation studies. Julie Sanders describes adaptation as 'celebratory of the cooperative and collaborative model of creativity'.[2] In this collaborative space, both the original text and the adaptation engage with each other, stepping out of their original frames and blending elements from distinct cultural and temporal contexts. This exchange parallels anthropologist Victor Turner's argument in his 'Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality' that during periods of intense social change, some of the societal sacred objects and rituals emerge from the secrecy of lodges and become part of the public movement. Prophetic leaders employ them to rally the populace against invaders or rulers who threaten their cultural traditions.[3] In other words, sacred rituals and deep-seated cultural practices dominate the plot in both *Medea* and *By the Bog of Cats*. When faced with deep individual crises and severe social changes, these elements emerge from the background and become central to their actions and struggles.

Secondly, Victor Turner further defines liminality in his 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage' as betwixt and between, neither here nor there, no longer a child and not yet an adult. During this period of transition between states, symbolic themes characteristically concern death and decomposition, or gestation and parturition, referring to the culturally defined person the initiate has been and will become. Because of the economy of symbolic reference, the opposed states – having been and the becoming – may be represented by a single object, act, or phrase.[4]

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[2] Sanders (2016: 6).
[3] Turner (1979: 470).
[4] Turner (1970: 96).

Turner describes the ritual preceding liminality as 'being initiated',[5] a process involving separation from one's initial mindset, transitioning to a liminal space where the symbolic reference disintegrates, merging the old and new spaces. According to Michel Foucault, such spaces are heterotopias whence 'all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality'.[6] Hester Swane's journey into the realm of liminality is not simply set in motion at the play's onset but rather commences long before that, with the abandonment of her mother during her childhood. This early event casts Hester into an 'in-between' space, where she is raised in a state of limbo, unable to connect to her past or establish her future. In her play, Carr deliberately introduces the bog, a place of fluid boundaries that 'dissolve[s] our myths and sterilize[s] the lyricism of our sentences'[7] as Hester's place of birth to highlight its significance in Hester's rite of passage. The bog disintegrates both Hester's and the people of the bog's identities, in a space that is 'other', capable of juxtaposing multiple realities and treating them as a site of deviation and reflection.

The once-familiar Bog of Cats is now a heterotopia, a place of metamorphosis where Hester experiences a loss of identity and a distorted perception of time and space. Foucault describes heterotopias as 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'.[8] The bog has a physical and symbolic significance that collocates Hester's past with her estranged present. Although Hester had relocated to live with Carthage and they had welcomed their daughter Josie into the world, she still finds it difficult

[5] Ibid. 95.
[6] Foucault – Miskowiec (1986: 24).
[7] Foucault (1994: 15)
[8] Foucault – Miskowiec (1986: 25).

to break free from the allure of the bog. In fact, she often finds herself drawn back to it during the nighttime while Carthage looks after their child.

Hester's profound bond with the bog is evident in her passionate conversation with Monica following her meeting with the enigmatic Ghost Fancier, as she tries to refute his prophecy of her death, Hester shouts:

> Think yees all Hester Swane with her tinker blood is getting' no more than she deserves. Think yees all she's too many notions, built her life up from a caravan on the side of the bog. Think yees all she's taken a step above herself in gettin' Carthage Kilbride into her bed. Think yees all yees knew it'd never last.[9]

Later, Hester asserts herself as master of her liminal world and what it contains, she objects, 'I'm the one who chooses and discards, not him, and certainly not any of yees. And I'm not runnin' with me tail between me legs just because certain people wants me out of their way'.[10] This act of defiance not only shows her resilience but also acknowledges the function of the bog as a space of transformation in which Hester reconstructs herself despite the social and individual chaos surrounding her.

Liminal or transitional spaces are often characterised by themes of 'death and decomposition, or gestation and parturition',[11] much like Foucault's interpretation of 'other spaces' like jails and cemeteries. He argues that cemeteries turned into 'other cities,' spaces segregated from the living, symbolising both the containing of death and life.[12] The bog serves as an analogy to such heterotopias, which reflect and negate so-

[9] Carr (1998: 15).
[10] Ibid. 16.
[11] Turner (1970: 96).
[12] Foucault – Miskowiec (1986: 25).

cietal norms, both within and outside the dominant order. At the same time, it carries within it memories of the past, buried bodies, and unresolved histories (Joseph's murder) while disturbing the present by refusing to comply with the logic of progress and stability. We see Hester Swane attempting to bury the dead black swan, which turns out also to be connected to the Ghost Fancier's prophecy of Hester's death. Carr foreshadows Hester's death in the first scene of the first act of the play to show the audience that death is only a part of transitioning; it is instead the state of the 'un-dead'[13] enveloping Hester and the bog that matters. Hester becomes a transitional being where 'the structural "invisibility" of liminal *personae* has a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified',[14] dual beings in their nature.

Hester's presence embodies a state of ambiguity, placed on the edge of societal rejection because of her distinct roots, yet holding onto her Traveller lineage with devoted determination. Her state of liminality is evident, amongst many other incidents, in her determination not to leave the bog, even though the Ghost Fancier and the Cat Woman both prophesise that she will die or bring destruction to the bog and herself by the evening. The Cat Woman tells Hester, 'Dreamt ya were a black tarin motorin' through the Bog of Cats and, oh, the scorch off of this tarin and it blastin' by and all the bog was dark in your wake, ya even quenched the jack-a-lantern and I had to run from the burn. Hester Swane, you'll bring this place down by evenin''.[15] This forewarning symbolises the inevitable connection between Hester's identity and the bog—a place of both refuge and doom. Through my argument, I propose that Hester's state of liminality peaks upon receiving the death warning from the Ghost Fancier. Within the limited one-day timeframe, she has the

[13] Turner (1970: 96).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Carr (1998: 20).

opportunity to examine and reflect on her society. Turner argues that 'liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection'[16] and Hester reflects on her society in that period only to realise that she's unable to change or integrate into her new reality; therefore, she commits suicide.

Before her tragic decision to commit suicide, during the ceremonial event of Carthage and Caroline's wedding, Hester confronts her society and questions their double standards. Upon Mrs. Kilbride's speech about the defined rules she always lived honouring and adhering to, Hester explicitly challenges Mrs. Kilbride: 'What rules are they? Teach them to me and I'll live by them. Yees don't know what it's like, to be flung on the ashpit and you still live'.[17] As Hester defiantly proclaims her refusal to abandon the bog, her curious question about the rules underscores her precarious position - caught between her past customs and the ambiguous future. Her explicit reference to being flung on the ashpit indicates her transformative status, which is shown in several examples throughout the play, trapped in a liminal state between destruction and survival. The source of her reluctance to embrace change lies in her deep sense of comfort within the bog's familiar surroundings coupled with her lingering anticipation of her absent mother. Hester's familiarity with the bog is apparent in her knowledge of it: 'I know every barrow and rivulet and bog hole of its nine square mile. I know where the best bog rosemary grows and the sweetest wild bog rue. I could lead yees around the Bog of Cats in me sleep'.[18] This close familiarity with the bog is not merely geographical but also emotional, as it becomes both her refuge and her jail, a place of deviation, according to Foucault. It is a realm she cannot leave, and within her intimate knowledge of it, Hester is unable to step across the threshold into a new world, reasserting her liminality.

[16] Turner (1970: 105).
[17] Carr (1998: 55).
[18] Ibid. 56.

When Hester tries to embrace her new surroundings, she faces rejection in this new social circle, being pushed away due to her outsider status. Carthage tells her to go away and leave the bog, Mrs. Kilbride tells her, 'We'll burn ya out if we have to', Xavier Cassidy shouts, 'We've had enough of your ravin', Swane, so take yourself elsewhere and let us try to recoup these marred celebrations'.[19] Carthage, Mrs. Kilbride, and Xavier's harsh remarks signify her lack of acceptance within their community. Struggling to fit in, Hester ultimately decides to confront Carthage and retreats to the chaotic but comforting confines of the bog. In the bog, she rediscovers her authentic self and finds again a sense of belonging. It is a place where she can be herself, 'People can "be themselves," it is frequently said, when they are not acting institutionalized roles'.[20] Hester defies her predetermined societal role and boldly pursues greater personal autonomy, rebelling against the confines of societal expectations. This act of defiance challenges the traditional notion of liminality, transforming it from a mere transition to a destination.

Her liminality is further highlighted through her oscillation between the behaviors of a fierce and a vulnerable woman. When examining the play and the shifts Hester undergoes—caught between asserting her roots and surrendering to reality—we can observe a recurring pattern of transitions. At the onset of the play, during her conversation with Monica, Hester fiercely asserts, 'If he thinks he can go on treatin' me the way he's been treatin' me, he's another thing comin''.[21] During her first encounter with Carthage, she declares, 'You were nothin' before I put me stamp on ya and/ ya'll be nothin' again I'm finished with ya.' However, her tone soon shifts to that of a frightened woman: 'Tell me what to do, Carthage, and I'll do it, anythin' for you to come back…anythin'.

[19] Ibid. 57.
[20] Turner (1970: 101).
[21] Carr (1998: 16).

Carthage, anythin', and I'll do it if it's in me power'.[22] Additionally, her intrusion at Carthage's and Caroline's wedding is marked by an indifferent attitude and vicious remarks; she shouts, 'Yees have taken everythin' from me,' but then pleads with Carthage for mercy, saying, 'Just let me stay in the house, Carthage. I won't bother anywan if yees'd just lave me alone'.[23] This shift highlights Hester's internal conflict as she moves from a position of power to one of subjugation.

Her swinging between a fierce and a weak woman is further shown when she goes back to the bog and fulfills her vicious war against Carthage's cattle and property, boldly declaring:

> Well, Carthage, ya think them were only idle threats I made? Ya think I can be flung in a bog hole like a bag of newborn pups? Let's see how ya like this — Ya hear that sound? Them's your cattle howlin'. Ya smell that smell? That's your forty calves roastin'. I tied them all in and flung diesel on them. And the house, I burnt the bed and the whole place went up in flames. I'd burn down the world if I'd enough diesel — Will somewan not come and save me from meself before I go and do worse.[24]

But afterward, when she is about to kill little Josie, her maternal instincts awaken, and she experiences remorse for what she is about to do. Hester tries to comfort Josie first. Josie tells Hester, 'I'd be watchin' for ya all the time 'long the Bog of Cats. I'd be hopin' and waitin' and prayin' for ya to return,' which prompts Hester to reply, 'Alright, alright! Shhh! (*Picks her up*) It's alright, I'll take ya with me, I won't have ya as I was, waitin' a lifetime for somewan to return, because they don't, Josie, they don't. It's alright. Close your eyes'.[25] Her oscillation between being a savage

[22] Ibid. 34.
[23] Ibid. 55–6.
[24] Ibid. 59.
[25] Ibid. 78.

slayer who kills her daughter and a concerned mother fearful that her daughter will suffer the same fate of longing further reveals her liminality. Trapped between guilt and fear, she struggles to reconcile these opposing forces within herself. This internal conflict not only highlights her deep emotional turmoil but also underscores the tragic inevitability of her actions as she tries to protect Josie from the same despair that has consumed her own life.

The liminal Irish identity

'Writing about contemporary Irish society has become a problem of gauging a never-ending transition',[26] as Tom Boland notes. The deep divisions between the South and North of Ireland appeared to have ended with the signing of the peace agreement in 1998, and critical issues like gender, sex, ethnicity, and the like took their place.[27] Following Ireland's globalisation initiatives in the 1970s, this change became increasingly evident, leaving the country constantly changing as a result of ongoing challenges to the status quo. The globalisation efforts of that period were characterised by 'a raising of consciousness about civil and human rights, feminism, environmentalism and disease eradication',[28] among other notions that began to shake the country's conservative social fabric and introduce liberal alternatives. Thus, Ireland eventually became more attentive to global influences, and its cultural engagement gained even greater visibility. As Casey states, 'the 1970s saw the beginnings of multiculturalism and postmodernism. Writers like Alvin Toffler (Future Shock) believed the change to a post-industrial society caused much stress and disorientation'.[29]

[26] Boland (2010: 68).
[27] Ibid. 67.
[28] Casey (2010).
[29] Ibid.

Another event that factored in Ireland's global engagement was joining the EU in 1973; this eased trade between Ireland and European countries; and, therefore, contributed to the cultural enrichment of the country. The EU not only sought to involve Ireland more culturally, but it also attempted to address the enduring Irish British conflict. In 1984, the European Parliament took the first steps towards resolving the ongoing conflict by authorising the Haagerup report. This historic report proposed a one-state solution, indicating the EU's dedication to finding a resolution. The EU sought to resolve this conflict by integrating identities, echoing Victor Turner's concept of a liminal space where identities blend, rebuild, and cooperate with one another. Katy Hayward argues that 'as the border became the locus and the focus of Irish/British differentiation after 1920, so nationalist/unionist disagreement as to the border's legitimacy became fundamental to individuals' political, economic and social identity'.[30] The differences in perspective between states started to fade away following the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, leading to a stronger sense of unity and shared aims between the two nations.

However, Hester Swane, emblematic of the Irish individual, struggles to acclimate herself to these newly established surroundings. Her encounter with the ghost of her murdered brother, Joseph, implies that the state of Hester, the 'state of the ritual subject (the "passenger") is ambiguous',[31] existing simultaneously in both realms, the dead and the living. Caught between her previous, dying identity and her emerging reality, Hester battles to enable these conflicting identities to coexist. This vague tension places her in a liminal space, unable to wholly belong to either world. As a result, her sense of self is fractured, further deepening her disconnection from reality.

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[30] Hayward (2006: 264).
[31] Turner (1970: 94).

Richard Kearney proposes that the solution to such conflicts might necessitate 'a new configuration of identities' and contends accordingly,

> Contemporary Ireland is in historic transition and calls for new modes of self-definition in keeping with an overall move towards a more federal and regional Europe. In the new European dispensation, nation-states will, arguably, become increasingly anachronistic. Power will be disseminated upwards from the state to transnational government and downwards to subnational government. In this context, future identities may, conceivably, be less nation-statist and more local and cosmopolitan.[32]

The endeavor to assimilate Ireland into a mosaic of existing blended identities reflects on societal norms and scrutinises them. Turner calls liminality a 'nay to all positive structural assertions, but in some sense the source of them all, and, more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise'.[33] Subsequently, as Hester delves deeper into this transitional space and scrutinises the customs and conventions of her society, she is met with fresh prospects. However, these newfound opportunities ultimately drive her down a path of ruin, as her actions spiral out of control by the end of the play.

It is also important to note that in a society like the bog, 'the only debate is how to best maintain that community, not to change it or to progress on to a new state',[34] but change is inevitable. The Catholic Irish have a strong desire to maintain their identity and resist change; they are continuously searching for the remnants of Ireland's rich history, 'at the same time the media, particularly TV, also began to open up new hori-

[32] Kearney (2002: 13).
[33] Turner (1970: 97).
[34] Dingley (2006: 265).

zons and change attitudes, tastes, and culture. New ideas and a general revolt against the old engulfed many western societies in the 1960s'.[35] This state of liminality, which emerged globally following the Industrial Revolution, was further intensified by the struggles of colonialism.

By 1998, The Good Friday Agreement represented a crucial milestone for Northern Ireland, signaling the end of a long-standing armed conflict. Nevertheless, according to Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio, it did not fully address the fundamental issues and divides that had fueled the conflict in the first place. In their astute observations, they note that the agreement may have merely silenced the guns rather than mending the deep-rooted tensions. They argue that 'the Good Friday Agreement (1998) finally created a "devolved government in a power-sharing executive supported from both communities". However, this has not signified a complete solution to the conflict'.[36] Carr's powerful work serves as a reminder of the enduring aftermath of the conflict. As we watch the tragic finale of Hester Swane taking the lives of her daughter and herself, we are confronted with a haunting parallel to the unresolved tensions simmering underneath the surface of this divided and colonised society.

Conclusion

Marina Carr's play thoroughly explores the theme of liminality through the complex character of Hester Swane. Hester serves as a symbol of the ever-changing Irish individual within a society undergoing constant shifts. Drawing inspiration from Victor Turner's concept of liminality, Hester's existence is characterised by a continuous state of in-betweenness, stemming from her abandonment as a child and her upbringing

[35] Ibid. 268.
[36] Bosi–De Fazio (2017: 19).

on the bog. The bog, once a familiar and comforting landscape, transforms into a heterotopia, serving as a physical manifestation of Hester's own metamorphosis and struggles with identity and societal expectations. As Ireland underwent significant social changes, including the effects of globalisation and colonisation, Hester faced the daunting task of finding her place in this rapidly evolving society. Caught in a liminal state on the edge of social acceptance, she struggled to adapt to the new reality that had taken hold. The impact of trauma on seemingly peaceful communities was amplified, showing how the fragile peace brought by the Good Friday Agreement failed to address fundamental issues. This harrowing act serves as a haunting reminder of the underlying tensions and unresolved aftermath of conflict, societal shifts, and the complexities that remain long after peace is declared. Through the character of Hester Swane, Carr's play serves as a commentary on the enduring consequences of conflict and transformation.

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Ancient Memories in the World of Comics

The adaptation of classical texts is greatly influenced by the media today, which is why many heroes appear in different cultures and bear striking resemblances to each other: these heroes are largely from the Greco-Roman tradition. As far as literature is concerned, the great classical genres are reworked and revived by popular culture, sometimes unconsciously taking on new forms. It is indisputable that high culture in the West is inextricably linked to classical antiquity, or at least to its ideas, an era about which every age has developed certain expectations for cultural or social reasons. Given the many ways mythology can be presented, comic books are one of the more recent forms that preserve our ideas about classical antiquity. Within the comic book appearances, The Incredible Hercules *stands out, with several interesting stories involving the hero transforming into a superhero while he is brought into the modern world, albeit retaining his classic form and virtuosity. This work provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between comics and mythology. Consequently, in addition to the deities and the hero, many reminiscences are recalled in the comic books, many of his exploits, along with his twelve labours. These recollections provide an opportunity to examine how classical texts are reinterpreted and applied in contemporary narratives.*

Keywords: Hercules, superhero, comic books, popular culture, classical reception

Reception

From their earliest literary appearances in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Greek heroes and demigods have been active in our daily lives, but the

last century has seen the emergence of a new breed of hero, the superhero, who has taken over comic books and movie screens alike.[1]

American comic book fans over the past decades could be described as one of the most dedicated and active communities in what we call fan communities. This was recognized by Hollywood in the early 2000s, and as a result, the film industry recently began producing comic book adaptations in a new form.[2] The film adaptations embody several innovations that both interconnect these works and allow them to exist independently. This is accomplished through the implementation of various techniques such as postcredit scenes,[3] easter eggs,[4] crossovers[5] and a lot more.[6] However, not only cinema, but comics as a medium, also evolved in the twentieth century, but also in many cases, they have not received the same recognition as movies and have been labeled as subliterature.[7] A primary factor contributing to the occasional recession in the popularity of comic books is the escalating complexity of superheroes and their narratives, which has resulted in a more limited audience primarily composed of the most dedicated readers.[8] Two of the biggest companies in the comics industry are the DC Comics and the Marvel Comics, and these publishers mostly focus on characters, continuity,

[1] Rogers (2011: 73).
[2] Perren–Felschow (2018: 309).
[3] In certain instances, postcredit scenes are used to direct the viewer's attention toward a future sequel of a film or series, or to introduce new characters. Conversely, in other situations, these scenes are utilized to meet the demands of fans. Beaty (2016: 322).
[4] Easter eggs are half-hidden visual references. These can also be directed at future plots or serve as foreshadowing for the introduction of new characters. However, the biggest difference to the postcredit scenes is that their appearance is very brief and, in many cases, only the most dedicated readers will be able to recognise them and to reward them for their commitment. Beaty (2016: 322).
[5] The commercial attractiveness of crossovers plays a significant role in enhancing audience engagement with other films by incorporating appearances of additional characters. Beaty (2016: 322–323).
[6] Beaty (2016: 321–322).
[7] Marshall–Kovacs (2011: vii–viii).
[8] Beaty (2016: 318–319).

and collection building. They aim to engage the reader with other stories based on an interest in a particular character, using methods such as guest-starring comic book characters and creating superteams (thus the Justice League, and Avengers) that allow the reader to meet other characters.[9] In the case of popular culture, the audience is not simply a consumer of the media, but in many cases also a modifier.[10] The same is true for the incorporation of mythology into popular culture, where people do not simply consume and treat the content as a finished object, but see it as a cultural resource.[11] Similarly, the function of the storyteller in mythological narratives has evolved when compared to ancient times, which frequently influences the narrative itself. Consequently, this forms a novel foundation within the realm of modern media.[12]

In addition, the medium of comic books is permeated with references and images from Greco–Roman mythology and history, which are intentionally or accidentally used by the creators. Reception Studies explore the links between modern culture and the ancient world. Comic book fans are often characterized by an obsession with collecting, organizing, rereading and reinterpreting material frequently, trying to discover new connections. This activity is slightly similar to the philologists, except that they develop new methodological tools and work with a more limited, smaller, static body of material.[13]

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[9] Perren–Felschow (2018: 311–313).

[10] As the media industry tried to reach a wider audience, film versions, theatrical adaptations, re-translations, comic books, and other modern adaptations of the stories appeared. This has encouraged fans to create certain fan fiction, becoming not just consumers, but creators as well. Walde (2016: 365).

[11] Fiske (2010: 112).

[12] Ward (2002: 1).

[13] The fandom, which denotes the community of fans, is often concerned with comparing the differences between the different versions of stories in comics and the versions presented in movie adaptations. The same activity can be repeated with the relationship between classics and comics. Kovacs (2011: 5–7).

In this context, we can talk about the reception of the classics, which focusses on the emergence of ancient Greek and Roman traditions in the culture of later periods. New readings and reinterpretations take many forms, but even if they are erroneous or deviate from the original form, they do not become illegitimate since they always enrich our understanding of the ancient sources. The medium of comics also draws heavily on ancient myths, as comics published over the decades are divided into similar periods.[14] Mythological adaptations frequently garner mixed reviews, as they either fall short in achieving absolute fidelity to the original works or make no attempt to do so. Consequently, creators may produce a purportedly hybrid or mixed version; however, this does not imply that these adaptations fail to impart new moral values, akin to those conveyed in their original context.[15]

As before, another similar phenomenon can be observed: in comics, the relationship between image and text functions as a visual element, similar to how vase painting functions in Greek and Roman culture. Comic books have their iconographic language. For example, in American comics, horizontal lines behind a character indicate his/her rapid movement, while wavy vertical lines above him/her may suggest that the character is stinky, and these symbols are usually referred to as *emanata*. Here, we can draw another parallel with the vase painters.[16]

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[14] Such as the Golden-/Silver-/Bronze Age, as we can see in the work of Hesiod at the beginning. Comic books, and especially North American superhero comics, can be classified into different eras, just like mythology, mainly according to the time of publication. The first is the Golden Age, which began in the early 1930s and lasted until the mid-1950s, followed by the Silver Age, and then the Bronze Age, which lasted from the early 1970s until the mid-1980s. The present era is called the Modern Age. Bryant (2010: 12–14) In any case, it is worth noting that this division is primarily the result of the work of fans and the industry and is not based on academic principles or the view of the creators. For this reason, its use is often unclear, as it may differ from one publisher or publication to another. Dunai (2024: 15–16, 39).

[15] Ward (2002: 79–80).

[16] As in ancient iconography, there were numerous occasions when instead of visualizing an entire temple, the representation of an altar was sufficient enough to depict a

The comic book version of mythology

The mythological heroes had to suffer and travel to achieve glory. The greatest heroes often traveled the furthest, perhaps the most unyielding of whom was the Panhellenic hero Heracles.[17] The figure of Heracles has always stood out, and even during the *Iliad*, he was an example of solidarity and perseverance, even though he is not in the story, since he belongs to an earlier generation of heroes. However, he has also always been a unique figure, for he is very often portrayed as alternating between his demigod and divine status, and it is this variability that makes him most suitable for being presented as a paradigm of the mythical Panhellenic ideal, for he has enjoyed huge popularity in the Greek world.[18] This diversity of character makes him suitable for the canonical hero/antihero portrayal that is common in comics. Heracles himself is an ambiguous hero, whether we consider his ancient or modern figure. Although he rids the world of monsters, as he is a hero, on the other hand, he plunders cities, captures beautiful women, and above all, fights the madness imposed on him by the gods.[19]

The classic world not only inspires the story of comics, but it also has a huge influence on the superhero genre.[20] This can be seen in the fact that the first superhero, Superman, was created based on characters such as Samson and Hercules and was inspired by other Greek and Roman deities, who have once again become active characters in contemporary narratives. Another perfect example of this phenomenon is the figure of Shazam, whose name is an acronym made up of the names of

whole rite. Kovacs (2011: 8–10).
[17] Stewart (2013: 67–68).
[18] Bär (2021: 3–10).
[19] Marshall–Kovacs (2011: vii–xii).
[20] Leshem (2019: 19).

Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury.[21] He not only takes on a name but also possesses attributes of heroes and gods, such as wisdom, strength, endurance, power, courage, and speed.[22] Another example is Wonder Woman, whose characterization is also based on similar elements: her beauty is reminiscent of Aphrodite, her wisdom of Athena, her speed of action of Mercury, and her strength of Hercules. She is also one of the Amazons, who are familiar from Greek mythology, since her mother is the Amazon queen Hippolyta.[23]

Finally, it is worth noting that there are different divisions and categorizations of the adaptation of classic themes in comics. According to the division of Leshem, the first category includes interpretations in which the narrative is based on or inspired by Greco–Roman events, as exemplified by the *300* comic book series, which is set in ancient Greece during the battle of Thermopylae. The second category includes the gods/goddesses of mythology, who can be found in their original form and appearance with their traditional attributes. The third category revolves around narratives that are inspired by the classical world in general and by specific mythological figures or events. The last and fourth category includes superheroes who are inspired by specific mythological gods or heroes, similar to the aforementioned figure, Shazam. The comic book series that I am discussing falls into the second category.

Recollections

In my research, I have paid particular attention to the comic book *The Incredible Hercules*, whose authors have looked to ancient mythology for inspiration, even though the hero lives in the modern age and in

[21] Dethloff (2011: 105).
[22] *Whiz Comics* Vol. 1. #2.
[23] *All Star Comics* #8.

this series is featured alongside the superheroes we know from Marvel Comics, such as Thor, Namor, or Black Widow. This reception places great emphasis on mixing the mythical and modern worlds. The central theme of the narrative concentrates on the fact that the gods have left the celestial spheres and are trying to establish their new power among mortals on Earth, but Zeus has been dethroned, and not only does a new leader have to be found, but also Hercules, a familiar figure to the audience, comes to the aid of the gods.[24] All this is, of course, accompanied by modern story threads better known to comic book fans, but there is also no shortage of mythological flashbacks, giving us the opportunity to compare them with the versions of the story handed down from antiquity. In the present research, I have focused primarily on the recollections of the twelve labours.

In the comics, we first encounter the twelve labours and their representation in the flashback in *The Incredible Hercules* issue #113, where we are introduced to his second task in the mythological tradition, the defeat of the Lernaean Hydra.[25] According to the task, the hero had to slay a huge aquatic monster living in the Lerna (or Lerné) swamp, whose characteristic was that its ninth head, the middle one, was immortal. The task was further complicated by the fact that a giant crab came to the aid of the beast, but Heracles was not alone, as he brought his nephew Iolaus (son of Iphicles) as a charioteer.[26] As soon as he found the monster, he lured it out with his fiery arrows. First, the hero had to fight the giant crab,[27] which attacked the hero and bit him in the leg. Then he had to turn his attention back to the Hydra, and according to some

[24] Koning (2020: 205–207).
[25] *The Incredible Hercules* #113 10–13.
[26] Hes. *Th*. 313–318.
[27] According to some stories, after Heracles killed the giant crab in gratitude for the beast's help, Hera put it among the stars as a constellation, and we know it today as Cancer. Hyg. *Astr*. 2, 23.

accounts, a wrestling match took place as the monster wrapped its body around the hero's legs and pinned him down while he tried to smash his head with his mace.[28] However, each time he knocked off its mortal heads, two more grew up to replace them.[29] Iolaus was ordered to set fire to the surrounding forest, and the place of the severed heads was burnt with fiery logs by his young companion,[30] when the hero reached the immortal head, he removed it as well and placed the body in a huge pit and rolled an enormous boulder over it. Before burying it, however, he cut the beast's body open and dipped its arrows in its bile, which was thus impregnated with the venom of the Hydra.[31] Later, however, despite his success, King Eurystheus annulled this task since Heracles asked for help, so it could not be counted among his ten labours.[32] In the comics, however, we learn the story not from the hero himself, but from another character, Ares, who is not even sure how many labours he has to do, and another character corrects his story since this was not the third task for Hercules, but the second.[33] The task is very similar to the mythological description we know. It is pointed out in the presentation of the story that, as in the modern comic, Heracles, – who in the modern story would be referred to as Hercules from now on – had already used the help of a young boy to overcome the Hydra, and that in the modernized story it is shown that it was Iolaus' idea to burn out the wounds, not the hero. In the story recalled, the Hydra has similar attributes to its mythological counterpart, in that its severed heads are replaced by new

[28] Apollod. II, 5, 2.
[29] D.S. IV, 11, 5.
[30] Apollod. II, 5, 2.
[31] D.S. IV, 11, 6.
[32] Apollod. II, 5, 2.
[33] This is presumably a reference to the fact that there were many variations of mythological stories. These popular themes included the birth and relationships of the gods, the creation of the world, the adventures gods and heroes. The origin stories of the heroes were told by later writers in a variety of ways. Pinsent (1969: 6–9).

ones each time, but here the whole monster is declared to be immortal, and it is not emphasized that it is only one of its nine heads. Finally, he disposes of the body of the monster by a similar method as we know it, by burying it and blocking the exit with a giant rock. In addition, he acquires the poison, which is anticipated to aid the hero in numerous ensuing scenarios and lead to his demise, being reputed as the most lethal toxin acknowledged by the gods.[34]

His next labour, discussed in the following, was also later invalidated. His fifth task was to clean and manure Augean's[35] stables in one day. Heracles asked for a tenth part of his cattle as a reward when he came up with the idea for the king of Elis, and since the king did not believe it could be done in a day, he easily promised the reward. Phyleus, the king's son, was called as a witness to the wager.[36] Since Heracles found the labour too humiliating, to avoid disgrace and being unworthy of immortality,[37] the hero broke the foundations of the stables and diverted the two neighbouring rivers, the Alpheus and the Peneus, from their beds, washing the entire stables. However, when the hero went to the king for payment, he refused, saying that since it was one of Heracles' works from Eurystheus, he does not deserve payment, and he reneged on the whole bet. The case was brought before the judges in vain, and the king's son testified against his father, but before the verdict was given, both his son and Heracles were banished from the kingdom by Augean, and Heracles' work was subsequently annulled by Eurystheus, as he expected a reward for his heroic act.[38] In the comic, we can observe Heracles' modesty, for he says that the bet was made before he saw the

[34] *The Incredible Hercules* #113 10–13.
[35] The king of Elis by most accounts, was the son of Helios and was famous for his many herds of cattle. However, other accounts name him as the son of Poseidon or Phorbas. Apollod. II, 5, 5.
[36] Apollod. II, 5, 5.
[37] D.S. IV, 13, 3.
[38] Apollod. II, 5, 5.

magnitude of the task he was undertaking, as if to suggest that if he had known the impossibility of the task, he would not have offered to help. Although there is no mention here of breaking the bet or of invalidating the task, Hercules shows concern and admits that he thought the task was hopeless, and when it is mentioned that witnesses testified to having seen it. As the mythological story goes, he confesses that he believes that divine intervention was behind the events, which leads us to conclude that he did not carry out his task, but nothing else is said, so we do not learn any more details about the events.[39]

The hero also performed many other feats, one of the most notable being the rescue of the titan Prometheus.[40] As a reward for his help, the titan taught Heracles how to carry out his eleventh task, which was to take a golden apple of the Hesperides for Eurystheus.[41] The golden apple tree belonged to Hera, queen of the gods, and was a wedding gift from Mother Earth,[42] was fiercely guarded by both the Hesperides[43] but also by Ladon, a serpent that never closed its eyes and made alarming noises. Near the garden of the Hesperides was the place where Atlas held the sky on his shoulders and was asked by the hero, on the advice of Prometheus, to bring him some of the fruits. The first obstacle was the guardians, but also if a mortal came into the garden, he thought he was on the Isles of the Blessed and did not wish to leave. In return for his help, he offered Atlas to take over his burden, and the titan complied, bringing three apples. He was delighted with his newfound freedom, and for this reason, did not wish to return to his old place but merely said he would gladly deliver the apples to King Eurystheus in place of

[39] *The Incredible Hercules* #116, 18.
[40] D.S. IV, 15, 2.
[41] Apollod. II, 5, 11.
[42] Apollod. II, 5, 11.
[43] The Hesperides are the children of Nyx (Night) and Erebus (Darkness) (Cic. *ND*. 3, 17.), or they are considered to be the children of Atlas. Hyg. *Astr*. 2, 3.

the hero, but his intention to leave was obvious. Although Heracles got advice for this scenario as well from Prometheus, he asked Atlas to give him only enough time to weave a pillow of rope over his head so that his burden would not be so heavy. The titan suspected no trickery, so he agreed, but upon gaining his freedom, Heracles abandoned Atlas and set off to do his labour. Some stories, on the other hand, say that Heracles entered the garden alone, and after killing the snake by himself, he took the apples, but variations of the earlier story are more common.[44] In the comics, Prometheus's role in the task is not mentioned at any level, and the guardians in the garden are merely the Hesperides. Atlas offers help in the same way as in the mythological narratives, but here he points out that he has brought three golden apples in exchange for three hours of freedom. However, during this account, he does not wish to take back his burden, and Hercules resorts to the same trick we are familiar with.[45]

His ninth task was to obtain the belt of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons. Eurystheus assigned this task to him since his daughter Admete had coveted the mythological belt. The belt was also given great significance because it was a gift from Ares, the god of war, to the Amazon queen, signifying that she was the most distinguished of her peers.[46] Heracles sailed to the island inhabited by the Amazons and, according to the most popular interpretation, the hero told his story to the queen, who promised to give him the belt as a gift. However, seeing the success of the hero, Hera decided to hinder the hero and took the form of an Amazon to spread the word among people that Heracles and his companions were planning to kidnap the queen. The commotion turned into a fight, and the hero killed Hippolyta and left the island as soon as he had

[44] Apollod. II, 5, 11.
[45] *The Incredible Hercules* #121, 8–9.
[46] D.S. IV, 16, 2

her belt.[47] There are other, less widespread accounts, one of which says that Heracles had taken the queen's sister and commander of the Amazons, Melanippe, captured earlier, and that the Amazons' leader had volunteered her belt,[48] while another says that Heracles himself, seeing the crowd already roused by Hera, thought he had been ambushed and attacked the queen in self-defense.[49] However, the comic book seems to adopt the widely accepted interpretation, which solely highlights Hera's rebellion. However, in this adaptation, the queen does not offer her belt merely out of kindness but because they are lovers with Hercules. The comic book version ends with the hero fleeing naked from the army of women, presenting a juxtaposition to the traditionally tragic outcome that is well known, thereby suggesting that the creators are endeavouring to highlight and create the comedic aspect. Nonetheless, the most significant disparity is the absence of any reference to the death of the queen. It remains uncertain whether the creators intended to omit the tragic narrative or aimed to maintain a potential romantic storyline.[50]

Lastly,[51] his first labour is also discussed in the comic book, namely the defeat of the Nemean lion, a beast sent by the gods to the countryside as punishment for the surrounding villages.[52] In this task, King Eurystheus sent the hero to retrieve the skin of the beast, which in itself proved to be an impossible task. The beast was rumoured to be invulnerable, as the hero soon found out when he aimed his arrows in vain, and they just bounced off the animal's body. Having no other choice, Heracles pursued it with his mace and followed it to a cave, where he

[47] Apollod. II, 5, 9.
[48] D.S. IV, 16, 3.
[49] Apollod. II, 5, 9.
[50] *The Incredible Hercules* #122, 10–12.
[51] The order of the labours presented above correlates to the order in which they appear in *The Incredible Hercules* comic book series and not their classical sources.
[52] Apollod. II, 5, 1.

strangled it and took its corpse as prey.[53] In this part of the comic, instead of describing the task, the author quotes from Joseph Campbell's *'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'*, in the chapter *'The Road of Trials'*, where he shows the reader the typological stages of the hero's journey:

> Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous test and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance to this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage.

From the imagery, all we learn is that the task is similar to the mythological one, with the only difference being that the hero is advised by a goddess to try to kill the beast with his bare hands.[54]

Summary

The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which reception theory fits into the world of comics, focusing on the figure of Heracles as observed through the medium. This form of reception theory, as outlined earlier, involves the emergence and reinterpretation of Greco–Roman culture.

The comic book series I am discussing highlights the fact that any modern rendering of mythical stories and characters, or their presentation in other media while differing in some respects, does not change

[53] D.S. IV, 11, 3–4.
[54] *The Incredible Hercules* #133, 13.

the basic work as a whole, but only complements it and presents the myth in a more accessible form for modern readers. In the course of the depictions, we have observed that five of the twelve labours of the mythical hero are presented in an accurate way, with modern elements. These entertaining mythological motifs persist within the modernised narrative, maintaining their most genuine form in alignment with contemporary standards. It is through these portrayals that the influence of classical culture on the modern genre becomes evident.

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